

From: [Linda Miller](#)
To: [Planning Clerk](#); [Ford, John](#); [Hilton, Keenan](#)
Cc: [Madrone, Steve](#); sregon@aol.com
Subject: Public Comment, Item H, Sept. 21 2023 Commission Meeting
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Humboldt County Planning Commissioners, John Ford and Keenan Kilton, Humboldt County Planning Department,

We wish to comment on the Draft Short-Term Rental (STR) Ordinance before you on September 21, 2023, Item Number "H".

We would first like to thank John Ford and Keenan Hilton at the Planning Department for holding the many public workshops and listening carefully to everyone in the development of the draft ordinance. We also appreciate the measures included in the ordinance that protect housing stock, communities, and neighborhoods; and limit noise and the number of attendees allowed at private gatherings and parties.

Unfortunately, I fear that those people most affected by STRs likely did not avail themselves of the opportunities to be heard. I am sure that many folks looking to rent or buy already scarce housing, or living near an STR have been negatively affected by them, but don't think this ordinance has anything to do with them.

My family and many of my neighbors have been very negatively affected by an unpermitted short-term rental/commercial event venue that has been operating for years, and as a VRBO for almost a year just outside the Blue Lake/Glendale Community Plan Area. This is in a rural Residential Estates/Residential Low-Density zone. They have had numerous weddings, retirement parties, baby showers, etc., over the past several years; there was an event almost every weekend this past June. There have been very loud bands and/or DJ music and announcements over a PA system, with lots of people yelling, late into the night. We have called the Sheriff many times, as have many of our neighbors. We are aware that there has been a Code Enforcement complaint for the property. When we called the event organizer, she was quite rude and belligerent.

We are very much against this owner being able to obtain a permit through this ordinance. *A prerequisite for being granted a permit for an STR should be that you have no previous complaints on record. We think this should be explicit in the ordinance.*

Under **Section 60.05.6.2.1, A and B, Required findings**, there are limitations that the STR "would not" result in significant adverse effects on the health, safety, and welfare of the community, or on the quality of the neighborhood. Shouldn't this also state that they have not caused significant adverse effects *in the past*? Why should an applicant be able to obtain a permit for an operation that *has had* significant adverse effects *in the past*? And that applicant has been very disrespectful to the existing neighborhood? Why would anyone expect that they would change in this regard? We would like to see this explicitly stated in the ordinance: that *any property owner that has exhibited this much disregard for their neighbors not be allowed to obtain a permit.*

It sounds like there are already more STRs in the County than would be allowed under the new ordinance, i.e., more than 2% of housing stock, so any new permits should go to those folks who have demonstrated that they are interested in complying and that they have respect for the surrounding neighbors and community. Those who have *not complied in the past do not deserve to be permitted* given the limited permits available even if they are now coming into compliance. We hope that you will make this a condition of being permitted, also *explicitly stated in the Ordinance.*

Under **Section 60.05.10.3.2 Neighborhood Quality and Public Nuisance**, we'd like to see under **A. Good Neighbor Guide**, that all neighbors within at least *700 feet* be recipients of the Good Neighbor Guide. There is only one house that is within 300 feet of the STR/event venue that has been causing our neighborhood trouble, and that house is on the same access road. So in our situation, only the folks on the access road would receive the Good Neighbor Guide. However, we and our immediate neighbors between 300 and 700 feet away from the STR would *not* receive a guide, even though the STR has negatively affected us all. We believe that much of the noise emanating from the STR lands in our direction, in addition to other homes that are outside of 300 feet, and not on the access road. We hope that you will reconsider the 300-foot limit on the Good Neighbor Guide. Otherwise, our only recourse will be to continue to call the Sheriff.

In addition, since we have had to put up with commercial events at the STR in this neighborhood, we would also like to see explicitly stated in the ordinance that *no commercial events are allowed*. The Draft Ordinance does state under Section 60.05.10.3.2.E. Private Gatherings and Parties are limited to 20 attendees, however, commercially hosted events should not be taking place at permitted STRs. Can this also be explicitly disallowed in the ordinance?

Under **Section 60.05.5 Existing Operations**, it says that two months after the effective date of the ordinance, the department will issue permits for qualifying locations with existing Short-term Rentals. We would like to see specified in the ordinance that there must not be prior complaints issued for the existing STR before they are considered "qualifying".

We would also like to suggest that since there is such a shortage of housing available in the Humboldt Bay area, including adjacent unincorporated areas, you consider making the percentage cap even smaller than 2%. Low-income renters/buyers and students need to have reasonably-priced housing available, and since this is currently not the case, why not make the cap even smaller? Shouldn't the County prioritize affordable month-to-month rentals over vacation rentals? Allowing a smaller percentage of STRs would then actually free up some housing that then could be made available on a month-to-month rental basis.

Thank you very much for hearing our concerns and suggestions on this draft ordinance.

Sincerely,

Linda Miller and Mark Cortright
McKinleyville

cc: Peggy O'Neill, District 5 Planning Commissioner
Steve Madrone, District 5 Supervisor