



Planning Department <planning@amadorgov.org>

FW: Concerning the new ordinance for short term rentals

1 message

Francesco Indrio

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To: "planning@amadorgov.org" <planning@amadorgov.org>

Greetings.

My wife and I participated in the meeting of last week concerning the new proposed ordinance regulating short term rentals. We participated because we offer our home for weekend rent occasionally. Our rentals are exclusively for small groups and we do not host events, parties or weddings. Our home is a peaceful retreat and our neighbors have never complained about our guests and we have a high rate of returning guests. We rent for a maximum of 50 nights a year. Our survival does not depend on this activity, but it allows us to cover the expenses of maintaining the property in above average conditions and developing it for agricultural uses. We employ a person almost full time to maintain the property and we offer his family living quarters on our property in partial exchange for his work, as allowed by California state rules. We love our home and since we bought the property in 2010 we have expanded from 20 acres to 50, we have planted a 2 acre vineyard and restored a small 250 plant vineyard that had been abandoned by previous owners. We planted 150 olive trees and we produce both wine and olive oil with the help and teachings of professionals from Shenandoah valley. We have added a solar system to our main residence and we keep the place very clean with the help of goats and donkeys that we raise.

We left the meeting with the feeling that everybody involved had an uncommon sense of community (we live in the Bay area, where politics are very much like science fiction anymore) and with the feeling that really all the people involved wanted the best for the community and did not have personal agendas involved in the discussion. That said, though, the whole idea of creating an ordinance simply because of a few bad apples that cannot be controlled by existing laws seems to be overkill and seems to fly in the face of some of the main reasons why people love Amador County and the people living in it. If the police cannot protect the public peace with existing laws, I don't see how an ordinance that is completely restrictive and tries to go into details of people's lives in a way that is hard to control and/or verify, leave alone, enforce. The beauty of the people of Amador county and neighboring areas is that there is a sense of live-and-let-live that is not regulated by paternalistic legal measures, but is regulated by ancient rules of good neighborhood, which are enforced just by communal living, and only in some extreme cases, by the law. Once you start telling people how to live their life the slippery slope starts that has brought many parts of California to become contentious, unfriendly, lawsuit crazy and plain idiotic.

One of the elements that seemed to come out is that if you regulate or restrict the short term rentals based on a broad set of rules that have to be vague in order to cover all the possibilities, you will effectively cut off the livelihood of many of the people that were at the meeting: from the person who has a tiny operation set up in an RV, that allows him to live the agricultural life without starving, to the person who invested many thousands of dollars preparing to rent for short term and now can't do it anymore, or finds himself/herself out of the possibility to use the investment they made and could go out of business. By doing this you will possibly turn our area in to one of those suburban areas that are not alive anymore, but where people can "afford" to live by activities that they have somewhere else. An area where gentrification by outside people (like we could be considered) will effectively kill the life the area had before, bringing in a bunch of entitled people who only care about their retirement peace and comfort because they do not have to make a living locally.

Also, parts of the ordinance, like the prohibition of hot tubs (because they can "encourage noise"), the requirement to have a person in the house when you rent (when a guest family certainly has nothing to do with the caretakers or owners), or the counting of people per bedrooms (people with kids know that they use all kinds of places to fall asleep in), all these attempted rules are really quintessential attempts at micromanaging life's spontaneity and they can only kill the very values of living in the country in or around Amador county.

The actual presentation of the ordinance was very flawed because it was very hard for people who wanted to attend the meeting to even find it and read it before the meeting. I am sure that if this information was more available and widespread, a lot more people would have showed up for that meeting and probably for the next. I really hope that in the near future and before you make any final and irreversible decisions, more discussion will be encouraged and more voices will be heard. Personally I will distribute my opinion and your ordinance in my neighborhood to hear what my neighbors think about it, and what the general consensus is.

I also hope that you will keep the people interested in this subject updated on the next occasions to participate in the discussion and the democratic system.

One final thing, we collect and remit to Amador County 10% Transient Occupancy Tax. To date, our small operation has contributed almost \$20,000. It would be interesting to know how much money is collected from all short term rentals in the county. It stands to reason that IF the proposed ordinance goes in to effect, there will be increased costs of in terms of inspections, licensing, enforcement etc. Some, like us, would likely stop the short term rentals altogether. More costs with less revenue is certainly something that should be taken into consideration.

Sincerely,

Francesco and Becky Indrio