

P.O. Box 706 • Stinson Beach • California • 94970
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July 24, 2018

Supervisor Dennis Rodoni
Marin County Civic Center
3501 Civic Center Drive, Room 329
San Rafael, CA 94903

Dear Supervisor Rodoni,

The Stinson Beach Village Association (SBVA) circulated to its members and discussed in its July 7, 2018 meeting the draft ordinance establishing certain requirements for short term rentals in unincorporated Marin County, which will be the subject of a public hearing before the Board of Supervisors on July 31, 2018.

In summary, we believe it's a start, but agree that it largely ignores the devastating effects the unregulated conversion of long term rentals to short term rentals has had on Stinson Beach and the other communities in unincorporated West Marin. In our community, long term rentals are now practically nonexistent, denying affordable housing to individuals and families and forcing many to leave. The consequences have been profound, among which are the loss of hundreds of registered voters, the loss of students attending the local school district, the lack of housing for local business employees who now face long commutes, as do employees and volunteers who staff our fire department and emergency services.

As stated in the Marin County LCP Land Use Plan, Amendment 1, Section C-SB-1, adopted by the Board of Supervisors on April 21, 2018:

Community Character of Stinson Beach. Maintain the existing character of residential, small-scale commercial and visitor-serving recreational development in Stinson Beach. New development must be designed to be consistent with community character and protection of scenic resources.

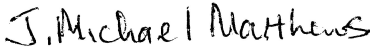
It's a stretch to think how largely unregulated conversion of long term to short term rentals supports this goal, considering the extent to which it has eroded our community character and quality of life for the permanent residents who remain.

How does the County hope to maintain the residential character of our village if it allows property owners to operate what are, in effect, hotels in residentially zoned areas? Some incorporated cities in Marin, e.g. Tiburon and Sausalito, realizing the threat to the “residential character” of their cities, have enacted ordinances restricting short term rentals to not less than 30 days. Other California coastal towns, such as Los Angeles, Santa Cruz, and Carmel have similar ordinances. And Carmel, in deference to its permanent residents, enforces a noise curfew of 9:00 p.m. for short term renters: 10:00 p.m. for residents. Santa Monica requires the property owner—not a just a “permanent resident” as Marin County requires for operators of bed and breakfasts—to live on the property during a renter’s stay, obtain a business license, and pay a 14% occupancy tax to the city. Even large cities that are popular tourist destinations, e.g. New York, Berlin, Paris, Amsterdam, and Copenhagen, severely restrict the number of days in the year a residential property can be made available as a short term rental in an effort to preserve their “community character.”

Considering the income generated by short term rentals of less than a month with no limits on annual availability in unincorporated Marin that is benefiting property owners, rental managers, and adjunct support business, and the revenue collected by the County from TOT taxes and license fees, we are not hopeful that the County will put any meaningful restrictions on short term rentals or aggressively defend preserving the rural atmosphere of our village, a prime goal of the SBVA as stated in the Stinson Beach Community Plan. We do, however, hope the Planning Department and the Board of Supervisors will give serious consideration to adopting the modest changes we are proposing to some of the provisions in the draft ordinance being considered in the July 31, 2018 hearing. Those suggested changes appear in underlined, italicized text in the body of the attached draft ordinance.

Thank you sincerely for your time and consideration of our concerns,

J. Michael Matthews


Vice President, Stinson Beach Village Association

Attachments: (1)

cc: Damon Connolly
Katie Rice
Kate Sears
Judy Arnold
Brian Crawford
Jack Leibster
Jeremy Tejirian
Rhonda Kutter