

August 23, 2017

Mendocino County Board of Supervisors
Chair, John McCowen
Vice-Chair Dan Hamburg
Ms. Carre Brown
Ms. Georgeanne Croskey
Mr. Dan Gjerde

501 Low Gap Road
Ukiah, CA 95482

Re: Exception to the Moratorium for Short-term Vacation Rentals

Dear Board:

Issue:

You will shortly revisit the option of modifying the current 45 day moratorium on existing housing for use as short-term vacation rentals, to extend it to a one-year moratorium that can be renewed for a second year. I understand the concerns related to insufficient housing stock to accommodate long-term inhabitants and not wanting to see this further impaired. This is a serious situation deserving of your efforts to make improvement. Unfortunately, as currently discussed, you may also risk creating an unintended consequence that will impair future growth in newly constructed housing stock.

Background:

For years my family has enjoyed the Irish Beach community. During many visits we have met wonderful people. We learned that some of these people were able to procure their homes in Irish Beach, while working elsewhere, by virtue of income received for their home from short-term vacation rentals. In fact, we have paid to stay in homes such as these and always paid TOT. The beauty in this plan is that the owners were still able to use their Irish Beach home for weekends and longer periods, while continuing to work out of the area. Eventually, some of these homes ceased being rented when the owner was finally able to move into their house on a permanent basis. Our family used this funding model as part of our basis for making effort to construct a new home in Irish Beach. Involved in this project is my wife and I, both of whom need to be near UC Davis for medical treatments; and, my son and daughter-in-law who are employed by the County of Placer as mental health professionals. Ultimately we would like to live in this home full time.

To date, this has been a two year effort. The Board approved our building permits. This allows us to proceed with construction. At the same meeting the Board approved the 45 day moratorium on short-term vacation rentals. Currently, as worded, this moratorium impacts us and places in jeopardy our ability to construct our home. Our failure to build would result in no new construction in Irish Beach at this time and negatively impact growth in the future housing stock of Mendocino County. This would seem to be in conflict with the public policy of wanting to see the housing situation improve.

Public Policy:

It would appear prudent to: create a public policy with incentives that contribute to increasing new residential housing stock; while, simultaneously, safeguarding existing residential housing stock.

Recommendation:

That a single property owner, constructing a new residence, and upon receiving their Certificate of Occupancy from the County, should be allowed to avail themselves of income from the short-term vacation rental market.

Conclusion:

It is fully understood that public policy should be predicated upon a vision for the future but in a manner that works to improve an issue of today. So I understand that one family having a problem is not necessarily what you might predicate an entire policy on. You have acknowledged that you have insufficient housing for full-time residents. Thus the emergency moratorium. To improve this situation you must increase available housing. This includes adding newly constructed homes to your housing stock. You must also protect currently existing housing stock from uses that may be adverse to providing housing for full-time residents.

To support the growth of available housing it would be contradictory to your efforts to limit what legal revenue sources an owner constructing a new house could or could not use. However, your current moratorium does just that. I believe this is an unintended consequence that you should change.

The recommendation made above will be a positive change that provides you with a sense of comfort about insuring growth in residences, that is reasonable. This is a County we have worked hard for the past two years to join. We would like to contribute if possible.

Enclosed is a very recent article from the Sacramento Bee on issues related to this matter from a statewide perspective that may be of interest.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this recommendation.

Respectfully,

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c Chamber of Commerce, Ms. Sharon Davis
Visitors Bureau, Mr. Allan Human