

CANDIDATES AND ENDORSEMENTS

N4N (Neighbors for Neighborhoods advocacy group) will support candidates we believe offer the best potential to return the quality of life to the residents of La Quinta neighborhoods whose character has been altered by STVRs. The residents of La Quinta who are being forced to live with the problems created by STVRs are demanding a solution. La Quinta is not the only city dealing with problems created by STVRs, cities all across the country are responding to similar problems. There is no silver bullet solution if there was, one of the hundreds of cities looking for a solution would have found it by now. Many of these cities are enacting stricter regulations including a minimum rental period of 30 days. Longer minimum rentals provide the opportunity to transform the renter into a neighbor. Other cities, like Cathedral City, are enacting ordinance to phase out STVRs.

All the candidates support STVRs. In addition they support quality of life for La Quinta residents. What is tricky is how you reconcile these two positions? The phrase "quality of life" has become part of every politician's position on why the STVR problem must be solved. A quality of life solution should mean returning the character of a neighborhood back to the level residents enjoyed before there were STVRs. If a neighborhood's character is to return to that standard and coexist (a position all of the candidates support) with STVRs then the STVRs must be invisible; i.e. STVR homes cannot be distinguished from any other home in the neighborhood.

A problem that STVRs are creating that no one is addressing is the availability and affordability of homes for young couples and working families. N4N believes that STVRs are changing the makeup of La Quinta neighborhoods by increasing rents and home values. The price point being created by STVR investors is forcing young couples and working families to move to other more affordable communities in the valley. Part of the plan to solve the STVR problem must include addressing how to keep younger working families as part of our communities. N4N is looking for candidates who understand La Quinta homes are increasingly being purchased by non-resident investors to be used solely for rentals which is transforming the makeup of our neighborhoods.

Current Status on STVRs in La Quinta

- There is a moratorium on approving requests for new STVR permits through February 2nd. N4N supports extending the current moratorium until a permanent solution to the STVR problems has been approved by the mayor and city council.
- The Mayor and City council have established an ad hoc committee to assess and recommend improvements to the STVR program. The committee has expressed a desire to find a solution to STVR created problems acceptable to all concerned parties. N4N believes the committee's goal should be to elimination all of the problems created by STVRs. Our worry is a solution "acceptable to all concerned parties" will produce political band aide solutions which do not fully restore the quality of life to La Quinta neighborhoods to which all full time residents are entitled.

Provided on this website is each candidates position on addressing the STVR problem; their interview with the Desert Sun (September 24th) and their response to a letter from N4N giving each candidate the opportunity to clarify and/or expand upon their Desert Sun interview.

N4N evaluated each candidate on;

1. Priority they gave to solving the STVR problem
2. Sympathy for the full time resident whose quality of life had been dramatically changed by STVRs
3. Support a solution that will return quality of life to pre-STVR level
4. Sensitive to a solution that will attract young working families to La Quinta neighborhoods
5. Relieving neighbors from being part of the enforcement solution
6. Solution not base on STVR tax revenue, but alternatives to restore any projected lost revenue

N4N understands the candidates cannot support a solution before they have a total picture of the magnitude of the problem, a menu of all possible solutions and the ad hoc committee's final report. However to receive our endorsement we must believe a candidate will support the best solution to fully restore resident's quality of life and not compromise to lobbying by outside STVR investors, property managers and real estate agents.

No candidate being endorsed by N4N publicly supports a policy we believe will fully restore the character of our local neighborhoods and their residents' quality of life. However, we believe we have identified those candidates who best understand the problems created by STVRs and exhibit the willingness to listen and be flexible to adjust their current stated position to the best outcome for La Quinta neighborhoods and their full time residents.

NEIGHBORS FOR NEIGHBORHOODS ENDORSEMENTS

MAYOR – LINDA EVANS (i) Linda's stated #1 priority is the STVR program. She co-sponsored the creation of the ad hoc committee. She was a proponent to extend the STVR moratorium. She has solicited input from homeowners impacted by STVRs and seems genuinely concerned about solving those problems leading to complaints. As dialogues progressed she acknowledged citizen quality of life as her goal. She invited N4N to an hour and a half meeting where the STVR problem and potential solutions were discussed at length.

CITY COUNCIL – KATHLEEN FITZPATRICK (i) Kathleen co-sponsored the creation of the ad hoc committee and voted to extend the STVR moratorium. She has acknowledged the commercialization of neighborhoods that has been promoted by current city policies, and is prioritizing citizen quality of life. She has said "...if we cannot maintain quality of life we might be forced to the eventual elimination of STVRs in La Quinta's R 1 zoned communities. She has invited and met with N4N for over three hours to exchange ideas on potential solutions to the STVR problem.

