

January 23, 2021

Dear Mike,

I have served, and been involved in many public meetings here, in San Juan County that follow the Opens Public Meeting Act and I fully support the process and importance of that act. I have very recently worked with Amy Vera to make sure that EPRC was following a particular situation due to COVID to make sure I was handling that situation property.

I am disturbed by the County Councils process concerning the vacation rental moratorium at last week's meetings on Monday and Tuesday. The most distressing one is that I do not believe by watching the video again, that how there was 24 hours notice, to the change of the Tuesday agenda when the discussion took place on Monday morning during Erika's presentation and it was on the agenda at 9am on Tuesday asking for action with no chance of the public to be aware this was coming. However, somehow the Orcas Vacation Group was informed and had representatives there. I only found out on the ferry Tuesday morning because a Friday Harbor person just happened to drop into the Monday council meeting to see what was happening and he call someone on Lopez, and they called me. That is not ok. I would like to make a public record request to know when the Tuesday morning agenda was changed.

I work hard to make sure I follow the open meeting act but also to show transparency to the public when dealing with all particularly important to the not so important issues. In my opinion, this builds public trust, and to do something that is so important without proper procedure and transparency, certainly does not build that trust. As Amy Vira spoke about moratoriums, it caught my attention when she noted that the normal procedure in requesting a moratorium is that you must show harm and then proceed with the moratorium process. Not only was no harm declared but the new moratorium was enacted within only 4 or 5 hours before the county offices were closed. Unlike most counties, ours is made up of islands and we rely on ferry schedules, so it is darn near impossible to get to our county offices unless you own your own boat or plane between noon and 5pm, but of course, first you must know that you need to! At least, when I put my ballot in the mailbox and it is postmarked, I know my vote will be counted. Apparently, that was not even given any consideration.

I have been following and participating in this vacation rental situation since the beginning. I was trusting the process with the new regulations and the continued work by the planning commission and staff and looking forward to adjusting or adding some new regulations. I am sorry the council felt the need to make such an extreme gesture and felt the need to enact something within 9 hours. 72 hours maybe but 9 and really 5 because the offices were not open until midnight. So now, the pause begins, and we as a community who now have been informed by other community members have the ability to respond.

Regrettably,

Leith Templin
Orcas Island

