

# S. Lake Tahoe on path to limit number of VHRs

By Kathryn Reed

Before the end of the year, South Lake Tahoe will have a moratorium in place regarding vacation home rentals.

The council on Tuesday agreed to limit the number of VHRs as well as create density criteria. Council member Tom Davis recused himself because of his involvement in the industry.

While no actual vote was taken, the four gave direction to staff to come back with an ordinance that will dramatically change things.

Today there are 1,368 VHRs in the non-tourist core area. As of Dec. 8, the limit will be 1,400. The first reading of the new ordinance will be at the next regular meeting on Oct. 17, with the second reading scheduled for Nov. 7. The ordinance then takes effect 30 days later.

Quality of life for full-time residents was the main reason for these changes.

The new ordinance means no new permits will be given out if there is a VHR within 150 feet of the applicant. There are currently about 110 pending applications. They will have the first opportunity to fill the spots.

Ultimately, the density issue will actually bring the number of these short-term rentals to 1,288, according to city staff. This will be through attrition and could take a number of years.

According to City Manager Nancy Kerry's presentation to council on Oct. 3, the minimum distance standard would:

- Improve residents' quality life, health and well-being by reducing areas highly saturated by VHRs;
- Minimize impacts of VHRs among residents;
- Help restore community character;
- Reduce calls for service for police department personnel.

Most of the council members acknowledged they did not want to decimate the VHR industry, but at the same time they seek to bring some peace to residents who have been burdened by unruly guests who have little respect for their temporary neighbors.

Homeowners associations will not be subject to these rules, but instead may create their own regulations. For now, this pertains to the Tahoe Keys and Tahoe Tyrol. About 17 percent of Tahoe Keys homes are used as a short-term rental. Their major concerns were bear boxes and density.

In the new ordinance also expect these following changes/additions:

- Maximum occupancy will be two people per bedroom, plus two additional guests.
- Camping in a tent or RV will not be allowed at a VHR.
- Parking must be on a paved surface.
- Bear boxes will be mandatory by July 2018, with regulations based on square footage of the rental.
- Warnings for VHR owners will be eliminated.
- If an owner receives three violations within 24 months, the permit will be revoked.
- VHR owners who stay in their own dwelling must adhere to the VHR rules, though permits for parties and the like can

be requested.

· Three people will be hired to boost the VHR compliance department to six. This will be paid for with an additional annual fee of another \$300 per property. (This was after Police Chief Brian Uhler admitted the temporary added enforcement last winter did not have much of an impact.)

One item to still be decided will be setting a minimum number of days people have to rent their place. This is to deter people from obtaining a permit with the sole purpose of keeping someone else from securing one.

It's also possible other changes could occur in the next two weeks, and that not all the council members will support the final ordinance.

A software program like Host Compliance will be on a future agenda for the council to decide if that or another platform is something the council wants to go forward with. The principal of the company made a **presentation earlier this fall**. The software is designed to ferret out scofflaws, plus Host Compliance in particular has other offerings such as a complaint hot line.

Thirty-five people spoke at the meeting Tuesday, with the views covering a wide spectrum. Some threatened taking the VHR issue to the ballot if constraints were not put into place, others spoke of the financial impact restrictions will have, some want the free to market dictate the number of VHRs, others want this to be a property rights issue, a few worry the tourist core area will be impacted with people displacing residents in a desire to have a VHR.

The new ordinance only pertains to units outside the tourist core, and only to full house rentals, not to those renting a room while they are on the premise.