CITY COUNCIL - RICHARD GRAY Richard does not support the moratorium on approving new STVR permits. He supports STVRs but prioritizes citizen quality of life. He would require neighbor approval as part of the STVR permitting process (this is a novel proposal which needs further exploration). He supports enforcing R1 and R2 zoning compliance. He advocates renewing STVR permits annually with a revocation process for problem properties.

Regardless of the election outcome all the members of N4N must continue to call the Hotline with complaints, send emails to all elected officials and be involved with city council meetings to encourage the best, strongest possible city ordinance to restore the character of our La Quinta neighborhoods.

Letter to Mayoral and City Council Candidates

What follows is a letter we sent to the mayoral and city council candidates to give each of them an opportunity to clarify and expand their position on Short Term Vacation Rentals. Each candidates respond to the letter can be found under the candidates name below;

Dear Candidate for City Office'

I am representing a non-political action group that wants a quality of life solution to the STVR problems that are plaguing our residential communities.

We are working to develop a 2000 strong voter base to support the mayoral and city council candidates who most strongly support;

1. restoring peace quiet and safety to La Quinta communities
2. stopping the commercial exploitation of our residential communities
3. stop ruining the quality of resident's lives for tax revenues.

The only statement we have on your STVR policy position is your September 24th Desert Sun interview. Before we endorse candidates, we wanted to provide you with the opportunity to expand on your policy and plan to return La Quinta residential communities to peaceful, quiet and safe neighborhoods full time residents bought into.

We understand there is an ongoing ad hoc committee exploring potential solutions to the STVR problem but are concerned this will result in a politically correct answer that will not eliminate the STVR problems. We are concerned the committee does not accurately reflect the population distribution of full time La Quinta residences to STVR owners and property managers. The unbalanced representation will force the ad hoc committee toward compromised band aide solutions which will not return the quality of life which STVRs are stealing from La Quinta neighborhoods.

I would think you would not want to be any less compassionate and sympathetic toward restoring La Quinta voter's quality of life than the Cathedral City council has already demonstrated to their citizens.

Looking forward to hearing your plan on giving our fellow La Quinta neighbors their neighborhoods back,

Thank you for your consideration,

Neighbors for Neighborhoods

Mayoral and City Council Candidates Stated Positions on STVRs

LINDA EVANS – Mayoral Candidate, Incumbent

Desert Sun Interview

Palm Springs Desert Sun Sept 24, 2020 [\(excerpted from Desert Sun article\)](#)

EVANS: I believe that cities can effectively permit short-term rentals (STVRs) that are responsibly managed, used and do not pose an undue disturbance to the surrounding community. I continue to support STVRs in La Quinta. However, recognizing the need to make changes to the program, our council implemented an ad hoc committee last year.

We have experienced a significant increase in complaints from our residents regarding problem rental properties since the pandemic shutdown. And, we prioritize quality of life for our residents, hence the need to make further changes to the program for successful co-existence. Our ad hoc committee has reviewed the current program, its enforcements, complaints and process to track problem renters/owners. They will be making recommendations at our City Council for council's review and consideration. These recommendations will be evaluated, with resident and rental owner input, prior to council making any changes or decisions.

I do not support banning short-term rentals in La Quinta. I do support addressing the issues and concerns and resolving them in a win-win situation. Our city needs the \$3.5 million revenue (pre-COVID) that is derived from this tourism market. We do need to ensure a balance to preserve the quality of life for our residents. I believe we can achieve that balance, as we have had the last four years of the program.

Response to N4N Position Letter

Thur, Oct 8 at 5:00 PM

Thank you for reaching out to me regarding STVRs in La Quinta. I am responding from my campaign email address since this is endorsement related and there are rules regarding the use of city email for campaign-related correspondence.

That being said, this is not a simple topic, as you are well aware, and there's not a simple answer.

However, let me provide my current position regarding "solving the STVR problem".

Since you read my Desert Sun response, you know that I am a supporter of STVRs IF they can successfully co-exist and provide quality of life for our residents. Quality of life has always been a priority of mine and of the city council members. We currently do not have quality of life in many areas of our city due to a change in behavior of renters and STVR owner properties. Things have changed with the program over the years and I recognize that attention to correct the problems is necessary. I appreciate the ad hoc committee's efforts to put forth recommendations for our consideration. Those recommendations will be a starting point for us and for our residents to consider, discuss, modify if desired, and evaluate before any decisions are made. Your input is critical to this process.

PGA West has been a hot spot, with conflicting interpretations of what entity has responsibility for enforcement. I feel that the city and the HOA should share responsibility in addressing the problems and finding mutually beneficial solutions. I have learned through various email exchanges and phone calls that there are some (including PGA residents and HOA members) who do not agree with me. Every other HOA in the city has CC&Rs that can supersede city direction. PGA West needs help in this area.

