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EXTERNAL

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Dear Supervisor Gorin,

Thank you again for meeting with us several weeks ago to discuss vacation rental permits and zoning. To further complicate the vacation rental issue I learned inadvertently that an interested party was considering purchasing the property at 17355 Gehricke Rd as a vacation rental. I was hopefully able to dissuade them. I have an update and questions.

We have started the process of becoming a Fire Safe Council. Our mission is to ensure the safety of our community in the event of a fire. To that end, we are embarking on projects that will educate the community about wildfire preparedness to reduce our risk during a wildfire. Our primary focus is on evacuation route planning and protocols. This may include but is not limited to: a communication plan for sudden evacuation, vegetation management along the roadway (i.e., shaded fuel breaks which lower fire hazards by thinning dense tree cover and removing underlying brush); creating and maintaining turnouts for both residents and emergency vehicles; and developing strategies that lower our community risk in the event of a wildfire.

We are in hopes that the County of Sonoma will join us in our efforts and help with clearing along the county portion of the road. Personally, I have expended funds on tree and brush removal to create defensible space around my house, as have a number of neighbors.

As stated in our zoom meeting with you and Gary Helfrich, we were surprised to learn that vacation rentals are still allowed on Gehricke Rd after our high risk fire and evacuation in 2017. We were spared from the burn due to the diligence of our neighbor, Jeff Harmon, who stayed with the firefighters and put out hot spots in our neighborhood day and night. Properties further up Gehricke Rd burned in part. Fortunately no houses were destroyed. As I understood it, Mr. Helfrich stated during our zoom meeting that if we had been placed in an exclusion zone, we would have burned. I would like further clarification on this statement. I represent a house on Grove St that is in an exclusion zone and although the owner got a TOT permit, he could not get a vacation rental permit due to having been placed in an exclusion zone following the fire. He is only able to rent the house as a long term rental. To my knowledge none of Grove St or any adjacent properties burned.

According to our Gehricke Rd. Fire Safe Council Advisor, Jeff Paganini of the Schell-Vista

Fire Protection District, the Cal Fire map considers Gehricke Rd an extremely high level fire risk area. I am wondering if there could be a discrepancy between the map utilized by the County of Sonoma and the map used by Cal Fire.

I'd also like to mention that I contacted PRMD quite some time ago and spoke with Charles Rivers who was to have sent someone to meet with us and inspect the area to offer an opinion on the feasibility of vacation rentals on Gehricke Rd. After last speaking with him and after leaving a number of messages for him I have not heard from anyone.

Thank you again for your time and concern. I look forward to hearing from you.

Warm Regards,

Pat Summers
Inn Wine Country
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