



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 5/21/2024

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
Department or Agency Name(s): Permit Sonoma
Staff Name and Phone Number: Doug Bush, Planner III
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:

Ordinance Amending Civil Penalties for Vacation Rentals (Second Reading/Final Adoption)

Recommended Action:

Adopt an Ordinance amending Sonoma County Code Section 1-7.1 to modify civil penalties for unpermitted and unlicensed Vacation Rentals and find the ordinance does not constitute a project under CEQA or is otherwise exempt under Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) - Second Reading/Final Adoption.

Executive Summary:

On April 30, 2024, the Board of Supervisors held a public hearing and passed a resolution introducing, reading the title of, and waiving further reading of an ordinance to amend civil penalties for vacation rentals operating without required permits or licenses. This item is a second reading for final adoption of the ordinance.

Discussion:

Sonoma County requires Vacation Rentals to obtain a land use permit under Sonoma County Code Section 26-28-160 and a Vacation Rental license under Sonoma County Code Chapter 4 Article VIII. County regulations are critical to ensuring that Vacation Rentals operate in a manner that does not create a nuisance and maintains public health, safety, and welfare. Vacation Rentals operating without required permits or licenses are subject to a penalty of 10 times the normal application fees.

This ordinance amends County Code Section 1-7.1, modifying the penalty to instead allow a range from 3 to 10 times the application fee. This would allow staff to consider the relevant facts of the violation and assess the penalty accordingly. The penalties would range from approximately \$1,787 (3x license fee) to \$5,956 (10x license fee) for unlicensed vacation rentals, and \$4,245 (3x zoning permit and license fee) to \$14,150 (10x zoning permit and license fee) for operations without a zoning permit or license.

The Code Enforcement Division of Permit Sonoma develops internal protocols to apply penalties consistently and equitably by taking factors into consideration such as the operator's awareness of County requirements and history of past violations. When an operator receives a notice of violation, they may appeal the determination - typically within 10 days of the notice of violation. The appeal is then considered at an abatement hearing before a Hearing Officer consistent with abatement procedures specified in Sec. 1-7.3 of County Code.

This ordinance will go into effect 30 days after adoption.

Agenda Date: 5/21/2024

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Racial Equity:

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?

No

The Racial Equity Toolkit was not applied

Prior Board Actions:

April 30, 2024, the Board of Supervisors held a public hearing and passed a resolution introducing, reading the title of, and waiving further reading of the ordinance.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

N/A

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

1. VR Penalty Ordinance

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

None.