

Opinion: SLT being illogical about VHR rules

By Jim Morris

I hate to waste my time, but I cannot let the erroneous propaganda put out by the emperor of City Hall go unrebutted. The city will not let go of this "nuisance" problem as it diverts focus on the dismal road conditions that the city has neglected for years. Also, city management has totally failed to provide a reliable snow removal system as we experienced last winter.

Austin Sass couldn't hold a private enterprise job in this town, but is lecturing our real estate and VHR community on how to make a living after all of the unconstitutional actions taken by this council. Sass's musings will bite the city in the future as he is feeding information regarding lawsuit material "taking of property rights."



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Get ready city of South Lake Tahoe as Mr. Sass nor Nancy Kerry is not keeping up with state decisions in state and appeals courts. City, check out the Aug. 22, 2017, ruling in Austin, Texas, which states that short term renting does not change a property from residential to commercial as is implied by the special use conditions recently enacted by the city.

Mr. Sass championed the new requirement that a property owner

cannot get a VHR permit if his property is within 150 feet of an existing VHR. He then talks about destroying the lives of 1,350 families who "did nothing wrong." I ask the question, what wrong did the unfortunate owner who can't rent because of the geography of an adjacent rental, or an arbitrary cap? What wrong did they do?

The city manager, council, and police chief were asked the question about whether a concentration of VHRs was more impactful than a dispersion. They could and would not answer because they failed to evaluate the complaint and citation information at their disposal.

The mayor asked for patience for the sake of our community and to give this new compromise a chance. What compromise? I see no concession by the biased city manager and mayor in the imposition of:

1. 150-foot barrier to obtain a VHR permit.
2. Artificial cap with no objective criteria.
3. Hiring three new compliance officers when there is not enough work for the one they have now. (Thirty-nine verified VHR violations for noise, parking, and trash through the busiest summer Lake Tahoe has seen in years)
4. Raising fees to defraud permit holders and violating the VHR ordinance by collecting more revenue than needed to administer the ordinance.

The city failed to answer pertinent questions regarding metrics involved in determining when "enough regulation is enough," but this group of "rulers" has no appetite for restricting their rule-making, even though the mayor admits that the city saw an "improvement" after the last ordinance change 18 months ago. We don't know how he comes to that conclusion as the city has admitted their mistake in exaggerating the VHR complaints by 400 percent and passed that

on to the creators of the much heralded “socio-economic” study.

We expected more from the two new council members as we didn’t think they would succumb to the biased pressure as clearly evidenced by Nancy Kerry’s evasion of pertinent questions on how she constructed the 27 pages of changes to the VHR ordinance.

Jim Morris is a 30-year resident and president of Lake Tahoe Accommodations, a company producing 10 percent of the total VHR transient occupancy taxes to the city and managing 80 city properties without a VHR fine in 14 years.