

Letter: Suggestions for VHR problem

To the community,

I recently heard about a fire in a VHR on the North Shore. The eight adults, eight children and two dogs were able to escape. The cause of the fire at the vacation rental is under investigation. Here is a prime example of the complaints fielded by officials about crowded VHRs.

The vacation home rental issue is not just a local issue. People in tourist areas nationwide are dealing with the same problems. The subject has been looked at from many angles, without a solid acceptable solution.

At the core of the issue is zoning. Zoning, in its basic form, attempts to separate residential property use from commercial property use. We are experiencing incompatible uses. Houses are generally built for families and not typically built to be used as a business. It would seem these are in violation of county zoning ordinance at the very least.

Everywhere folks are complaining about the intrusions to their privacy and quiet enjoyment of their property. This is a main principle in real estate ownership. Enforcement has fallen on our city resources, taxing the citizens to respond to these intrusions. Cities may recover some costs via the permit fees, but those recurring costs often exceed the fees paid upon application.

I have heard from VHR owners that enforcing rules large and small on the vacationers often results in bad reviews on social media and online reservations. This type of retaliation needs to be addressed by the online platforms publishing them. If it's on the internet, it must be true! We don't want to

penalize owners that are trying to be compliant and good neighbors, but have the vacationers' cavalier behavior put them in a no-win spot.

I think the VHRs should be self-policing through a vacation homeowners association. Generally, any person who owns or wants to buy a VHR must be a member of a VHOA and therefore must obey the governing documents including articles of incorporation, CC&Rs (covenants, conditions and restrictions) and bylaws. Most homeowner associations are incorporated and are subject to state statutes that govern non-profit corporations and homeowner associations. California has a large body of HOA law.

The community benefits of establishing this method because the local police are not having to answer to every small problem, and the city does not have to hire additional personnel and bear the expenses of salary, benefits and retirement.

VHRs are an industry and we do not want to suppress commerce, but we must also protect the rights and liberties of our residents. These VHRs are commercial enterprises and should have their own zoning designation, being zoned in a separate area, close to the destinations and tourist attractions to reduce traffic congestion and pollution as it is such a commonly cited goal in the Tahoe basin.

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