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Sent: Sunday, May 15, 2022 11:50 AM
To: Vacation Rental Comments
Subject: Vacation rental comments

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Dear County Council:

I respectfully request that you cap vacation rental permits at the July 2021 level of "Active and Compliant" permits.

It's a challenge to think of an argument you may not have heard before, but let me try.

Everyone in the county lives in a neighborhood. Houses might be close together or further apart, but everyone who calls San Juan County home can tell you what neighborhood they live in. Every single county resident cares about what happens in their neighborhood, but not all neighbors have offered you their opinions.

Life in the county has and is changing, in many ways for the better, but what hasn't changed is the centrality of the neighborhood. It's where we turn for help, how we notice a neighbor hasn't been seen in a while, or who left their car lights on. A neighborhood is the atomic structure of a community. If you render that asunder, everything else becomes a little more fractured.

Vacation rental permits present a threat to neighborhoods. If that weren't true, you wouldn't be debating the issue. While the level of threat can't be reduced to numbers, what can be known is that no one wants an empty house as a neighbor. No one wants "neighbors" consisting of new vacationers arriving every few days who can't be aware that one neighbor is developing memory issues, a local child has particular needs, or that a beloved animal is on the loose again. Every neighborhood has its own patterns and signals that develop over time. I'm confident that every one of you could identify some in your own area.

Any step to protect stability matters during these upended times. We need public officials who can identify a manageable problem and solve it. Without such examples, there is no trust that any solutions are possible, which bodes ill for the future. It's not a small thing to take a stand for our neighborhoods. It might send forth that "ripple of hope" we so desperately need.

The vacation rental permit will become more or less of a problem. Which direction the problem heads is within your power, and your power alone, to control.

For all our neighbors, I hope you place a priority on protecting our neighborhoods. Prove to us that elected officials can serve the needs of those who don't have the luxury of being able to raise their voices to protect what they don't know is at risk.

Thank you for your attention to these views.

Kate Kimball

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