

From: [Adam Klaus](#)
To: [PlanningAgency](#)
Subject: vacation rental ordinance
Date: March 17, 2022 3:13:38 PM

EXTERNAL

[I'm in line to comment in the Zoom hearing, but I suspect I will have to drop before my turn comes.]

I've owned my home in Monte Rio for 10 years. It is a second home -- my partner and I are tied to jobs in San Francisco for the time being -- but we spend a significant amount of time there, working on the house and garden, building relationships with the neighbors, and creating memories with family and friends.

I also rent it as a vacation rental when we're not there, and the income has made it possible for us to maintain and improve the home. My first experience of Sonoma County was visiting Guerneville and staying in a vacation rental. It's hard to forget that the area has a long history of vacation visitors, particularly when you enter Monte Rio under the "vacation wonderland" sign. I'm proud to continue in that tradition.

I recognize the concerns residents have about poorly-run vacation rentals in their neighborhoods. That's no fun — and certainly sounds like a violation of current regulations. But I'd like to present a few points about the effort I take to be a responsible host:

- I rent to a maximum of four people (even though my permit cap is six) and am very clear with them that my number one priority is respecting my full-time neighbors.
- It's a pleasure to host small families and couples — almost all of them local to the Bay Area — including those who come back year after year; I try to keep my rates reasonable because I genuinely like being able to share the beauty of Sonoma County with people who can't afford a home here, and blunt measures like caps on rental nights would force me to raise my rates, putting it out of reach for many of my best guests.
- My neighbors frequently tell me how quiet my guests are or that they even enjoyed talking with them (one story that tugged my heartstrings last summer was hearing about how my neighbor showed the young son of a guest how to pick an apple from a tree for the first time)
- In the once or twice that I have ever heard from a neighbor about a guest problem, I was the best person to resolve it; the very prescriptive rules around having a property manager — including in the current ordinance — are overly specific and can actually make it harder to achieve the end goal of resolving complaints.
- I recommend local restaurants and businesses to my guests, which contributes to the local economy.
- I've had a relationship with the same housekeeper for many years, paying above-market wage and continuing to support her during the rental prohibition period during the pandemic.

I appreciate the effort the county staff and board have put into crafting these regulations, some of which are reasonable and necessary. I just ask that you consider the impact on those of us who work hard to be good neighbors and community members, the positive economic impact that vacation rentals bring, and the long history that Sonoma County has hosting vacationers. Maybe it's best to start with a list of outcomes and work backward from there, rather than the difficult-to-enforce hodgepodge that comprise the current and proposed regulations.

Finally, I'm a strong advocate for more housing, and I urge you to look closely at regulatory changes that would actually allow more and affordable housing to be built, rather than scapegoating and stereotyping vacation rentals.

Adam Klaus

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