

Suquamish Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Suquamish Elementary Library
January 3, 2019

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Tom Curley (Chairperson), Allen Jacobs, Laurie Kadet, Carol Larsen, and Kevin McDonald.

QUORUM: YES

OTHERS PRESENT:

County Staff: Jennifer Cannon (Commissioner Gelder's office), Tina Nelson (Kitsap County Public Works [KCPW] Senior Engineer) and Darren Gurney, DCD Planner

Community: Allen Haugen, Marty Harper, Marion Schoenbachler, and Deb Wolin (among many others there only for the Short-Term Vacation Rental presentation who did not sign in).

Other Governmental Partners: None were present

Public Comment: no public comments

PROCEEDINGS

Meeting began at 6:02 PM with the Short Term Vacation Rental presentation

December minutes were approved.

Meeting Core

Suquamish Police were not available for an update at this meeting.

Jennifer Cannon introduced herself, and proceeded with the PowerPoint presentation on Short Term Vacation Rentals [STVR]. There is a long history of people renting out rooms in their homes (boarding, home-sharing) though this can sometimes be for longer-term stays. STVR are residences offering temporary lodging for less than 30 days. With the advent of companies offering hosts convenient listing via the Internet, there's been a huge growth of STVRs in the last decade – a nationwide and international phenomenon. AirBnB and VRBO are examples of listing companies.

Noise, neighborhood character, parking, traffic, building safety (think motels and exit signage and smoke detectors) are all issues that come with STVR's, and those complaints are increasing. STVRs add to the limited pool of motel and hotel accommodations in the county and bring in tourist dollars. The current county policy is overly burdensome and unenforceable – the Kitsap County Board of Commissioners directed the policy team in

the Commissioners Office to update the policy to better reflect the reality of STVR's. The current policy treats STVRs like Bed and Breakfasts.

Kitsap County is very interested in input from all residents, from those who rent, to neighbors, to those who have rented. This is the very beginning of the process of updating county policy. Suquamish Tribal Council Chambers were standing-room-only, and it was a focused and passionate crowd. Those who provide the rentals believe they're providing a good and useful service and were fearful of over-regulation. Most of the STVR owners currently aren't registered with the county, and thus feel unregulated, and several voiced that they like being unregulated. Recently AirBnB added an automatic deduction to pay the lodging tax for the county and state; however, their internal policies could change and there are many other listing companies that do not do this.

Other comments from the public: few hotels in the region, AirBnB now requires insurance and licenses, regulations should be funded by taxes, STVR can change the nature of the whole neighborhood, regulations should mimic long-term rental regulations, bad actors (hosts and STV renters) should be identified, should consider a committee of hosts to help develop policies, make sure to record comments, an one-size-fits all regulation approach is worrisome, and the survey should ask about how much money is generated by the STVR. Questions from the attendees: why have outreach, will regulations cause STVR to shut down, what is the timeline, what are the long-term rental complaints, are STVRs affecting long-term rentals, are there policies to check backgrounds on tenants, couldn't complaints be addressed by existing regulations and on a case-by-case basis (also looking at listing companies), are there concerns about taxes not being paid, do other cities/comparable jurisdictions have policies, is this just another way to collect fees, will regulations maintain the character of the neighborhood, what do you tell someone that wants to start a STVR about the existing Conditional Use Permit, what can we do, and will survey be anonymous?

The county discussed how it is challenging to track where STVR's exist, and in some cases, neighbors complain about the lack of a contact person available to deal with problems quickly. At this point the county is collecting comments, with an online confidential survey, a paper comment form, and public meetings planned. A full report summarizing the comments and input received by the county will be released in March. Interested persons should sign up for the short-term vacation rental email list at: <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WAKITSAP/subscriber/new> and check the project website for updates: https://www.kitsapgov.com/BOC_p/Pages/STR.aspx. This meeting ran for about an hour. We took a 5-minute break, then resumed the SCAC meeting.

