

ISSUE #12 7/30/24

## Spotlight Story - Follow the Money



In 2020, Long Beach, CA Vice Mayor Allen revealed to *The Beachcomber* that she received STR income from an Airbnb and was classified as a "super host." In 2024, Allen is weighing in on STR enforcement issues and is curiously interested in the city ordinance overriding an HOA that wants to ban STRs.

In Issue #1 of Neighborhood Notes, we posted [this story](#) about a St. Louis alderman and key member of short-term rental hearings recusing himself from future meetings after local media uncovered he has properties listed on Airbnb.

Here in Long Beach, we're not as lucky. Earlier in the year, we discovered that our sitting Vice Mayor was once an Airbnb "superhost," and has failed to recuse on any legislative matters related to short-term rentals. We posted the video evidence [here](#) on our website (scroll to the bottom). Despite reaching out to many media outlets and the city's own Ethics Commission, nothing came of this obvious conflict-of-interest. We had to write our own local op-ed on the matter, which is the only media attention this received:

*In early 2020, Beachcomber reporter Stephen Downing reported extensively on the shady business dealings and questionable*

residency requirements of then City Council candidate Cindy Allen (*Anatomy of Campaign Fraud in Long Beach | Beachcomber*). Now our sitting vice mayor, questions about Ms. Allen's ethical behavior persist.

*In that report, Allen admitted to once using her Ocean Avenue condo for short-term rental income (garnering between \$10,000 and \$100,000 annually). Why is that relevant now? Following an Airbnb-related shooting at a College Estates home in January, the City Council was tasked to re-evaluate the existing STR ordinance put in place in 2020.*

*Instead of recusing herself from the discussion and coming clean about her connection with Airbnb, at the April 2 City Council meeting, Allen instead heaped praise on the short-term rental program and asked an oddly incriminating question to a city attorney about the city ordinance overriding an HOA's desire to restrict them.*

*Nowhere in the city's presentation nor the discussion about regulating STRs came up the topic of HOAs, yet Ms. Allen felt compelled to veer off into this topic.*

*Is Allen still operating an Airbnb out of her condo? And if so, why is she weighing in on legislation or enforcement procedures regarding short-term rentals? The city's own Ethics Commission states that a councilperson "will disclose all personal, financial, or professional interests or outside activities that may relate to or influence my role or official capacity."*

*Allen's role as an Airbnb operator (past or current) obviously shows a conflict of interest and quite possibly exposes the city's vested interest in short-term rentals, especially when neighboring cities in LA and OC continue to crack down on them, particularly those of the "un-hosted" variety which Allen admitted to once operate.*

*To think that our sitting vice mayor would not wield considerable power on this subject is naïve. Furthermore, the last census tract that attempted (and failed) to petition un-hosted STRs out of their neighborhood was in Allen's District 2. Maybe that's just a coincidence, but it would not be far-fetched to believe Allen had an influence on that petition's demise given her admitted prior status as a short-term rental operator.*

*Wherever one falls on the issue of unsupervised short-term rentals operating in residential neighborhoods, we should continue to demand transparency and honesty from our elected leaders. Unfortunately, in Long Beach, those two things are in short supply. Cindy Allen keeps proving the point.*

We share this as a reminder that many City governments are inherently corrupt and are covered by a local press core unwilling to call out such issues. Your municipality might be a "machine politics" type of town as well. Do you know if any members of your local City Council have owned or are current operators of short-term rentals? This factor could certainly impact the extent and nature of STR regulations in your area given the obvious bias such politicians and administrators harbor towards STRs. It's something to be vigilant of, and we recommend calling it out whenever you see it.



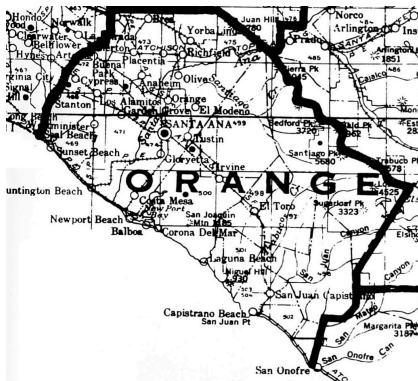
Airbnb is one of Gavin Newsom's top donors. It is any wonder that California is such a short-term rental friendly place? California Democrats march in lockstep with Newsom's policy demands.

On the issue of influence, it's easy to point to even higher levels of government which are swayed by short-term rental lobbyists. It is widely known that Airbnb is one of Gavin Newsom's top donors. These booking platforms have millions to throw around making campaign donations to corrupt (or easily-persuadable) legislators, city managers and councilpeople. Where are the lobbyists for residential neighborhoods? The closest ally might be the hotel unions, though they are obviously more interested in their own financial gain and pushing for higher worker wages. But even they can be found donating large sums of money to

the same politicians who support putting more STRs in local communities. Hotel union reps we've reached out to about this dichotomy refuse to respond.

Even in the "red state" of Tennessee, Airbnb wields a heavy hand to prevent more substantive regulation of short-term rentals. Read this [article](#). And [this article](#) does a fine job laying out the record spending Airbnb is putting into lobbying the federal government. STR platforms must know that the tide is turning against them, hence the increased spending to keep the gravy train going.

Nobody is saying fighting City Hall is an easy proposition, but knowledge is power. The more you know about how short-term rental legislation is influenced in your area, the better equipped you will be to tackle the issue.



## How Orange County is Grappling with STRs

The lay of the land in the OC, including a proposed ballot measure in Dana Point.

[READ ARTICLE](#)



## Yet Another Airbnb-Related Shooting

Woman shot, New Orleans rental ransacked after teen party.

[READ ARTICLE](#)



## Airbnb: Miami Vice Edition

An armed robbery where Airbnb tenants were caught dealing drugs. It's a Miami Vice episode come to life.

[READ ARTICLE](#)





## San Diego: An STR Disaster Zone

"It's great it's bringing revenue to the city, but it's taking 6,000 homes off the market. It's hurt our community. It's driven up rents."

[READ ARTICLE](#)



## City Creates Anonymous Online Portal to Report Problem STRs

Did Norfolk, Virginia stumble on to something?

[READ ARTICLE](#)



## South Carolina Airbnb Becomes Criminal Safehouse

Accused murderer found hiding out at a short-term rental.

[READ ARTICLE](#)

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## Podcast Episode #3 Has Dropped

# NIGHTMARE NEXT DOOR



**LONG BEACH  
SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD  
COALITION**

**THE PODCAST ABOUT SHORT-TERM RENTALS  
AND RESIDENTIAL FAMILY NEIGHBORHOODS**

Episode #3 of the podcast has arrived - you can listen [here on Spotify](#) or [here on iTunes](#). If you'd be kind enough to rate, review & share, we'd really appreciate it! In this episode, we're highlighting some great speeches at City Council from heroes in San Diego, Dallas & New Orleans. We also feature a Dec 2023 presentation given by Dr. David Wachsmuth (McGill University) to the California Coastal Commission on the impact of short-term rentals on communities. In our Nightmare News segment, an incident involving an Airbnb-related shooting in Plano, Texas terrorizes a once-peaceful neighborhood.

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## On Hiatus

Neighborhood Notes will be on indefinite hiatus. You can find all past issues on our website.

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CITY COUNCILPERSON OR POLITICIAN**

### **Long Beach Safe Neighborhood Coalition**

"Protect Neighborhoods, Not Strangerhoods"

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