

From: [Kathy McArthur](#) on behalf of [Planning Shared](#)
To: [Alex Dyer](#)
Cc: [Charity Hallberg Dodds](#); [Mike Irg](#)
Subject: FW: Correspondence re: Proposed Temporary Use Permit: TUP20004-5458 Highland Drive
Date: May 12, 2021 7:57:37 AM
Attachments: [Highlander2021AirB&BNeighbours.pdf](#)
Importance: High

From: HEATHER MOHAN <hemohan@shaw.ca>
Sent: May 11, 2021 9:57 PM
To: Planning Shared <planning@acrd.bc.ca>
Subject: Correspondence re: Proposed Temporary Use Permit: TUP20004-5458 Highland Drive
Importance: High

Dear ACRD Staff and Board:

Our names are Heather Mohan and Josh Dahling. We are the applicants for the Temporary Use Permit on Highland Drive. After the notice about our permit application was circulated, we spoke with a number of our neighbours --- some were very supportive of our application and two expressed concerns. We made efforts to address those concerns by having direct conversations and by circulating the attached letter.

We plan to be in attendance at the Board meeting tomorrow and would be happy to answer any questions about our permit or address any identified concerns directly at that time -- if there is an opportunity to do so.

Sincerely,

Dr. Heather Mohan and Josh Dahling

May 2, 2021

Hello Highland Drive Neighbours:

It's Heather and Josh writing to you from 5458 Highland Drive. We know that many of you recently received a notice from the ACRD acknowledging our application for a temporary use permit in order to operate an Airbnb from our home. We also understand that you may have concerns and questions about our plans. We are writing this letter today in hopes of providing you with additional information and context that may alleviate your concerns.

Of course, we would also welcome the opportunity to speak with you directly – either by phone or through a socially-distanced/in-person conversation. You can contact Heather on her cell phone at: **604-808-1199** or send an email to heather@campkerry.org if you would like to coordinate a time to meet.

A Little Bit About Us: We moved from the Lower Mainland in the summer of 2018 to this beautiful neighbourhood. Since the moment we arrived, we have known that moving here was one of the best decisions of our lives. We absolutely love where we live, and we love the community of Port Alberni. We hope to remain here, provided we are all healthy and well, for the rest of our lives!

We have 3 children ~ two still live and work in Burnaby (Serenity who is 20 & Isaiah who is 25) ~ and our 16 year old daughter Harmony lives here at home with us. In the past year we also acquired a Labradoodle puppy named Finley who you may have seen out walking with us or chasing balls up and down the street with Mayo (his golden retriever best friend who is often in residence at Jean & Joanne's house next door).

While we both have long histories of working in health care, education and social services – fifteen years ago we founded our own non-profit organization/registered charity, which now provides grief and bereavement support to over 1000 children, individuals and families in BC (and across Canada) every year. (www.campkerry.org). Prior to COVID-19, Heather used to travel on a regular basis for work, while Josh worked almost exclusively from home. Since the pandemic, we have been successful in transitioning all our work to virtual platforms and we both now work full-time from home.

The Story of Our 2-Bedroom Suite: Over the past several years you may have noticed a lot of construction activity going on at our house. We initially started renovations on our lower level with the plan of creating a fully self-contained 2-bedroom suite to house Heather's elderly mother. Nancy still lives alone in her own home in Ontario and has frequently expressed her desire to live with family rather than going into a retirement home when she is no longer able to cope on her own. Not long after we had completed the suite, Nancy changed her mind and decided that she could not leave her friends and routines in Ontario "just yet". While our long-term plan for Nancy to move into the suite remains unchanged, we decided to explore the option of creating an Airbnb in the meantime. We have a wide network of professional colleagues and friends who frequently travel and are often looking for quiet, comfortable places to stay when they visit Vancouver Island. We ourselves only stay in Airbnb's when we travel across Canada and have had nothing but positive experiences with this type of accommodation.

Rather than advertising our rental suite without an approved license, we applied for an ACRD temporary use permit. It was then that we learned of the lengthy review process by the District; including extensive safety, septic and fire code requirements that needed to be satisfied before our application could be

reviewed by the ACRD Board. Ironically, none of these additional expenses would have been incurred and none of these requirements would have needed to be met if we had chosen to rent our suite out to a long-term tenant or to run a home-based business. We also learned that, although there are numerous Airbnb's currently operating in the Port Alberni area (and throughout the Pacific Rim), we were actually the first ones to apply for a legal permit under the current review process.

Many of the negative public perceptions stemming from Airbnb's in Tofino and Sproat Lake appear to be from properties operating without legal permits and ACRD permission. According to our communications with the ACRD, in the future they will be issuing orders for unlicensed Airbnb's to close their operations, and they will be implementing fines for those who do not comply.

Going Forward; Our Reassurances to You:

We appreciate having heard from some of you about your concerns in relation to Airbnb's in general, and in the Highland Drive area specifically. To that end, we would like to reassure you that:

- We will abide by all provincial health orders and COVID-19 cleaning protocols in our suite.
- We will be at home whenever the suite is rented out.
- We do not intend to rent the suite out on a full-time basis as our insurance only allows us to have it occupied a certain number of days per year.
- Our suite will not be rented out to groups of people planning parties, special events or weddings.
- Guests will not be allowed to smoke in the suite or on the balcony of the suite.
- All guests will be pre-screened prior to staying in our home.
- We anticipate that most of our guests will be friends, colleagues and referrals from their networks; primarily individuals, couples or small families who are health-care professionals, teachers and/or government employees.
- Guests will be allowed a maximum of two vehicles and these will be parked either in our driveway or on the gravel parking area directly in front of our property. The second driveway beside our house is only for access to the back of our property where we eventually intend to store our boat, and for access to our septic. It will not be available for guests to use.
- Quiet hours are in place and will be enforced. Excessive drinking/partying will not be tolerated.
- One Airbnb in a neighbourhood does not automatically imply that others will be allowed. We have invested considerable time and personal expense to meet ACRD's legal temporary use permit requirements. If our home was to be sold in the future, the permit could not be transferred to the new owners. Each applicant is reviewed on their own merits and on a case-by-case basis. The process (as we have now learned!) is lengthy, time-consuming and expensive.
- We love and respect the beauty, the quiet and the peaceful setting of our home and the neighbourhood of Highland Drive. While we are happy to share our home, along with our love of the Alberni Valley with other like-minded people, we will never jeopardize our values by allowing guests to stay in our home who don't respect our space or the neighbourhood we are so grateful to have discovered and chosen to live in.

Please feel free to reach out to us at any time with your comments, questions and/or concerns.

Sincerely,

Heather & Josh