

## Sophia Cassam

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**From:** Dana Knutson <danaknutson1@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 22, 2021 11:58 AM  
**To:** Council Public Comment  
**Subject:** vacation rental moratorium

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Dear City Council, my partner and I fell in love with the Islands as kids boating with our respective families. As adults we had hoped to buy a boat and explore the islands together. In 2014 we bought a fixer on SJI that had been vacant since 2008. It was abandoned during construction due to the financial crisis, and a neighborhood eyesore. At the time we were told that we could rent our home short term and that many islanders do especially during the holidays to support being able to live in such a beautiful place. We were excited to have a place to share with friends and family and the ability to rent and make it affordable for us so we bought it....the money pit.

We embarked on a long 3 year journey to make our home a nice addition to the neighborhood. We renewed expired permits. We applied for new permits. We followed all new and local building codes. We hired all local contractors. We worked tirelessly on our home even through illness. We were good neighbors.

Upon completion we applied for a short term rental permit in the hopes of being able to re-coup the extraordinary costs of building on an Island and medical bills and still be able to enjoy it ourselves. We were given conflicting information about needing a permit or not and decided to withdraw our application based on what we were told and our permit fee was refunded. We proceeded to have a few guests before a notoriously difficult neighbor complained about "loud laughing" on the deck and short term renters. Ironically at the time of the complaint we were the ones there with our family enjoying our own home! We had rented previously though and learned we did need a permit so we paid our fine and removed our short term listing. We were in the wrong.

Another complaint was made by our neighbor while we were on Island having Cynthia (Cynthia's Bistro) and her family over for dinner and we were served papers again! This time it was because our neighbor didn't recognize the cars in the driveway and thought we had short term renters! We had to prove our innocence and were told we were being "watched" since we had rented short term prior. We were asked to provide all makes and models of cars that belonged to us to avoid this issue again. We complied.

Cynthia's nephew is my daughters boyfriend. He and his crew were hired to build affordable rentals on the Island. They couldn't find an affordable place to rent let alone any place to rent, so we rented our 3bed/3 bath waterfront home to them for studio prices which didn't even cover our own monthly expenses. We came up to the Island less than a dozen times in the 14 months they were renting. The first time we came up we had another complaint of renting short term and operating a separate ADU! Again we were having to prove our innocence and have our home inspected! Our home was inspected and again we were exonerated.

Then our neighbor began complaining about us having long term renters. No noise after dark. Dogs must be leashed at all times. No walking on "her" beach.

She was even caught walking around on our deck several times and finally caught on camera throwing dog feces at our front door?!?! Our renters both short and long term were harassed by our neighbor for just being there!

In Jan 2021 we decided to pursue the short term rental permit process again now that our tenants are winding down their project here on SJI. We learned this was possible as long as we disconnected from town water, installed a water

tank and bought hauled water. The premise being that water on the Island is a dwindling resource and needs to be conserved. Made sense until we learned the hauled water came from the town!!! I highly doubt that's even legal?!?! Having both short term renters and long term renters we can prove that more water was consumed when we had our longterm renters. We also looked into adding an ADU which would help with the lack of affordable housing for Islanders and still allow us to enjoy our home. Now a moratorium on that has been placed as well. And now the council is complaining about an overrun of tourism? Tourism supports your local businesses. And most of the tourists that do come to the Island are boaters which use your water and don't pay taxes.

We have come to realize that "Islanders" in general do not like second home owners. They want the Island for themselves. Unchanged. We fell in love with SJI in 2014. The natural beauty, the wildlife, the slower pace of life, the quaint shops. We had hoped to retire here someday. We pay our taxes, we hire locals, we are good neighbors. We take our friends and family to local eateries and shops and as hosts we promoted many Island businesses and encouraged guests to patronize those establishments. We support the Island economy. We love the Island, and we want to be able to afford the house we built and share it with our friends and family. We want to provide lodging for those that don't own boats or homes here so they too can explore the Island and support local establishments. I believe there is a way to have short term rentals thru-out the Islands and still maintain the beauty of our Island for locals and visitors alike.

Thank you,  
Mike and Dana  
3051 Pear Point Road

Sent from my iPhone