

To San Juan County ~~Council~~ Dept of Community Development

Reference: Vacation Rentals.

March 27, 2017

S.J.C. DEPARTMENT OF

MAR 27 2017

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The San Juan Islands are one of the most desirable places in the world. We are fortunate to live here. In our travels, especially the east coast we find that most places like this have been abused and no longer hold the charm of friendly community and neighborhoods that is still quite present here. Most places fall victim to greed. Our place is as vulnerable as any. The lax regulation of vacation rentals on our island is one of the main factors that contribute to the disintegration of a lifestyle that we have enjoyed here.

There are reasons to have vacation rentals. I understand that, it provides a place for visitors to stay while they visit the island. Mostly it seems to regular people like me, the purpose of the vacation rental is to make money for people who live somewhere else and own the rentals and even more so for the relators who use them as sales pitches and then profit again as managers. \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$

I guess they are here to stay. But I am sad to say that for me, they are a cancer slowly killing my neighborhood. I live in a small community off Yacht Haven. When we bought the place here 30 years ago, we suddenly realized the inner beauty of this island was the people. When we needed help, there were always neighbors ready to assist. We had community picnics for the beginning of fishing season, and the end of summer. You couldn't walk down the road without meeting a neighbor for a good chat, and during harvest season, you would find fight hard not to be inundated with zucchini and pears. Now the community is mostly older people who are now passing away and as each member dies, the heirs have to decide whether to transient rent or sell. We are lucky because we've added three new younger people to the neighborhood and they have become new life to our community. We also have permanent renters here, and they are fantastic because we have gotten to know them and they are more than good neighbors. But we have also added three transient rentals (with more in the works) and they can be fine people, but they are here and gone, and each time we add a vacation rental, we lose real neighbor.

The vacation rentals cause problems. The lots are close together and the renters are for the most part nice enough people but they are paying big bucks to have fun. Can't you blame them for loud conversations and music late at night. It is expensive, so mostly the houses are maxed out putting major pressure on septic systems and water systems. It seems like a vacation spot so really there seems to be no reason not to stroll the beaches looking for interesting rocks and picking up oysters even though that beach is my front yard and I planted those oysters and have thrown out "jewels" for my grandkids to find.

Mostly we just try to bear with the intrusions. When they are bad enough we have picked up the phone and complained but for several years there was no one in charge of supervising these rentals. I have been to meetings for transient rental properties and the county representative says there are never any complaints and it makes you just want to stand on your chair and scream, because first of all we try hard to tolerate and when we finally give up there has been no one answering the phone and now they say they always answer the phone but no one comes out and no one records the complaints so it just gets

very stressful and makes life upsetting. ( I was not here last summer so maybe things changed, I understand they finally got someone to supervise the properties, but I still had to confront a person trying to find arrow heads on my beach just last week. )

## Solutions

- 1. Call a spade a spade. These people pay B and O taxes and pay commercial insurance. This is a commercial rental. In communities like ours commercial businesses are not appropriate and not allowed. No vacation rentals should even be in a neighborhood like ours.**
- 2. At least limit the number of vacation rentals for a residential neighborhood so the residential area doesn't become a resort.**
- 3. Charge enough on permits to pay for someone to supervise the rentals, take the calls, act on the problems and keep an accurate record of complaints. (Certainly people are making enough money on this rental to pay for annual permit dues, otherwise there wouldn't be so many people doing it.)**
- 4. Insist the permits be renewed each year and do not renew permits if there have been consistent complaints.**
- 5. Do a better job of looking at the sites before giving a permit. If there are dangers, poor water systems, traffic problems, take these seriously. My experience is that at the hearing, the rules for appropriate sites were jokes. No one took the permit rules seriously. Two doors down from my house is a vacation rental right now with a deck that is a death trap for young child or an inebriated adult. (The deck is high and the railings are not adequate.) The water system does not pass code. The county was informed of these problems and they didn't seem to care.**

Respectively Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Bryan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J".

Jennifer Bryan