

Chamber exec rents room without license or paying TOT

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce Executive Director B Gorman and her husband have been renting the lower portion of their South Lake Tahoe home without a business license and without paying transient occupancy tax.

When reached Sept. 7, Gorman said it was “pretty much friends and friends of friends” who stayed at their house.



B Gorman

But then why advertise the fully equipped downstairs apartment on a website? The reviews on the Airbnb website read more like people who don't know the Gormans.

Gorman wasn't on the phone long enough to ask her why she doesn't have a business license or why she doesn't pay TOT.

“I'm not going to have this conversation with you,” Gorman said. “We are not going to dabble in it (meaning the rental) and that's all I'm going to say.”

The reason this is an issue is that as head of the chamber she advises people how to operate a business. One thing she tells people is to get a business license. The chamber sells people a packet of information about how to open a business on the South Shore. Gorman meets one-on-one to advise people how to

open a business.

Gorman is violating the law according to Chapter 28A of the South Lake Tahoe City Code Vacation Home Rentals ordinance which says, "No owner of a vacation home rental shall rent that unit for 30 consecutive calendar days or less without a valid vacation home rental permit for that unit issued pursuant to this chapter."

Part of the ordinance also says owners are required to have, "Evidence of a valid transient occupancy tax registration certificate issued by the city for the vacation home rental."

Christi Bozes in the Finance Department said the Gormans don't have a business license or a vacation rental permit and there is no record of them ever paying TOT.

In the terse and short conversation Gorman had with this reporter she said they no longer plan to rent out the house. The listing on Airbnb was up the morning of Sept. 7 and down that afternoon.

According to Airbnb's website, it "is an online marketplace allowing anyone from private residents to commercial properties to rent out their extra space."

Patrick Atherton, president of the chamber board, knew nothing of Gorman's second source of income until *Lake Tahoe News* called.

"I had no idea. I will research a little more and go from there. I am completely unaware," Atherton said.

Here are some reviews on Airbnb about the Gormans' fully equipped lower residence:

From Dec. 26, 2009, "This was our first time using airbnb, and these hosts set the bar high."

From July 6, 2010, "suite accomodations at hotel prices. added

bonus: great location with water/mountain views. already planning a return trip. note: this was our first experience with airbnb; it definitely won't be our last."

From July 15, 2010, "We can only say that all the wonderful things previous reviewers have written about B and Jim's place and their hospitality is just scratching the surface."

From Sept. 4, 2010, "We have a very nice stay with Jim and B. The place is beautiful. Jim and B were very friendly and helpful. We highly recommend them."