I have already reached out to the HOA Board, and have a meeting scheduled with the HOA Board Presidents next Monday. This meeting will include our city manager, staff, and Council Member

Fitzpatrick. We want to present what we have done to date to address the problems in the program, and what is being considered going forward. We also want their feedback and input. We also will discuss the process of supporting PGA West in potentially proposing changes to the CC&Rs to address some of the challenges in PGA West with STVRs.

I would like to request a separate meeting with you and your choice of a few others in your group to further discuss your position and ideas to make constructive changes to the program.

Some of these ideas can/should include the following (my position on solving the problem):

- Consideration of a minimum day stay (10 + days) to mitigate the constant turnover of guests
- Collaboration with PGA security and city code enforcement and hotline services for faster response and documentation to address complaints/violations and issue fines
- Suggestions for modifications to your CC&Rs so they better reflect the will of the PGA West residents
- Assessment of density of permitted properties
- Appropriate marketing (should they continue) and expectations
- Requirement for faster response time from owners with problem renters
- Possible deposits from renters to cover fines for violations during their stay
- Training requirements for anyone with a STVR
- Potential for PGA West residents to cease allowing 30 days or less rentals

I'm sure there are others, but that covers some of the bigger topics at this time.

Please let me know if you would be willing to meet either in person at city hall with a small group or if you prefer a zoom meeting format. I would like to include Kathleen Fitzpatrick in the meeting as she shared with me your concerns based on your meeting. We want to hear from you. We want to improve the program. We want to ensure our residents are happy.

Thank you,

Linda Evans

ROBERT SYLK – Mayoral Candidate, Challenger

Desert Sun Interview

Palm Springs Desert Sun Sept 24, 2020 [\(excerpted from Desert Sun article\)](#)

SYLK: There are two sides to every story. I have heard both sides and I guess it depends on which side of the bathroom door you're on. I am also a businessman, and this is a tourist area, so a middle of the road answer allowing this business to operate and the neighbors to sleep in peace would work.

The STVR rental issue has many layers and I am not sure the program was evaluated properly before implementation, considering the modern-day STVR renter and the impact their presence has on neighborhoods in large numbers. The Cove area is especially concentrated with these STVRs due to the affordability of real estate there. Investors are buying up those properties, slapping on a coat of white paint, putting in furniture and renting them as party houses without regard

or the impact they are having on the neighborhood. We should first listen to the residents who should be the priority, and not just the almighty dollar. An audit needs to be done to determine the problems and how they can be addressed to the residents' satisfaction. If not, the program needs to be reassessed completely with proper regulations that meet both sides' concerns. In the meantime, I support the current 90-day moratorium to sort things out. I want this business to continue with

the penalties agreed to by both the owner and his tenant, as I favor more business coming to La Quinta. I have a plan that I believe will work well.

Response to N4N Position Letter

From: rsylk77@aol.com <rsylk77@aol.com>

Sent: Wednesday, October 7, 2020 5:49 PM

Subject: Re: WHAT IS YOUR POSITION ON SOLVING THE STVR PROBLEM?

The city is in hungry money mode and they leave the residents hanging on the cross bar and are delaying until after the election as they do frequently. It's all smoke and mirrors. If you can't see that then you are wearing your rose colored glasses. What you read in TDS is correct and Richard and I agree on this and more on our stance he will send to you. His email is above. Thanks, Robert

Kathleen Fitzpatrick – City Council Candidate, Incumbent

Desert Sun Interview

Palm Springs Desert Sun Sept 24, 2020 [\(excerpted from Desert Sun article\)](#)

FITZPATRICK: Short-term vacation rentals have become very popular in all resort areas. I think La Quinta had taken an early, proactive approach to regulating them in the city. However, council recognized the program permits were growing, and late last year decided we needed to look at how to make it better. Council established an ad hoc committee to look at improving the program at all levels. What many do not realize is that operating a STVR in a residential neighborhood requires a permit because operating any business out of a home in an R-1 zone is prohibited. In order to mitigate the use of a home as a business, rules have to be set in place in to maintain the fabric of the neighborhood and allow for the enjoyment of each homeowner of their property.

While the ad hoc is in the middle of their study of the program in La Quinta, I believe the solutions to the problem will require additional mitigation measures as part of each permit in the form of regulations, fines and enforcement. The program will have to be more responsive to complaints. And, there may well have to be limits on the numbers of permits issued by density.

I want to see a program that works for everyone. I want a program that allows our full-time residents to live in their neighborhoods in peaceful coexistence with homeowners who rent their homes on a short-term basis; it benefits all of us in the long term.

