

Adam Zack

From: Lynda Guernsey
Sent: Friday, August 20, 2021 7:43 AM
To: Vacation Rental Comments
Subject: FW: Regarding VRs

Lynda Guernsey, Administrative Specialist II – Direct Line (360) 370-7579
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From: Tracey Smith <traceylaurensmith@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 19, 2021 11:37 PM
To: Lynda Guernsey <LyndaG@sanjuanco.com>
Subject: Regarding VRs

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Hello – I contacting you regarding the proposed vacation rental motion on the Aug 20th planning commission agenda.

As with many communities that are vacation destinations, the San Juans face issues of affordable housing for year round residents and shortages of housing for seasonal workers. My husband and I have owned a home on Orcas Island since 2012, so I am most familiar with the situation on Orcas. Opal has done a wonderful job creating affordable housing on Orcas, but clearly more is needed. Rosario Resort and the Orcas Hotel provide housing for their employees. There are creative solutions out there which likely require public and private funding, zoning changing and available land. For example, the recent sale of Mount Bake farm got me thinking of the possibilities. With the right funding and zoning, I imagined an apartment / dormitory style building with common areas that could house seasonal (or year round) workers and a wing for senior apartments that could transition to long term care. In addition there would be a community of modest homes with common gardens (a la cottagecompany.com). And a area for a tiny home village, built off site and towed to the island, could quickly provide more affordable housing options.

In terms of vacation rentals, we bought our house with the intent to enjoy it for a week or two in the summer and more in the off season, renting it out the rest of the May- Sept to cover our expenses. We plan to make it our retirement home. If we were not able to operate our home as a vacation rental, we would keep it for our own use and would not turn it into a long term rental. All the other owners of VR properties on Orcas that I know personally are in the same position. Limiting vacation rental permits will not serve to improve the amount of affordable housing stock available nor increase the number of long term rentals.

As to the motion:

Amend item 3 to include long term rentals and vacation rentals.

Remove items 5. – 7. These are premature given Recommendation 2, ie enforce existing regulation. If after a period of 18-24 months the existing regulations are deemed insufficient, this can be revisited.

Remove item 10. As stated in b.ii.: When code enforcement is complete and only compliant permits remain, then have the planning commission revisit the cap limit. (Note that code enforcement should allow the home owner a period of time to correct any issues found during an code enforcement review.)

Thank you for your consideration.

Tracey L Smith
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