Roadside vegetation management for pedestrian safety in Suquamish, discussion led by Kevin McD: there are not many locations, but where there is vegetation creating a hazard, Kevin would like to see Kitsap County alert the homeowners that it's their responsibility. This is problematic in Suquamish due to the large number of rentals, with landlord living elsewhere, and that nothing has ever been done about it. Tom C suggested that perhaps

citizens could step in as vegetation vigilantes and do some pruning, but Kevin held firm that it should be Kitsap County that does enforcement of a nuisance ordinance. Tina Nelson, representing Public Works, reminded everyone that the right of way is an overlay on the underlying land ownership (in this case lot owners) and junior to lot ownership. It is the citizen's land out to the middle of the street right of way, thus they are responsible for maintaining it, though the county obviously maintains the roadway, but the county doesn't have 'right of way police'. If brush is overgrowing a stop sign, for instance, there is a safety hazard and that rises to the top of the list. If a tree is overhanging into the right of way, or blackberries are growing into it, the county process would be to notify those neighbors after a complaint is lodged. They are 'complaint driven.' Tom summarized by suggesting that a process could be to locate and prioritize each problem area, photograph it, note the address, then send that in through Kitsap1 and that complaint would trigger the county process. Sometimes owners don't have the tools to do the maintenance, and don't recognize there's a problem. Unlike a city that has ordinances that demand that homeowners bear responsibility, the county lacks that, though the underlying land ownership implies it – and it's needed, according to Tina, for rural areas of the county like Suquamish. Much of this could be solved by home-owner education. Bremerton has a door-hangar and informational pamphlet. Jennifer offered that Jon Brand (Public Works) suggested as a first step, refining the pamphlet, then mailing it out to a concentrated area (Suquamish). Tina suggested a resolution or ordinance on encroachment into the right of way isn't probably what the community wants. Perhaps a standard for the LAMIRD. Deborah suggested that would be a good first step, then move to an ordinance. Alan suggested doing a comparison with Seattle and Tacoma, and what their ordinances are. Kevin feels it is uncomfortable for a citizen to walk up and suggest a lot owner trim their foliage, thus it should be on the county. Kevin offered to lead the education effort, and work with Jennifer, who will work with Jon Brand. Kevin also suggested that the Suquamish LAMIRD is composed of rural regulations in an urban setting, with narrow 40' rights of way – into which telephone poles, on-street parking, pedestrians, kids on bike – all must co-exist, making full use of the right of way very important. Kevin will mark where line of sight issues present dangers, in addition to vegetation issues that crowd the right of way.

The annual Suquamish Open House will not happen this year due to lack of a coordinator.

Tom reminded everyone that the Hansville Transfer Station will be on slowdown due to a new floor being poured in the main facility down by the airport (Olympic View) from January 11 through February 5.

James Street Road End – Alan reported that gravel is needed, and a way is needed to get it down to the muddy section at the bottom. Alan and Allen strategized on how to do that. Tom reported that the Appendix X grant requires a 501(c)3 non-profit to handle the funds. Tom is working with the Suquamish Garden Club and will meet with them at their next meeting on February 20.

James Street Road End bollard – locked with a key lock, that Alan would like to move in order to get gravel farther down and out of the way.

Final public comment: A person showed up to give public testimony for the Short-Term Vacation Rental. She has a place in Lofall, and there's a large short-term vacation rental on a five acre lot with an owner who lives in New York. The rental house is often used for large, loud parties, weddings, and she wanted to protest the change in her neighborhood dynamics. She has called police, and they never come. It was suggested that since the county is 'complaint driven', that she should be a squeaky wheel and keep complaining to the county.

The meeting closed at 8:35 PM.

The next meeting will be on Thursday, December 6, 2017, at 6:00 p.m. at the Suquamish Elementary School Library, 18950 Park Ave NE, Suquamish.

Minutes submitted by: Recorder, Brian Albro

MINUTES APPROVED:

(Chairperson's Signature)

(Date)