

## Sophia Cassam

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**From:** annie crane <annieboonecrane@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 19, 2021 11:44 AM  
**To:** Council Public Comment  
**Subject:** Vacation Rental Moritorium

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Hello,

I would like to see a continued moratorium on vacation rental permits until fair solutions for this very serious problem is resolved. There has been devastating unforeseen growth in vacation rentals and unfair issues have been created by allowing these vacation rental businesses to be located in residential communities. This truth needs to be recognized .

We need to be alarmed by the obvious conclusion of what the total cost has been and will be to our residential communities due to this fast growing business , who they really benefit and who they do not. There is currently an extremely unfair situation for voting residents on many levels.

Restricting to the current number of vacation rental businesses, only continues the current problems.

Some of the many problems neighbors of vacation rental businesses in residential neighborhoods must now cope with due to the exploding inventory of vacation rentals owned by out of towners(non-voting )are due to the real fact that not all renters are sweet families or appreciative humans who only wish to have a quiet and peaceful vacation on our beautiful Island.

Stories of disrespectful vacationers who do not follow the rules and create potentially dangerous situations for the neighborhoods they are located in are common and continuing.

This has forced neighbors to have to "police" these kinds of vacationers. In our own now over run neighborhood, we have observed very small unattended, (no life jackets) children allowed by their parent to venture out on (supposedly restricted) boat docks at the private beach, dogs who are unleashed and wander into neighbors property to do you know what or be a possible threat, renters having bonfires in dry weather season close to tinder dry low hanging trees and close by residential homes, loud and disruptive behavior (they are on **their** vacation, after all) and in general not following supposed rules. More rules are not enough to stop renters who do not follow them.

Call and report them, you say?

This should not be the duty of monitoring by neighbors who already follow common sense rules but currently have to be vigilant of these disruptive and potentially dangerous behaviors not uncommon in renters. We should not have to be responsible for the safety of our own neighborhood from incoming renters that solely benefit the financial pockets out of town owners.

Obviously, ratting on renters exposes residential neighbors to retaliation by being recognized by renter offenders ...who else could it have been who complained??

For people who live quietly alone, who are older and retired, or for young families that live respectfully in our residential neighborhood and communities to have to confront these renters is grossly unfair and obviously dangerous.

We need to recognize the truth of what is already occurring and see with open eyes the resulting gutting of our communities and quality of life due to vacation rental businesses in residential communities. None of us could have expected the type of rampant growth that has happened in vacation rentals.

I personally would not now want to buy a home in a neighborhood that has been overrun by vacation rentals unless I planned to rent it. It is a poor choice for a peaceful and connected neighborhood.... A select few people and businesses will be profiting from this growing transition to dominantly tourism and it is not the full time residents.

But for those who could now be restricted from applying for a new permit for their own home it would be unfair also..if rules did change to limit and a current un permitted resident planned to market for sale, their value would plummet. Not only would they be not allowed to sell their home as a business venture for a vacation rental as their already permitted neighbors have one, but they would be limited to marketing their home to people who very doubtfully would want to buy in an area that is already consumed by vacation rental businesses.

The current free for all for vacation home permits in residential areas has to stop and serious thought must be considered to change zoning and create zoned areas strictly for the purpose of the vacation business industry ,which is an important business.

The fulltime and voting residents of these communities are being completely overlooked and treated unfairly by those who live off Island and those who operate these vacation rental businesses. And we must remember that these are businesses. At the very least there should be additional taxes for these businesses.

Gone are the days when vacationers stayed at parks and other vacation accommodations in areas that were designated for tourists, now they have been allowed to consume our residential areas .

We already know how this has adversely affected the ability of people who live and work here to be able to afford homes as well as other costs. And this is a devastating effect now and in will worsen in the future.

Unless we all plan on repurposing Orcas Island to now be primarily a tourist destination with little concern for the residents , we must find a better solution or we will be choosing a terrible loss of community continuity and connection that has already begun.

An honest, truthful and realistic tally of just exactly what this means for the future financial impact on this Island is desperately needed now. Especially if there were an economic change or any other event that caused the tourism industry to take a downturn. And we know that this can happen.

There are possible solutions for what is happening now.

Perhaps revisiting the idea of past tourist facilities elsewhere and development of new accommodations in areas specifically zoned for campgrounds and tourist facilities is necessary.

Most definitely by looking at other communities who have succeeded in coming up with solutions to the high risk path we are currently on, is one idea.

I have researched just a few and have found that there are some excellent and fair solutions that not only allow for continued tourism, but also protect the integrity of residential communities .I am sure that there are others that need to be researched.

One such location is a property that was a previously abandoned commercial greenhouse facility that was repurposed into a tiny house community, that in addition has wonderful facilities now for tourists. <https://tinytranquility.com/>

This makes me wonder why taxpayer and community funded properties here on Orcas Island that have been purchased for the purpose of housing could not also include areas for some of these very charming tiny houses (which are temporary and on wheels) for the accommodation of incoming tourists.

This also locates them in areas that can be policed easily and makes access to amenities (shops, cafes..etc) for tourists much easier also. Perhaps this could make these tourist destinations more delightfully walkable and create less traffic problems as well.

Surely there are other solutions that will also accommodate growing tourism, allowing for businesses to thrive without gutting our small hamlets and neighborhoods. There are communities elsewhere that have successfully adopted new strategies to resolve these issues.

It is proving to be disruptive and destructive to continue to allow vacation rentals to destroy the integrity of our residential communities and we must continue a moratorium until fair solutions can be found.

Thank you so much.

Annie B. Crane