



Ben Rough

From: John Willett <johnwillett@embarqmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 06, 2015 8:54 AM
To: Perry Huston; Ben Rough; Ray L. Campbell
Cc: Jim and Janet Gregg; 'Maggie Coon'; karen reneau; bcharlton@sunmountain.com; Bill Pope; geoff childs; monica bernhard; Vicki Miniajluk; Winthrop Inn
Subject: 2015 Okanogan County Zoning Laws 5.15
Attachments: 2015 Okanogan County Zoning Laws 5.15.doc

Perry, Ben and Ray,

Please consider these suggestions and the many talks, calls and emails I have had with you over the past years about a new Zoning Ordinance for Nightly Rentals for the County.

Opening up all lands to Nightly Rental possibilities, if I heard Planning's ideas to fix this Nightly Rental problem right, will not support our County's rural character, which we rely on for our business model and economy.

We all agree that we need to fix this. Ray knows the problem, as his daughter struggled with the loose legalities and home owners years ago when she was Central Reservations.

We need to fix this and the rewrite of the Zoning Codes for the Comp. Plan is the perfect time.

Happy Trails,
John Willett
Methow Valley Lodging Association, VP

2015 Okanogan County Zoning Laws Reviewed and Updated

Ref: Nightly Rental Ordinances

You probably are aware that Okanogan County is now redoing its zoning laws. One of the long standing problems with the old zoning laws was with Nightly Rental permitting. Currently there are over 80 in Methow with 75% not Permitted by OKCO Planning because they basically have no permitting process. OKCo Health has a permitting process, but the two Depts. do not exchange information. Consequently, a NR can be permitted without a review or notification to anyone, besides OKCo County Health.

This has led to many abuses including: 1) Renting without a Health Permit, 2) Turning Planned Developments in residential zones into Motels 3) No voice for neighbors in residential zones in the permitting process 4) No checks on a owner paying their taxes, including the Hotel/Motel taxes that help pay for improvements to our local infrastructure for tourism 5) unfair competition with legal tourist accommodations like Hotels, Motels, Bed and Breakfasts and legal Nightly Rentals.

The Okanogan Planning Dept's idea now is to fix this problem by opening up all lands in the County to Nightly Rentals in its new zoning ordinances, making NR's attainable as a "non-conforming use" through the "conditional use" permitting process. Just last year a Planned Development Permit for a Nightly Rental on land that was non-compliant with the PD codes was given to a land owner in Mazama by Planning/Hearing Examiner, though the neighbors and the Community objected to this happening in this residential area. Giving OkCo staff strict rules to follow when permitting, looking at this resent action, is a good idea for communities, neighbors and business if you want rules to be followed and rural areas preserved. Tourist come here to experience the ruralness of our area. People come here to live because of the ruralness. Turning the valleys and hills into spotty Motel development and subjugating the rules is not good for the overall business atmosphere and attracting tourist to our area.

The current zoning rules only allow NR's in Planned Developments. Here, it was thought, the Home Owner Association (community) can decide whether to allow NR's or not. The only change that would be required to keep PDs from turning into Motels in residential areas would be to limit NR ownership to one unit per owner (partner or family member) per Planning zone or PD. Nightly Rentals were set up in this County in the 1990's to offer homes periodically to the public for rent. Hotels, Motels B&Bs cannot offer a place for families to congregate in a home/family atmosphere. This was set up as a Cottage Industry, not a commercial enterprise. This attitude should be reflected in the new Zoning Ordinances.

Requirements for: UBI tax disclosure, obtaining Planning and Health permits should be in the ordinance. Time lines for compliance, civil penalties and loss of licensing for non-compliance should be included.

Requiring a SEPA review should be re-implemented and required for all Nightly Rentals.

One owner/one Nightly Rental in a PD or Planning zone should be mandated.

Community Advisory Committee review, its recommendations and approval given priority in permitting. The Planned Development ordinance and Zoning codes must also be strictly enforced.

Please consider these and contact your Commissioner and express your views and concerns if you don't want the valley's residential areas overrun by Motel like developments and Nightly Rentals everywhere.