Short Term Rentals Create Ongoing Problems

by HEIDI FRON Reporter | Posted: Thursday, October 11, 2018 9:00 am

Controversies surrounding Short Term Rental (STR) homes arose again at the Lake Arrowhead Municipal Advisory Council (MAC), which met Oct. 4 at Fire Station 91 in Lake Arrowhead.

The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors approved a revised STR ordinance in May 2017, making the owner or owner’s agent responsible for handling complaints when visitors in rental units make too much noise (especially at night), build over-sized campfires in yards, infringe on neighboring residents’ parking areas, and cause various other problems. The revised ordinance also implemented a 24/7 hotline for resolving problems.

Mountain residents are now astounded and concerned about the number of rental units that have been established, particularly within proximity of each other. Some of those who attended the Oct. 4 MAC meeting complained about the effects of having four STRs within in about 200 feet of their private homes.

A spokeswoman for the neighborhood pointed out that the county regulates bed-and-breakfast (B&B) businesses, which cannot open if another B&B already exists within 1,000 feet of the proposed business. Questions were raised about STRs being treated differently, zoning laws and why a “commercial business” could be operated in a residential area.

Council member Scott Rindenow explained that an STR is considered to be a residential use of the property, while council woman Michelle Ambrozic emphasized the county’s reluctance to interfere by restricting private property rights. Rindenow suggested putting together a list of proposals and addressing all of the issues with the county at one time.

Rindenow also recommended having county representatives, such as code enforcement and land use officials attend the MAC meeting, possibly in November.

Lewis Murray, representing County Supervisor Janice Rutherford, encouraged the group to boil the topic down to specific issues, instead of “ping-ponging around.” Murray said suggestions may be sent to him by email: Lewis.Murray@bos.sbcounty.gov. He will then forward the suggestions to MAC members.

“Every city and county has its own regulations, and there are thousands of them,” Murray commented.

Rindenow added that it might be wise to deal with the two issues of density and enforcement. He mentioned the possibility that after three complaints about a STR house, the owner could receive a citation. An attendee at the meeting previously suggested: Three complaints and you are out.
Incorporate Lake Gregory

by Harry Bradley Publisher | Posted: Thursday, October 11, 2018 9:00 am

In Crestline, a community information meeting was presented Oct. 9 to a standing room only crowd at the Thousand Pines Conference Center by a group of Crestline community leaders consisting of Bill Mellinger, Steve Garcia, Mike Johnstone, John Short and Penny Shubnell.

The group has been formed to investigate the feasibility of municipal incorporation for the communities of Lake Gregory, including: Crestline, Crest Forest, Valley of Enchantment, Cedarpines Park and San Moritz. Penny Shubnell presented the scope of Incorporate Lake Gregory with a map of Crestline Sanitation District and its sphere of influence.

Examples were cited by members of the group indicating that, by incorporating as a city, they could provide all the existing services (water, fire, law enforcement, road and sewer and parks) while retaining local control of tax revenues, which means they could operate more efficiently. The group believes that community development would also be streamlined by having local control of building safety and planning; emergency services; and parks and recreation. Local governance and oversight would improve the direction of tax resources and ultimately enhance all the services to the communities of Lake Gregory.

John Short spoke to the unique challenges of a mountain community, citing snow removal, parking, fire and flood preparations, which he said a local city council could address faster than the County government.

This was an informal meeting to introduce the community to the process of incorporating as a city. The procedure for a proposed city is considered by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). The process could take two to three years and cost $100,000, more or less. The group has applied for nonprofit status so that they can raise funds to hire the experts needed to work through the LAFCO process.

A petition for incorporation was available at the meeting for signatures by those local residents who want to investigate the feasibility of cityhood for the communities of Lake Gregory.

Searching their website at www.incorporatelakegregory.org, you will find Item 7. The preliminary feasibility study documents on the website are from the proposed Rim of the World Incorporation in 2014 through 2015, which also included Lake Arrowhead and Hilltop (a portion of Running Springs). These documents serve as an outline of what the Lake Gregory Preliminary feasibility study must present to LAFCO.
The presenters are confident that they will have the support of the Lake Gregory Community, and with their focus and persistence, the goal to incorporate will one day come to fruition.
Typhus fever’s wild threat? The rat-faced opossum, named in health advisories as culprits in spreading the disease

The opossum, or Virginia opossum, Didelphis virginiana, seen here in captivity on March 15, 2018. (file photo)

By STEVE SCAUZILLO | sscauzillo@scng.com | San Gabriel Valley Tribune
PUBLISHED: October 11, 2018 at 3:39 pm | UPDATED: October 11, 2018 at 11:39 pm
When you think of animals carrying fleas, what comes to mind are dogs and cats, a problem that most responsible pet owners know all about.

