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Landlord group sues Pacific Grove over its short-term rental restrictions

By KELLY NIX

A GROUP of Pacific Grove homeowners are fighting back against the city over numerous restrictions it put into place to keep vacation rentals from causing problems for neighbors.

Last week, a group called the Short-Term Rental Owners Neighborhood Group of Pacific Grove filed suit against the city, its city council and mayor over changes the council made to the short-term-rental program in February.

The lawsuit, in part, targets the city’s cap on the number of properties eligible for short-term rentals and the institution of a lottery system that seeks to reduce the number of vacation rentals in Pacific Grove.

“The new ordinance would arbitrarily disregard, terminate and de-vest the existing rights and entitlements” of the owners of

short-term rentals, according to the lawsuit filed in Monterey County Superior Court.

The suit seeks a court order directing the city to rescind the ordinance that created the rental restrictions, and also asks the court to prevent the city from implementing the lottery system or “any action to impair, suspend, terminate or non-renew any transient use license currently in effect.”

Pacific Grove’s rules, the suit says, “unlawfully violate, deny and impair the fundamental vested rights of the petitioners and others lawfully using their properties for short-term occupancy and rentals.”

The lawsuit also names rental owners Joy Colangelo, Kevin Delaney, William B. Harder, Alka Joshi, Kathryn Kranen and Spencer Tall as plaintiffs. Palo Alto attorney David P. Lanferman filed the complaint on their behalf.

Pacific Grove City attorney David Laredo said he couldn’t comment on the complaint because the city had not yet been served, but he said Pacific Grove will fight the legal action. “The city council was unanimous in providing direction that city staff, and my office, vigorously defend the regulations it adopted to protect our citizens and to minimize impacts that can arise from inappropriately high densities of short-term rental properties,” Laredo told The Pine Cone.

Vacation rentals have come under scrutiny in Pacific Grove, where some neighbors say they cause parking problems, noise and other concerns. An anti-va-

See **LANDLORDS** page 17A



PHOTO/JACKIE EDWARDS

The City of Pacific Grove is now requiring vacation rental owners and managers to post signs like these on their rentals.

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LANDLORDS

From page 8A

vacation rental group — Pacific Grove Neighbors United — circulated a ballot initiative that seeks to phase out such rentals in residential neighborhoods outside the commercial and coastal areas of the city.

Although the Pacific Grove Chamber of Commerce and hoteliers oppose vacation rentals, proponents say they offer more affordable housing for tourists and provide nec-

essary revenue — about \$1 million per year — in taxes to the city.

The city is now requiring vacation-rental owners to place placards on their houses with the name and phone number of the “site manager,” which can be the homeowner or someone else responsible for managing the rental.

“The reason for this requirement is for neighbors, law enforcement staff, and/or any person having concerns about a short-term rental to have the owner’s or site manager’s contact information readily accessible on site,” city management analyst Haroon Noori told The Pine Cone.

RAMPS

From page 5A

pleted by Memorial Day.

And next week, MPE crews will start rebuilding ramps at Ocean Avenue intersections to ensure they meet ADA requirements, he said. Work will begin on the westbound side, running from Junipero to Monte Verde, and a total of 28 ramps will be rebuilt and surfaced with the hard, bumpy plastic now required by

the feds.

The complete repaving of Ocean Avenue — which is also called for in the contract — will be delayed until after Labor Day, however, since city officials want to avoid major disruptions during the busy summer months, according to Harary.

“We will want to keep our lines of communication open when work begins along Ocean Avenue, as this is the most challenging, and most impactful, portion of the whole paving project,” he said.

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