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March 2, 2020

To: Mayor Murillo and City Council
Re: 3/3/20 Council Agenda, Item #15
City Prosecutor Enforcement Update

Dear Mayor Murillo and Council Members,

Allied Neighborhoods Association is very appreciative of the October 2019 City Prosecutor Enforcement Overview and meeting the Attorney's Office enforcement team that's now in place. We look forward to Tuesday's Enforcement Update.

In October Mr. Calonne reminded Council short-term vacation rental enforcement has been part of their enforcement portfolio since 2015 - and a current enforcement priority. On Tuesday Allied is expecting an update on the 248 open vacation rental cases from October, and hopefully an update on any other new cases from the enforcement team's proactive work in this area.

Allied wants to go over some basic information. As you know, there are multiple zoning areas where short-term vacation rental (STR) businesses are an allowed use (basically all zones where transient occupancy/hotel use is allowed - which includes commercial zones, the R-MH multi-unit residential/hotel zone and M-C, manufacturing/commercial zone) - and business proprietors need to obtain a permit to operate and remit TOT. We also have three residential zoning areas where STRs are NOT an allowed use; those residential zones are all single family zones, R-2 and R-M.

In 2015 the State certified our most recent Housing Element. This Housing Element has a chapter on Housing Challenges, which includes a section on Vacation Rentals that says STRs "pose a housing challenge because they decrease available long-term housing opportunities for local residents as well as contribute to the increase in housing costs." It also says the trend of converting owner occupied and rental units to STRs has become quite popular, especially in destination communities such as Santa Barbara - and that STRs in SB have become common, especially in residential zones. (although, as mentioned above, only allowed in certain zones)

A quick visit online reveals hundreds of illegal (i.e., unpermitted) short-term vacation rentals currently being advertised and operating in the City of Santa Barbara. We need to continue to enforce our Zoning Ordinance (as to location of STRs, and permitting), respect our residential neighborhoods and zoning where STRs are not allowed, prioritize housing over losing any existing housing to unpermitted STR transient occupancy businesses, and continue enforcement as a priority. Additionally, this must be considered a housing strategy to free up additional housing units and help ease the shortage.

Sincerely,
Allied Neighborhoods Association

P.S. As we mentioned back in October, enforcement of housing health and safety violations are important; our housing needs to be safe for all occupants. Additionally, we can't afford to lose housing units through neglect.

cc: Ariel Calonne
Denny Wei
Paul Casey
George Buell
Renee Brooke