But an equal, yet lesser known threat is lurking in the wild and unbeknownst to homeowners, living under the floorboards or in the attic. We are talking about opossums.

In fact, the opossum was named by public health officials this past week as a main carrier of fleas that transmit typhus fever. The opossum, or possum, is a major contributor to the outbreak in Pasadena, where a record 20 cases have been reported this year as of Thursday, an “elevated level” well above the average of one to five cases per year, according to the city of Pasadena.

Los Angeles County is reporting 59 cases of typhus fever so far this year. Of those, nine are associated with an outbreak in downtown Los Angeles and six of those were among people experiencing homelessness, however specific outbreak locations are being withheld by the county. L.A. County Department of Public Health reported on Wednesday that about 60 cases per year is average, so the county is ahead of its yearly rate.

Grumpy baby opossums are cared for by volunteers at the Wetlands and Wildlife Care Center in Huntington Beach on Saturday, May 5, 2018. (Photo by Mindy Schauer, Orange County Register/SCNG)
Typhus fever's wild threat? The rat-faced opossum, named in health advisories as culprits in spreading the disease – San Ber…

Long Beach has had 12 cases of flea-borne typhus, according to a city advisory in September. Both Long Beach and Pasadena cases are not included in the Los Angeles County health department total.

Fleas hosted by these animals can carry one of two strains of bacteria, Rickettsia typhi or Rickettsia felis, that cause typhus fever when they bite humans or simply land on human skin and deposit feces that get rubbed into the body and enter the bloodstream. The L.A. County health department reported the carriers are feral cats, infected rats and opossums, in an emailed response to questions on Wednesday

The disease can cause high fever, chills, headaches and rash. Typhus is fatal in only about 1 percent of the cases, according to the county health department.

“Typhus fever is a disease that can cause serious complications requiring lengthy hospitalization, and rarely, death,” said Dr. Ying-Ying Goh, Pasadena’s health officer, in a city announcement dated Oct. 5.

The disease, also known as murine typhus, responds well to treatment, mostly antibiotics, said Michael Johnson, director of the Pasadena Public Health Department during a phone interview Wednesday. Johnson said all 20 victims are recovering. “I don't believe any are still hospitalized, although some of them were,” he said.
He said the cases are spread throughout the city of Pasadena, from the foothill neighborhoods to the central core to the more residential southern sections. He said more study needs to be done as to why there has been a jump in the number of typhus fever cases this year.

Fleas can come from pets inside a home and from possums moving through neighborhoods from wilderness areas, he said. “It is an endemic problem, But the opossum is very much a part of the problem.”

A single opossum can carry as many as 700 fleas, said Levy Sun, public information officer with the San Gabriel Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District. “If you were to capture an opossum, you would see it has a very heavy flea load.”

He has received an uptick in calls, including some from worried Pasadena residents who want to see the opossums killed and the fleas sprayed with insecticides. Both are not practical options, he said.

It is not possible to keep up with the flea population, he said. One female lays up to 50 eggs that hatch into mature adults in about two weeks.
The technician from All Star Animal Trapping caught this opossum in a house in Glendale in June. The animal was found hiding between a window and a screen. (courtesy photo).

Robert Messersmith, owner of All Star Animal Trapping, serving the greater Los Angeles region, says trapping opossums is the third-most logged call, with raccoons first and skunks second.

When he finds any of these animals, he's often covered in fleas, he said. Messersmith said a meeting was planned for Thursday “to figure out how to take better precautions.”

He said opossums, the only North American marsupials, are very prevalent in urban communities because they have no living predators. Opossums are typically 2-feet long and eat just about anything, from worms to garbage to pet food. They can employ a defense tactic by “playing dead,” which is really entering a coma-like state for up to two hours. They are nocturnal, meaning they sleep during the day and forage for food at night.

