

Tuesday, July 12, 2005

## **Vacation rentals aren't worst offenders**

There is much talk about vacation rentals, but that is such a minor problem compared with all the other illegal residential rentals and illegal commercial businesses being conducted on residential property that the city has not cracked down on. These other illegal rentals and businesses are doing more damage to our residential neighborhoods than vacation rentals.

Look around -- almost every neighborhood suffers from illegal multifamily dwellings or apartments and illegal commercial activity, which have drastically changed its single-family character. There is now more congestion, overcrowding, long-term undesirables moving in, and the overall neighborhood declines, for there is no incentive to fix up and repair.

On the other hand, most vacation rental properties have been upgraded and cater to more upscale tenants, including local residents who prefer staying at vacation rentals on Oahu and on the neighbor islands. Since vacation rental properties are upgraded, adjacent properties join the trend and are fixed up and repaired. The neighborhood improves and so do the outlying areas. Look at Kailua, a once sleepy town that has been transformed into a vibrant community.

The city should redirect its efforts to cracking down on those illegal dwellings and commercial activities that really contribute to the decline of residential neighborhoods, and start supporting activities, like vacation rentals, that improve them.

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