



The voice of our community

October 14, 2015

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Cecilia Brown, Chair
Santa Barbara County Planning Commission
J' Amy Brown, Chair
Montecito Planning Commission
123 E. Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Re: Short-Term Vacation Rental Ordinance, Planning Commission
Hearings of November 4 and 18, 2015

Dear Commissioners:

As a community organization dedicated to preserving the semi-rural residential character of Montecito, we ask that you direct staff to prepare ordinances that prohibit the short-term rental (less than 30 days) of properties located within residential zones. As documented in our survey of the community, and in the long history of complaints to our office, short-term rental of residential properties adversely affects residential neighborhoods. The explosion in the marketing of residences in our local community, county, state and across the country further compels this community to move forward now to clarify applicable zoning ordinance provisions.

In late October 2014, the Montecito Association conducted a survey of Montecito residents on the topic of short-term vacation rentals. The survey link went to approximately 1200 current and past Montecito Association members. We received 300 responses. Of particular note is that a substantial number of people said activities of a vacation rental in their neighborhood had impacted their daily life. When asked how they were affected, most responses were related to noise, including loud parties, increased traffic and parking congestion. The survey results are available on the Montecito Association website for anyone who is interested.

For years, the Montecito Association has fielded complaints from residents regarding short-term vacation rentals that have adversely affected the enjoyment of their home. Unfortunately, since about 2007, there has been no recourse because the County stopped enforcing ordinance provisions that disallow transient occupancy of dwellings. This effort needs to be carried forward to address the current state of ambiguity in ordinance interpretation.

Please clarify the existing prohibition on transient occupancy of residential dwellings by developing ordinance language that clearly prohibits rentals of less than 30 days and include provisions that establish effective enforcement of that prohibition. This is the only approach that will meet the intent of the residential zone in Montecito to "protect the residential characteristics of an area and to promote a suitable environment for family life." It is also consistent with the ordinance limitation on accessory uses in residential zones to those that "do not involve a commercial enterprise on the site."

We look forward to working with the County on these ordinances to protect residential neighborhoods and develop clear criteria for expedited and meaningful enforcement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cindy Feinberg". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cindy Feinberg, President