Response to N4N Position Letter

Sun, Oct 11 at 8:18 PM

LA QUINTA SHORT TERM RENTAL PROGRAM (STVR)

There is no doubt that the STVR program currently is impacting the quality of life in the R-1 zones in La Quinta in general, and specifically PGA West.

I supported the establishment of the Ad hoc committee, before the Covid created upsurge in bookings, because of concerns created by the growth of the program. The diversity of the Ad hoc membership reflects the breadth of the concerns Council saw across the board with the program. I want recommendations from the Ad hoc for policy changes that allow for the management of La Quinta's program; and, to maintain the quality of life and the fabric of our neighborhoods. I think that new policies will include more regulations, fines and better enforcement. The policy will need to be more responsive to complaints. And, there may well have to be limits to the number of permits issued by density. We are going to have to work closely with PGA West in order to make these changes work within the management of your CC&Rs, and discussions are ongoing with your HOAs.

I believe that if we cannot maintain quality of life with a safe and sound program, then we will have to look at other options for STVRs and the possibility for serious restrictions, or the eventual elimination of STVRs in La Quinta's R-1 zones. I want a program that allows our full time residents to live in their neighborhoods and enjoy the quality of life they expect. It would be nice if we can develop a program that allows the peaceful coexistence of home owners and STVRs because it does benefit us all from an economic stand point. However, my primary goal is to protect the quality of life we all moved to La Quinta to enjoy.

Thank you,

Kathleen Fitzpatrick

RICHARD GRAY – City Council Candidate, Challenger

Desert Sun Interview

Palm Springs Desert Sun Sept 24, 2020 [\(excerpted from Desert Sun article\)](#)

GRAY: The 90-day moratorium is an authoritarian reaction to an important issue. If there has been an increase in complaints, code compliance should first deal with specific issues to eliminate violations. Prohibiting new applications are not the best or fairest means to deal with violations. In fact, the council should look at the whole concept of STVRs. Some homeowners may be under economic pressure to compensate for our closed and suffering COVID-19 economy. At the same time, owners purchased their properties with the current zoning in mind. When STVRs are constant, the rental property becomes a commercial activity. On the other hand, long-term renters become part of the neighborhood. I think we should have input from the neighbors before a property becomes a constant STVR. And, quite obviously, continual or exaggerated violations of noise, number of occupants, and other issues should be justification for revocation of permits for STVR.

Response to N4N Position Letter

Wed, Oct 7 at 6:11 PM

Here's what I emailed to Robert Sylk as part of our personal discussion on STVRs. It's not a complete analysis - I don't know the details of the STVR permit and enforcement procedures.

Robert - cities like Big Bear have scads of these STVRs. I wonder if La Quinta got advice and suggestions from them and from others. It seems to me that the council is taking knee-jerk actions. Instead, there should be rather standard terms for current and future STVRs that protect the neighbors while allowing owners to benefit from their property.

In my opinion, there should be some of these terms:

- 1) Approval from next door neighbors on the initial application for a STVR permit.
- 2) The permit should be time limited, such as a 1 year term that requires another permit to continue.
- 3) The city should not allow too many STVRs in the same local neighborhood.
- 4) Everyone must recognize that original purchasers counted on the zoning to protect them. R-1s and R-2s were meant to restrict the area to residential usage of one or two families.

- 5) B&Bs with the owners present on the property are different and should have different requirements. Nevertheless, they should require a permit, pay fees and taxes, and be regulated.
- 6) Code compliance, COPs, and others should handle complaints and the renters should be responsible for fines as part of their rental agreement.
- 7) Rather than prohibit all STVR permits, code compliance should be able per regulations to set up a revocation process of the permit.

All in all, I don't know the details of the current STVR permits, but I suspect La Quinta should have a more well thought-out permit procedure and compliance enforcement.

Richard Gray

STEVE SANCHEZ – City Council, Incumbent

Desert Sun Interview

Palm Springs Desert Sun Sept 24, 2020 ([excerpted from Desert Sun article](#))

SANCHEZ: I support the Short-Term Vacation Rental (STVR's) program, as I am a proponent of individual and property owner rights. However, with individual and property owner rights, come individual and property owner responsibilities.

The philosophical foundation for how I govern is “do what you want on your property, as long as it doesn't effect anyone else on theirs.” The problem is when it does affect someone else with loud noise, social disturbances, parking issues, etc.

Both STVR owners and neighbors are entitled to enjoy their homes peacefully as they see fit. Enforcement of current ordinances has proven to be the difficult part of the program, but I do not believe that eliminating the program is the answer. STVR owner and renter education and accountability is what we continue to work harder at.

Response to N4N Position Letter

We reached out to Mr. Sanchez twice to make sure he had every opportunity to clarify and expand his position on the STVR problem. He did not respond.