The No. 1 cause of death is being hit by a car, Messersmith said. When he traps them, he’ll drive them 10 miles outside the area and then let them go. Only injured animals can be euthanized under the law, he said.

The best way to avoid getting typhus fever is to reduce exposure to fleas. Experts recommend the following actions:

• Reduce vegetation on a yard’s perimeter, where opossums or feral cats can hide

• Fill in holes in eaves, crawspaces or sheds

• Don’t leave cat or dog food outside

• Pick up fruit from trees

• Keep garbage containers tightly covered

• Use flea control medication on your pets

For more information, go to www.sgvmosquito.org/flea-borne-typhus.

Pasadena residents can report suspected or confirmed cases of typhus to the city health department at: 626-744-6089 (Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.) or 626-744-6043 after hours.

L.A. County residents can call: 888-397-3993.
Rash of typhus cases raises alarm

Downtown L.A.’s outbreak follows an upward trend across the county, adding to homelessness debate.

BY SOUMYA KARLAMANGLA

A man hospitalized for dehydration a few months ago at Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center started suffering a severe fever, and doctors weren’t sure why.

The patient was homeless, a clue that he might have typhus. Every year people contract flea-borne typhus in Southern California, mostly in Los Angeles County. Doctors did a blood test.

“We sent it off, and lo and behold — typhus,” County-USC Chief Medical Officer Dr. Brad Spellberg said.

Since July, there have been nine cases of typhus in downtown Los Angeles, six of which infected homeless people, prompting health officials last week to declare an outbreak there. There have also been 20 cases in Pasadena this year, far more than the five typically seen there annually.

Typhus outbreaks are often associated with poor hygiene and overcrowding. Los Angeles officials say they’re corralling stray animals that could carry fleas, cleaning streets and encouraging people to treat their pets for fleas and put away trash that may attract infected animals.

The outbreak has also fueled debates about homelessness and housing. L.A. Mayor Eric Garcetti this week pledged $300,000 to increase street cleaning downtown. But many fear that won’t be enough to curb the growing number of cases and clear out the trash that has accumulated as the city’s homeless population has spread.

“The sidewalks weren’t ever intended for habitation, our storm drains were never intended for human waste, and rats [are] crawling all over people,” said Estela Lopez, executive director of the L.A. Downtown Industrial Business Improvement District. “This is unimaginable, that in such an advanced society we would be facing this problem.”

More people have been falling sick with typhus in Los Angeles County over the last decade, though experts are unsure why. The rise in homelessness is prominent among the theories, which also include warmer temperatures and people spending more time outside.
There were five typhus cases in 2008, compared with 79 cases so far this year, according to the California Department of Public Health.

Typhus spreads when fleas become infected with bacteria known as Rickettsia typhi or Rickettsia felis. The illness reaches humans when fleas bite them or when infected flea feces are rubbed into cuts or scrapes in the skin, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“It’s very hard to say — these microbes have a mind of their own. They come when they want, and they seem to go when they want,” Spellberg said. “I don’t think anybody really knows.”

Typhus is distinct from typhoid fever, a foodborne illness that is rarely contracted within the United States and can be spread from person to person. Typhus, by contrast, cannot be passed between people.

Typhus causes fever, body aches, stomach pain and a rash. Most people recover on their own, but more severe cases can lead to damage to the heart, brain and lungs without treatment. The infection can lead to death in rare cases.

Alex Comisar, a spokesman for Garcetti, said the city and the county have formed a task force to address the outbreak and are stepping up cleaning efforts using the extra funding.

“We’re deploying every available resource to help control and stop this outbreak,” Comisar said.

Next week, city workers will begin picking up trash and cleaning within what has been designated the “typhus zone,” a downtown area bounded by 3rd, 7th, Spring and Alameda streets.

Already, workers clean some streets in the zone encompassing parts of skid row as part of a program called Operation Healthy Streets. They are cleared of debris, washed and then misted with a liquid containing bleach every two weeks.

But the new effort will expand the cleaning area from 100 acres to 279, according to a map provided by Comisar. The new funding will last for nine months.

Enrique Zaldivar, director of the city’s sanitation department, said the new effort will allow collaboration with private businesses that may help stem the outbreak in a way that would not have been possible before.

“There may be a privately owned building that is not being utilized, and it’s a perfect place for rodents to nest, and that’s totally outside the reach of our cleaning operations,” he said.

