

## Adam Zack

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**From:** Leith Templin <leithtemplin@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 19, 2021 3:47 PM  
**To:** Vacation Rental Comments  
**Subject:** letter to planning commission  
**Attachments:** Planning. Comm.ltr.August 19.docx

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August 19, 2021

Dear Planning Commission,

I would like to thank all of you for spending so much time on behalf of our county. You all dedicate a tremendous amount time and energy to do the work that it takes in being a planning commissioner.

I know how hard it is to sift through all the information that is before you. I caution you and hope that you can sort out the important information and facts from the emotional pleas.

These are strange times and there are many angry people around that want to blame something for the state of our county, nation, and world. It is very evident, that is what is happening here. People want to blame something on the lack of housing and workers for businesses among other things. Unfortunately, VRs were an easy target. With all the emotional testimony that has been given I hope that you can keep the focus on the facts. Most of the claims made against VR's have been negated from water to environmental issues. I participated in all the "open conversations workshops" held on Orcas. It was far from being an open conversation and exchange with a bias on how bad vacation rentals are and how they are ruining our island. There was a definite agenda. You have heard recently all the conversations about trying to save Orcas Highlands from any more VR's. This appears to be coming from one residence who has the ear of a council person. The HOA board for this community does not support their claim and in fact at the last hearing examiner hearing, for two vacation rentals permits, which I listened to, there was not one public comment either at the hearing or received by the planning department concerning the request for those two new permits. You would think that if this was such a huge concern somebody out of the 100+ single family residence would have said something.

Now you have been given some real facts to look at. VRs represent less than 3% of the housing stock in SJC. In my opinion, what has had a major impact on the county's housing issues are two things 1) the comprehensive plan update in 2000 and the installation of high-speed internet.

Here is what I think and hope you will agree with. Our housing issues are not caused by Vacation Rentals alone (or maybe at all). Yes, housing is a very real problem and we as a community need to come together and address it. Not until we stop blaming any one situation and truly come to together for the sake of the community and not our own personal agendas will we be able to solve these problems that are so glaringly in front of us.

When the comprehensive plan went into effect. San Juan Island stepped up and addressed and built many affordable housing units. Orcas did not. For Orcas it was a NIMBY "Not in my backyard" and the "beauty police" that slowed to a stop additional affordable housing as well as resorts and the like be built. The town of Friday Harbor has many more "rooms for rent" than Orcas so of course Orcas has more VR's. Orcas does not have nearly as many suites, hotels, motels, or apartments. The county now allows ADU's to be built in the rural areas but on a lottery system. The Adu's were built to be affordable housing for working people, mother-in-law apartments or caregiver accommodations. The availability of high-speed internet has changed the island in many ways. People could have blamed high speed internet but since most residence are enjoying that service the Vacation Rental situation was a much easier target.

If you do decide to recommend a cap, please give it a wide birth until we can gather better information on the current ones that we have. When you do address the regulations, please make a distinction between people that are renting a room inside their home, a separate unit where the owner is on site and the house that is just rented with no one on

site. Set a maximum number of guests per house size and that no events take place in regular house rentals in neighborhoods. Any event from 10+ people for family gatherings, reunions to weddings need to have an event permit  
Thank you for your time today,  
Leith Templin  
Orcas Island  
4<sup>th</sup> Generation San Juan County

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

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