

**INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, FLORIDA**

**M E M O R A N D U M**

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**TO:** Jason E. Brown; County Administrator

**FROM:** Stan Boling, AICP; Community Development Director

**DATE:** June 6, 2016

**SUBJECT:** Preliminary Update on the County’s Short Term Vacation Rental Regulations and Vacation Rental Permit Implementation

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It is requested that the data herein presented be given formal consideration by the Board of County Commissioners at its regular meeting of June 20, 2017.

**BACKGROUND**

At its meeting of June 21, 2016, the Board of County Commissioners (Board) concluded a comprehensive effort to develop regulations for short-term vacation rentals. At that meeting, the Board adopted special vacation rental regulations, established significant fines for vacation-rental violations, and adopted an application fee for a County vacation rental permit process that implements the vacation rental regulations. As part of its action at the June 21, 2016 meeting, the Board directed staff to provide a “progress report” a year after adoption of the new regulations (see Attachment 1).

Staff herein provides a preliminary update to the Board on implementation of the vacation rental regulations. In October 2017, one year after full implementation of the County’s vacation rental permitting program, staff will present a full evaluation in a format that will allow public discussion.

**ANALYSIS**

Although the Board adopted short-term vacation rental regulations on June 21, 2016, it took some months after adoption to fully implement the County’s vacation rental permitting program and to begin formally contacting owners/operators of suspected vacation rental units. After adoption of the regulations, staff worked to secure a contract with an outside service provider to identify and track internet advertisements for vacation rental units located in the unincorporated area of the county. After securing the contract, it took additional time to obtain and refine data on suspected units, to train code enforcement staff on inspection duties, and to develop listings and to begin mailing out letters to owners/operators of suspected units. Mail-out notices began in October 2016.

Based on refined data provided by the County’s service provider (iCompass/Host Compliance), staff broke-down suspected vacation rental units into three sub-geographic areas of the county: the south barrier island, the north barrier island, and the mainland. Staff then contacted each unit owner/operator to confirm the use of the unit and to prompt initiation of the permit process when applicable. To date, staff has found that, after staff contact, a significant number of owners/operators ceased advertising for short term rental periods (less than 30 days). As previously reported to the Board, the County’s service provider continuously tracks all internet advertisements, enabling easy monitoring of any advertisement changes. Also, to date a number of unit owners/operators have obtained or submitted for a County permit while others have been unresponsive and have been sent a notice of violation.

Since adoption of the commercial event prohibition in 2015 and the vacation rental regulations in 2016, complaints received by Code Enforcement for vacation-rental nuisances declined significantly. Staff’s focus now is on getting all short-term vacation rental units properly permitted. As of June 1, 2017, vacation rental unit statistics are as follows:

	<u>Total Suspected Units</u>	<u>Pulled/ Changed Ads</u>	<u>Obtained Permit</u>	<u>Permit Pending</u>	<u>Notice of Violation</u>
South Barrier Island	41	18	7	10	6
North Barrier Island	31	19	2	6	4
Mainland	67	48	3	10	6
<b>Total Unincorporated Area Total</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>16</b>

By October 2017, staff will have a full year of experience implementing the ordinance and will be in a better position to fully evaluate the effectiveness of the vacation rental regulations and implementation. Until then, staff will continue implementing the County’s vacation rental permit program and enforcing the short-term vacation rental regulations.

**RECOMMENDATION**

This is an informational item only; no Board action is required.

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Minutes from June 21, 2016 Board of County Commissioners Meeting
2. County Vacation Rental Permit Application (Includes Vacation Rental Regulations)
3. Vacation Rental Inspection Checklist
4. Spreadsheets for South Barrier Island, North Barrier Island, and Mainland Units