But many expressed anger that the cleanup area would not extend south of 7th Street. Rena Leddy, executive director of the L.A. Fashion District Business Improvement District, said heaps of trash are accumulating south of the typhus zone, from 8th Street down to the edge of her district near 18th Street.
On Thursday, several tents lined an alleyway just south of 7th Street, surrounded by crates and trash. Pigeons pecked at food fallen on the sidewalk. At the corner of 8th Street and Central Avenue, also outside of the typhus zone, a large heap of trash had accumulated against a brick wall.

“There are other parts of downtown that also have mass amounts of accumulated garbage. That’s what we’ve all been told is collecting the rats that are then spreading the fleas,” Leddy said.

But officials say that although rats, cats and opossums can all carry fleas, different outbreaks have different causes.

The uptick in cases in Pasadena this year is probably linked to opossums and cats — not rats, said Levy Sun, public information officer for the San Gabriel Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District.

“Rats are kind of a red herring here,” Sun said.

Sun said that testing of rats in the region shows they don’t carry many fleas.

During the last typhus outbreak in Los Angeles County in 2015, a single opossum captured in a mobile home park in Pomona had 1,087 fleas on it. Three-fifths of the fleas tested from the cats and opossums that were trapped tested positive for typhus.

Health officials were able to control that outbreak by starting flea control, trapping feral animals in the area, offering free typhus tests and monitoring flea populations. People who lived in the mobile home community had to clear feeding sites and limit the number of pets to one, a rule dictated by the property owner that hadn’t been followed.

One person had 32 pets, according to an academic paper published about the response to the outbreak.

Sun encouraged people to clean up debris and buckets in their backyards and make sure their pets are treated for fleas. The solution, he said, is not to “shake typhus and wildlife from our environment, but shake the habits we have.”

Of the 945 typhus cases in California since 2001, 726 have been in L.A. County — and those numbers only seem to be going up.

“We’ve been thinking about typhus for a long time,” Spellberg said.

soumya.karlamangla@latimes.com
Attorneys in wrongful-death lawsuit are wrong about police training, Ontario says

By BRIAN ROKOS | brokos@scng.com | The Press-Enterprise
PUBLISHED: October 11, 2018 at 3:56 pm | UPDATED: October 11, 2018 at 4:57 pm
The city of Ontario disputes an assertion by attorneys who filed a wrongful-death lawsuit that the Police Department lacks policies and training designed to prevent suspects who are restrained from suffocating.

In announcing this month that the city had settled a lawsuit with the family of 28-year-old Kyle Briones for $2.75 million, the family's attorneys, the Law Offices of Dale K. Galipo and Law Offices of George Rosenberg, said Briones' October 2016 death “was caused by asphyxia during prone restraint, chest compression and obstruction of his external airway by multiple police officers.”

The attorneys' police-practices expert, Roger Clark, said Ontario does not have any related policies or training.

However, the city, in response to a Public Records Act request from Southern California News Group, said officers are taught about the dangers of positional asphyxia at the mandatory, twice-a-year “arrest-and-control” classes.

The policy for use of leg restraints says the suspect “shall not be placed on his/her stomach for an extended period, as this could reduce the person’s ability to breathe.”

While the Police Department's restraint policy does not specifically mention the term positional asphyxia, the city said, instructors do use that term during training.
It is unclear whether the involved officers followed the policy. The family’s attorneys said the officers forcibly took down Briones, used a Taser on him, tethered his legs and left him in a prone position for about six minutes. The attorneys also claimed that even though Briones appeared to be having health problems, the officers did not allow medics to treat him until he stopped breathing.

The city said it believes Briones’ death was “a tragic accident,” and that the San Bernardino County Coroner ruled that Briones died from a pre-existing medical condition and that there was evidence of previous heart attacks.

The city, also in response to the SCNG request, said that insurance will pay for $1.75 million of the $2.75 million settlement.

Tags:  Police,  Top Stories IVDB,  Top Stories Sun
This summer, a national rent-tracking website named Fontana the most prosperous city in California between 2000 and 2016.

In weighing six key economic and demographic factors, RentCafé found only Odessa, Texas, Washington, D.C., and Charleston, S.C., more prosperous among cities with at least 100,000 residents.

“This (recognition) is significant if you know how far we’ve come,” Mayor Acquanetta Warren said at a June press conference celebrating the distinction. “… We have overcome challenges and have emerged from them a stronger, more prosperous city.”

