



**Trinidad adopts “urgency moratorium” on vacation rentals.** The Trinidad City Council voted 4-0 last night to adopt an “urgency” ordinance to close short-term rental (STR) units in town for all but documented essential personnel during the pandemic. The moratorium on vacation rentals, which specifically includes the Trinidad Bay B&B, goes into effect Monday, Dec. 14, and runs for three months. The Council may lift the moratorium earlier if the COVID-19 public health crisis eases. The city has 31 licensed vacation rentals, plus the Trinidad Bay B&B. Trinidad Retreats owners Jonna and Reid Kitchen, and an Edwards Street vacation rental property owner, said the city was unnecessarily out in front of the county in imposing the order, and accused the city of longstanding bias against vacation rentals. Council members acknowledged the hardship that the moratorium represents for vacation rental property owners, but said that in light of the recent surge in COVID-19 cases in Humboldt County, the town's public health concerns must take precedence. The urgency ordinance requires that any essential personnel who do rent in town must be documented with the city before moving in. Essential personnel may include visiting medical providers or others in the county to help combat the pandemic. The ordinance also includes fines of \$1,000 for each infraction. Humboldt County is at the highest (purple) level for COVID restrictions, but Supervisors have not yet ordered full shutdown of services and business such as lodging, although the county does require people leaving the county or coming into the county self-quarantine for 14 days, which has not been enforced. Vacation renters, of course, do not follow the self-quarantine requirement. Statewide, full shutdown restrictions have been ordered by region as soon as only 15% of emergency room beds remain available. Humboldt County has 27 ICU beds (15% would be four beds), and most recently had something like 28% (7 beds) capacity remaining. Mayor Steve Ladwig, who is an STR owner, recused himself and took no part in Thursday's urgency declaration discussion or vote. For information of the City of Trinidad's measures regarding the pandemic, contact the city offices at (707) 677-0223.

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