From: kaylin bettinger
To: CD STRComment
Subject: Focus on housing affordability
Date: Friday, August 28, 2020 3:24:25 PM

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Dear Chelan County Commissioners,

I want to thank you for taking on the important and difficult task of creating clear regulations around nightly rentals in Chelan County. I live in Leavenworth and I see firsthand the tension between the economic benefits of short-term rentals and the problems they cause, including lack of affordable housing and bad neighborliness.

I support restricting the number of short-term rentals in our county. I encourage the commission to put meaningful deadlines in place to ensure that the percentage of STRs drops to 5% or less on a specific timeline.

I have observed that throughout this process, the concerns around housing affordability have largely been left out of the conversation, or considered secondary to other issues like unruly partiers and bad neighborliness. I encourage the commissioners to consider that housing affordability has a huge impact on the vibrancy of the community, and more weight should be given to the affordability picture.

An example is the proposed short-term rental task force, which is outlined in Attachment C in the draft county code. It is suggested that the task force should be made up of short-term rental owners, other area homeowners, county commissioners and county staff.

If the commission was looking at the short-term rental issue through the lens of housing affordability, other groups would be involved in this task force. Local renters would be invited to participate, since they struggle to find housing due to insufficient housing stock caused by a high number of nightly rentals. Local employers, like the school district or hospital would be involved. These employers often struggle to maintain a workforce due to lack of housing for their employees.

The makeup of the taskforce should be remedied to include those who are impacted by the lack of affordable housing due to nightly rentals. But more importantly, the commissioners should recognize that they are not giving enough weight to housing affordability in every step of this conversation. It’s important to listen to the residents who are fed up with living next door to party houses, but the commissioners have an obligation to consider community members who are being even more heavily impacted: the renters and local employers who cannot find housing due to the housing units in our county being used as short-term rentals instead of long term.

Thank you,

Kaylin Bettinger

Chelan County resident, 98826