

SLT going after vacation home rental violators

By Kathryn Reed

Enforcement, or the lack thereof, is a major complaint of South Lake Tahoe's vacation home rental ordinance.

Temporary relief is on the way. The City Council last week approved funding for a private security firm to work exclusively on VHR issues.

The \$30,800 for the 90-day contract is coming from the Undesignated Vacation Home Rental Fund. This pot of money is accumulated from permit fees.

The security force is expected to start working in mid-December.

"For 80 hours per week, these private security personnel will serve to function as a preventive presence and eyes-ears for the police department," the Nov. 15 staff report says.

Police Chief Brian Uhler, whose department is responsible for enforcement, told *Lake Tahoe News* with nearly 385 permits recently expiring, he's worried people may start operating under the radar.

The city in fall 2015 enacted a beefed-up VHR ordinance in which homeowners must have their rental up to code. Hundreds of people got permits just before the new rules went into place. However, upon renewal this year they would have had to have gone through the new inspection process.

What city officials don't know is why those nearly 400 homeowners did not seek to renew their permit.

The added enforcement, especially during the peak winter

rental period, will allow crews to crack down on illegal rentals as well as legitimate ones violating aspects of the ordinance, like parking, noise and garbage.

The security force will work 80 hours a week. The funding also includes a full time temporary community service officer.

Their specific duties include:

- Patrolling assigned areas and addresses;
- Checking on expired VHRs by address to see if there appears to be illegal renting going on;
- Looking for noise and trash violations;
- Alerting CSO to issues;
- Serving as backup to CSO as needed.

These people are in addition to the community service officer who is working 40 hours a week. The added security will also mean the ability to handle more complaints, especially during peak holiday times.

Uhler said once the contract is up the department will assess how many complaints there were, the impact the security force had and whether retaining them in summer might be appropriate.