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Land Use Consulting - Permitting Assistance - Project Management - Feasibility & Project Analysis

City of Bandon  
Attn: Planning Commission  
Planning@cityofbandon.org

Re: 22-120 Vacation Rental (VRD) Ordinance Amendment – Public Comment

Bandon Planning Commissioners,

Please accept this letter as public comment for the pending ordinance amendment concerning Vacation Rental Dwellings. I am compelled to share my concerns with you, as a land use professional and former city planner for the City of Bandon.

I urge you to explore whether the policies you are helping to create can be effectively *enforced*, and consider what unintended consequences these policies will have on the community. VRDs are a small but important part of Bandon's economy. They provide residents with a myriad of employment opportunities that may otherwise not exist. They are a significant source of revenue for the local government. Although their impact on neighborhoods may be high at times, their impact on the community is low in comparison to other types of tourist accommodations (hotels/motels).

Based on historic planning department reports, VRD applications are a negligible part of staff's workload. Historical police department and code compliance reports also indicate that VRDs have a minimal impact to their case loads, despite 'property crime' being listed as the highest factor in Bandon's community crime rating. Since occupied houses are less likely to be victimized, a different approach to regulating VRDs could benefit not only the community's crime rating, but could also be a potential long-term cost savings in community policing. These departmental reports indicate that the City is neither flooded with new VRD applications, nor struggling to manage a barrage of complaints about existing VRDs.

Recent Census data lists a large number of vacant homes inside Bandon's city limits at values substantially higher than Bandon's affordable or workforce housing targets. These vacant properties will not influence the community's housing needs, and they contribute almost nothing to the local economy in their vacant states, but they are untapped Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) revenue potential if they were able to become VRDs. Rather than continuing to regulate VRDs to death, biting the proverbial hand that feeds the City, consider:

- (1) Creating an alternate Administrative (Type II) approval process that is dependent on neighborhood participation and consent, rather than overcomplicated saturation

calculations.

- (2) Utilizing the existing Quasi-Judicial (Type III) approval process only for properties that cannot obtain Type II approval, and add requirements for neighborhood participation and consent.
- (3) Adopting a penalty for violating the VRD ordinance that encourages long term compliance, separate or in alignment with what already exists in BMC 1.16.
- (4) Clearly defining application requirements in your VRD ordinance and use the elements of the application to enforce the ordinance. (Ex: a required safety features checklist, an agreement to post licenses, etc.)
- (5) Eliminate the administrative issue of determining a property's VRD eligibility and/or status by allowing the VRD Conditional Use Permit to once again 'run with the land', with a required annual reinstatement fee. Or create a permit expiration that is based on a recorded sale of the property, which is public record, rather than redefining what is an 'owner'.
- (6) Not limiting the number of VRDs an individual or entity can own or operate in Bandon, unless this regulation will apply to other types of permitted tourist accommodations and commercial uses in the CD-1, CD-2, CD-3, and C-3 zones.

VRDs are costly, long-term investments for a large majority of property owners and the TOT's they generate benefit the community as a whole. Property owners go to great lengths to satisfy not only Bandon's land use regulations, but also the local health department, State Fire Marshal, and other agencies tasked with minimizing liability and protecting interests.

Rather than taking the overly regulatory approach, consuming more of the City's limited resources and compounding administration and enforcement issues; why not focus on what is known about the 99% of compliant VRDs and amend the ordinance to better suit the community as a whole, based on available data, the documented economic needs of the community, and the public interest before you.

Respectfully,



Megan Lawrence  
Owner  
South Coast Consulting LLC