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INDEPENDENCE DAY "FAKE NEWS" COMES TO PALM SPRINGS
(<http://www.yesincludeme.com/blog/independence-day-fake-news-comes-to-palm-springs>)
7/9/2017
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A local campaigning group currently taking legal action against the City of Palm Springs, Protect Our Neighborhoods, has published "fake news" in its newsletter sent to local citizens.

The PON newsletter, sent out over Independence Day, alarmingly stated that:

The statistic of the evening: "1800"

That's the number of unpermitted STRs the city claims it discovered since January 1, 2017. We were incredulous to hear that 1800 number, and sought---and received---an email confirmation two days later. So with the 2100 permitted plus the 1800 unpermitted, our city has about **30%** of its housing stock engaged in the vacation rental business. What the city is doing about these scofflaws is anyone's guess. We continue to seek answers."

The problem is that this claim of eighteen hundred VRs without permits in Palm Springs is simply not true. Boris Stark, one of the officers in the City's new Department of Vacation Rental Compliance explained that it came about because of a mistake in one line of a Powerpoint presentation at a meeting held in mid-June, a mistake which was swiftly corrected and this correction is visible online at the City's website (<http://www.palmspringsca.gov/home/showdocument?id=53181>) which states:

SINCE JANUARY - INVESTIGATED OVER 1800 LEADS AND ADVERTISEMENTS FOR POTENTIAL UNREGISTERED VACATION RENTALS*

As Mr. Stark explained:

"What it should have said was that we have investigated over 1800 community leads and advertising websites of properties in the city of Palm Springs, **so there is to our knowledge no eighteen hundred unregistered vacation rentals in the city**, and I apologize for that but we have clarified it on our Powerpoint and have actually posted it on our website. Believe me, if there was eighteen hundred unregistered vacation rentals we would have wrote eighteen hundred tickets."

In other words, that line in the Powerpoint presentation, about which PON say they were incredulous, is a statement about the **volume** of investigative work the department has been doing, not the **results** of that work.

Despite PON saying they "sought and received confirmation", they published statements that were factually wrong. The meeting at which they viewed the presentation was held on June 20th. Their newsletter was sent out on July 3rd. They had nearly two weeks to get their facts straight, but they didn't. Perhaps they were too eager to get "confirmation" rather than to get the truth?

The quote above from Mr. Stark is just a small part of an interview I conducted with him recently which will be published here soon as part of an ongoing series of articles about the Vacation Rental "issue" in Palm Springs.



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Lucien Wolff

7/10/2017 02:54:53 pm

Thanks Jonathan....keep me appraised. I have specific thoughts on V.R.'s which I have verbalized to Judy as well as to the city. It has to do with responsible renting and a minimum of 7days. I am not for banning V.R.'s altogether as it is a huge source of income for many.
Lucien

Reply

Mark Owens

7/11/2017 06:03:40 pm

Your statement is ridiculous. I will post the email exchange. Indeed we were seeking confirmation from the city. They doubled down. If the city presents a power point and then is given an opportunity to rectify and not only doesn't bit answers questions about the methods employed, we did more than most. In turn, questions submitted to the city over a wide range of issues simply remain unanswered well beyond the 10 day requirement. The good news is that the average citizen will find the enforcement and unanswered questions to to my be more of the same from a city that finds its citizens

Yes, Include Me!...
The Blog
Things that affect
people in Palm Springs.

Author

The Yes, Include Me! blog, is written by Jonathan Freeman with love, curiosity and a dose of cynicism about Palm Springs and the people who try to run it for people who live here for whatever period that may be.

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to be difficult. Let's vote

Reply

Jonathan (<http://Yesincludeme.com>)

7/11/2017 09:32:56 pm

Mr. Owens I don't doubt that some exchange took place. But exactly what was said and how clear or definitive it was I know not. Therefore I look forward to receiving the relevant emails at your earliest opportunity.

However in the meantime the truth is that the Coty does NOT maintain that there are 1,800 unregistered VRs in Palm Springs nor indeed as of July 5th. when I interviewed a VR Compliance Dept. officer, that there are any at all. The reason why will become clearer once the article based on that interview is published.

Reply

Keith Crosley (<http://www.evillapalmsprings.com>)

7/27/2017 09:19:16 am

Hi Jonathan,

Just came across this article and I had nearly the identical conversation with Boris Stark at VRCD about this issue. Indeed, they had not intended to imply what they did (that there might be 1800 unregistered vacation rentals in Palm Springs).

This would, of course, be preposterous as there are 2067 registered right now and to nearly double that would nearly double call volume to the Vacation Rental Hotline and we'd see "a lot" more "not a vacation rental - VRCD investigating" type calls.

As it is, in the last 6 months we know of only 2 unregistered vacation rentals that were identified via calls to the Hotline. Most of these are identi

There's a bit of a weakness here in VRCD's reporting. The VRCD is not always able to fully investigate addresses that are not in the Vacation Rental Permits database before publication of each weekly report. Further, the VRCD has not yet published any follow-up about specific calls that were found to be "not a vacation rental" but where they were still following up. I've asked if they might do that on even just a quarterly basis, in the interest of "closing the loop" on these types of calls.

Speaking of: You might be interested in my most recent analysis of Hotline Call logs, which I've summarized in a nifty infographic. You can find a short article and links to that infographic here:

<https://medium.com/@ElrodVilla/vacation-rentals-in-palm-springs-4d4ac2efbbf1>

It's also available on our site here (but for some reason I've not quite been able to pin down, the mobile view of this page gets a little funky at times):

<http://www.evillapalmsprings.com/palm-springs-vacation-rentals-hotline-infographic.html>

Best Regards,
Keith

Reply

Keith Crosley (<http://www.evillapalmsprings.com>)

7/27/2017 09:41:22 am

... Whoops: didn't complete one of my thoughts: Was saying...

As it is, in the last 6 months we know of only 2 unregistered vacation rentals that were identified via calls to the Hotline. Most unregistered vacation rentals are instead identified by the efforts of VRCD. Specifically, Amanda there scours listings on the various VR listing sites (Airbnb, VRBO, etc.) checking for the presence of the TOT number and/or City ID number (these are required to be posted as an aid to the VRCD in identifying unregistered rentals).

I've discussed this at some length with her. She reviewed A LOT of listings in the first few month of the year and did issue quite a number of citations for "failure to post permit" numbers. It's much more common for her to find a registered rental which (for one reason or another) failed to have its TOT/ID number posted than it is to find an unregistered rental.

In a recent city press release about VRCD efforts, they mentioned 16 citations for "failure to register" having been issued (see <http://www.palmspringsca.gov/home/showdocument?id=51797>).

It took review of more than 1800 listings / reported addresses to identify these. (Basically what this means is that Amanda reviewed something like 85% of all vacation rental listings in Palm Springs for compliance with these regulations!)

Her own estimate for the number of unregistered vacation rentals operating in Palm Springs is that it is far, far less than 100. Of course, one can never get to 100% compliance with any ordinance, but VRCD is trying very hard to achieve it. Of homes that may be operating without a permit, her sense is these tend to be places that are only rented seasonally (such as folks who get out of town for festival season, their own vacation, or whatnot) and rent their place only at those times. So, they are quite hard to find as advertisements for them (listings on the various sites being the most common form of VR advertising) are not constantly live.

Sometimes these types of owners are simply unaware of the registration requirement (though it's hard to imagine how they could not). Some of them may be aware of the requirement but choosing to "take the risk".

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