February 23, 2018

To Chairman Richard Rodriguez, Vice Chair Maggie Kestly, Steven Onstot, Nora Aidukas, and Phil White~

Regarding to the Short Term Rental(STR) & Homeshare & Temporary Rental Units (TRU) Ordinance March 1, 2018 meeting.

We thank you for writing the ordinance.

I have concerns based on the fact that my neighbors and I have lived with a Short Term Rental in our neighborhood for about 2 years. The STR house was a business investment, sold in September to someone who now lives there. We have survived a STR and another fire, for now. Having had these recent experiences, I would ask that you consider these suggestions for changes to the ordinance.

1.A conditional use permit needed for any STR/homeshare/TRU. Written permission from ALL neighbors within 300 feet BEFORE any of the permitting process can begin. Thus, upholding Ventura County’s standard of maintaining the integrity of the neighborhood. If the neighbors within 300’ says “yes”, then go for it, if someone says, “no”, then no. This will create a natural flow for areas where the (eventually only) homeshares will tend to migrate, thus they are in the neighborhoods that want them.

The argument against this is that “it pits neighbor against neighbor”. I disagree. In our neighborhood with a total of 5 properties, 4 properties were against having a STR in the neighborhood. We 4 properties literally felt like we were “taken hostage” by the one STR! We became like cops. Our daily lives became preparation for a potential lawsuit rather than enjoying our homes as we knew them. The STR owners did NOT live here. They rented it out on VRBO~ It was booked by strangers. They did NOT care about what went on in the neighborhood. We were forced to live on edge as we documented the impacts of the STR. We thought someone was going to get hurt and would have to prove how/when, etc. This is no way to live in our homes and yet we 4 properties were doing this. “Shell shock” is the term for what we are left with.

Please add this CUP at the beginning of the ordinance. It will help on the front side of enforcement. Give the neighborhoods the choice of being profited on at their own expense, or not.

2. In “Sec.8107.46.2 Definitions “b””~ Under Primary Residence please add a tighter “proof” of primary residence. I believe this definition is foundational for the entire ordinance to work. Title, income tax returns, and tax bills will have the “Primary Residence” name & the address of the STR/Homeshare/TRU on them. True. Then they can be picked up at the “resident’s” address and forwarded. Anyone can make a paper trail that proves anything they want~ especially this day in age! If the STR owners had actually lived there, why was our form of communication with them registered letters to Wilshire Blvd?

“Home owners exemption” is one way to prove residency, though after talking to the VCassessor’s office who says the only way to “truly” know if someone is actually residing there is find out from the neighbors. Again, the neighbors become the cops. In our case, through VC Assessor’s records our neighbor’s house proved NOT to be the “primary residence” and the owners insisted that they “reside” there. They thought they were making the STR “legal” because they said that “friends” were staying there. The online VRBO ad proved that they were short time renters. We, the neighbors know the owners never lived there. See what I mean about we have all become cops? Digging around for protection. This is what innocent people do when they feel pressure in the place they are supposed to feel the most peace. Home.

The definition of “Primary Residence” needs to be tighter in order for this ordinance to work. The way it is, enforcement will be difficult. If you wonder “why?” here….please call me and I will explain.

3. Declare December 13, 2016 BOS meeting as the beginning date to amoritize STRs. I recall BOS saying at the decision meeting on 12/13/16 that they would give a 2 year process. Had it not been for the sale of the STR house in our neighborhood, I would still be counting the days until this final date to begin enforcement. I don’t think I could have waited that long. Please don’t make others who are in the horrendous situation of ending up with a hotel (STR) in their neighborhood sit with it any longer than December 13, 2018. Please make this “end” date for STRs 12/13/18 or as soon as possible.

After looking at graphs on page 5 in The Applied Development Economics I question this count and the lack of increased number of STRs in 2017. I request that you consider putting a cap on the number of these businesses allowed in Ojai.

I am particularly happy to see “Sec.8107-46.9.6”~ Insurance requirement for business. As well as “Sec. 8107-46-5-2~d’~”~Corporation, partnership, LLC or legal entity not a natural person owned as ineligible. This will ensure that the neighbor actually exists. This is a relief. Thank you.

Finally~I close this letter wondering why there is no mention of water. Has there been a study of water usage amounts from STR/Homeshare/TRU properties? This concern seems to come in last. I think it is the most important.

Thank you for the ordinance intending to protect our neighborhoods.

All the best to you,

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