As media organizations laud Fontana’s present, six mayoral candidates – Warren, Councilman Jesus “Jesse” Sandoval, Carlos Sandoval, Hafsa Sharafat, Mylinda Carrillo and Lorena Corona – are vying to lead the city into the future.
“I’m looking forward to this challenge. I have been for a while,” said Warren, first elected as mayor in 2010. “I’m not done. I just want to finish what I started. I feel even more confident I can get those items taken care of.”

At her State of the City address this year, Warren talked about manufacturing growth and its impact on the local economy. In a recent interview, she said the booming field provides residents good-paying jobs and developers a reason to come to Fontana.

Amid contention over warehouses' impact on traffic, infrastructure and air pollution, Warren said developers are following the law, conducting themselves properly and abiding by regulations set by the South Coast Air Quality Management District.

“Manufacturing’s not going away,” the mayor added. “Saying something is 'Made in Fontana,' it's not a joke.”

Warren’s opponents, conversely, critique her stance on warehouses.

Sharafat, a 21-year-old recent college graduate, said warehouses, such as two approved by city leaders in January, bring more trucks and air pollution to one of Southern California’s most polluted areas. Also, the first-time candidate said, the majority of jobs provided by warehouse tenants are low-paying, part-time jobs.

Jesse Sandoval, who voted against the aforementioned Southwest Fontana Logistics Center Project, noted the plight of residents working in warehouses.

“There's no affordable housing here,” the sixth-year councilman said. “Those jobs, if anything, pay barely above minimum wage, they're not 40 hours. And people have to pay for their own health benefits, benefits that offset their wages.”
While Carlos Sandoval and Carrillo did not respond to multiple calls seeking comment, Corona, a former Fontana Unified school board member, said certain residents have seen their property values drop due to new warehouses being built nearby.

“All these warehouses are coming into our neighborhoods,” she said. “Is there any community benefit?”

In working alongside Warren these past six years, Jesse Sandoval said city leadership has lacked vision as neighboring Rialto, which has half of Fontana’s population, bustles with new entertainment and dining options.

“We need to raise the bar in Fontana,” he said. “I’ve been (on the council) for six years and it still is the same status quo.”

During their respective campaigns, mayoral hopefuls Sharafat and Corona have embraced demographics they say City Hall has largely ignored.

Sharafat, who, if elected, would become one of the youngest city leaders in Fontana history, said she hopes to be a voice for young people who want to assume leadership positions. Corona, meanwhile, said she wants the LGBTQ community to be heard by those in power.

“I hear all the frustrations, understand the challenges we see,” Corona said. “At the end of the day, I am inspired by the ongoing struggle of our hardworking people in the city of Fontana. We’re doing great because our people are not giving up, regardless of age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, they’re not giving up.

“That’s what inspires me.”

In addition to mayor, Fontana voters next month will elect representatives for council Districts 1 and 4 as well as city clerk and treasurer.

In District 1, four candidates seek election Nov. 6:

• **Phillip Wayne Cothran Jr.**, a local businessman.

• Jocelyn Aguirre, a student.

• **Shannon O’Brien**, a former Fontana Unified School District board member and founder of Children’s Resources Inc., a nonprofit that works with local schools.

• Lourdes (Ms. Lulu) I. Goñi, a music director.

In District 4, an incumbent is challenged by two hopefuls:

• **John B. Roberts**, a councilman and former San Bernardino County fire marshal.
• Patricia A. Gonzalez, a businesswoman, nurse and educator.

• **Glenda A. Barillas**, a business development director.

City Clerk Toni Lewis faces challenger **Germaine McClellan Key**, a retired division chief for the Los Angeles Department of Children and Families. City Treasurer Janet Koehler-Brooks is challenged by Lydia Salazar-Wibert, who previously served on the City Council.

For more information on the November election, visit [sbcountyelections.com](http://sbcountyelections.com).

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**Brian Whitehead**

Brian Whitehead covers San Bernardino for The Sun. Bred in Grand Terrace, he graduated from Riverside Notre Dame High and Cal State Fullerton. For seven years, he covered high school and college sports for The Orange County Register. Before landing at The Sun, he was the city beat reporter for Buena Park, Fullerton and La Palma.

Follow Brian Whitehead @bwhitehead3