

Sophia Cassam

From: Cindy Wolf
Sent: Tuesday, February 9, 2021 5:29 PM
To: Lisl Thomsen
Cc: Ingrid Gabriel
Subject: RE: Concerns about Vacation Rental Working group

Hi Lisl,

Thank you for adding your voice to this conversation. It is my hope that this moratorium will give us time to think through the pros and cons of vacation rentals from a number of perspectives. I must say it was the single biggest issue I heard about on the campaign trail, and the plea for rethinking regulations came from a much broader swath of the community than the Vacation Rentals Work Group. I am a big believer in primary sources and good data. Two sources really convinced me we had some big problems that could in part be alleviated by better VR regulations. One is "Tourism and visitor management in the San Juan Islands", a report commissioned by a number of County, State and Federal government agencies from Confluence Research and Consulting. The other is a staff report written by a Senior Planner for San Juan County and presented May 25, 2000 called "Study of Socioeconomic Impacts of Growth Pressure in Selected Seasonal and Resort Communities." If you are interested in seeing these, I can send you the links. I welcome your voice in the discussion. There will be a Public Hearing on the moratorium at the February 23rd Council meeting. You are welcome to testify. If we proceed with the moratorium, we will begin working to establish a framework for public input to the process. I do hope the results will be something everyone can live with.

Kind regards,

Cindy Wolf

From: Lisl Thomsen <lsltmsn7@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 9, 2021 2:03 PM
To: Cindy Wolf <cindyw@sanjuanco.com>
Subject: Concerns about Vacation Rental Working group

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On Tue, Feb 9, 2021 at 2:02 PM Lisl Thomsen <lsltmsn7@gmail.com> wrote:

Hello Cindy,

Congratulations on your success in the election, I hope you're enjoying the position!

(I first sent this to another email of yours, vote for cindy, but since I have not received a reply I am thinking you no longer check that email account)

I am writing with concerns about the vacation rental group and the restrictions that may be enforced because of their dislike of the Vacation rental business.

I am a nearly lifetime resident of Orcas. Arrived Orcas at 3 years old, 1979/80

I am a property owner and full time resident of Orcas Island. My husband and I also manage an airbnb on the property we own adjacent to our residence. We have 4 children who are in or have completed their education here on Orcas at OIHS.

While I agree that it is worth evaluating the issue of vacation rental permits and how they are given out, I am quite concerned by the lack of comprehensive and accurate information and concepts the 'Island Stewards' group has been presenting in their effort for the moratorium and changes to rental regulations.

My husband and I attended their meetings prior to covid, and evaluated the information they were putting out at that time- a significant majority was extremely misleading and was presented in a way that was less than objective.

When I examined their presentations with the hat of a critical thinker rather than just grabbing a pitchfork to join the anti vacation rental crowd, it was clear they had misrepresented and taken liberties with the data they were presenting.

'Pitchforking' aside, my husband and I saw potential in the effort toward more thoughtful governance of the vacation rental issue and we asked to join the group at the end of the first meeting.

We were declined on the spot, by Mr. Aldort, without discussion of the group--- This does not appear to be an inclusive group, more like a club with a ring leader perhaps. I question whether this group represents, or has the interests of the whole community at heart when they are blatantly excluding participation of interested community members.

I'd like to believe that a group such as this, pushing for regulations that affect so many would go about it in an objective way that included the views of all involved. Based on what I am seeing and hearing it is not my experience.

In speaking with one of the group members they confided that the majority of the groups' members are tunnel visioned, that they were refusing to hear concerns and thoughts that were any different than what they wanted to hear.

I beg of you to consider the Vacation Rental Working group is not representing the community, rather only a small portion of the community, an easily reactive one at that. They have deliberately ignored and refused involvement of others who might add to the comprehensiveness of the effort.

I also ask you to please let me know what I might be able to do beyond this letter to be sure that there is a more comprehensive approach given to these concerns.

Thank you,
Lisl Thomsen