

# Warren County Report



## Warren & Frederick County Report

122 W 14th Street, PMB 20  
Front Royal, VA 22630

Member  
Virginia Press Association

Readership:  
26,000 and growing

Press releases should be  
emailed to:  
[briefs@warrencountyreport.com](mailto:briefs@warrencountyreport.com)

Publisher & Editor-in-Chief:  
Daniel P. McDermott  
[editor@warrencountyreport.com](mailto:editor@warrencountyreport.com)

Roger Bianchini  
Senior Writer  
(540) 635-4835  
[rogerb@warrencountyreport.com](mailto:rogerb@warrencountyreport.com)  
Reporter: Sue Golden  
Copy Editor: Laura Biondi  
[editor@warrencountyreport.com](mailto:editor@warrencountyreport.com)

Feature Writer: Carol Ballard  
[crawford0905@gmail.com](mailto:crawford0905@gmail.com)

National & Agency Advertising:  
Alison Duvall: (540) 551-2072  
[alisond@warrencountyreport.com](mailto:alisond@warrencountyreport.com)

Advertising Sales Representatives:  
Alison Duvall: (540) 551-2072  
[alisond@warrencountyreport.com](mailto:alisond@warrencountyreport.com)

Angie Buterakos: 540-683-1847  
[fcwcr@gmail.com](mailto:fcwcr@gmail.com)

Billing Coordinator:  
Pam Cole:  
[billing@warrencountyreport.com](mailto:billing@warrencountyreport.com)

Graphic Design & Layout:  
Jeff Richmond  
[layout@warrencountyreport.com](mailto:layout@warrencountyreport.com)

Contributors:  
Malcolm Barr Sr.  
Ken Thurman  
Ryan Koch, Cartoonist Extraordinaire  
Kevin S. Engle, Humor Columnist  
Leslie Fiddler, Writer

If you are interested in contributing  
articles to our paper, please e-mail:  
[editor@warrencountyreport.com](mailto:editor@warrencountyreport.com)

This publication is proudly  
printed on 100% recycled paper with  
soy-based ink.

To advertise in Warren & Frederick County Report, Contact:  
Angie Buterakos at [fcwcr@gmail.com](mailto:fcwcr@gmail.com) • 540-683-1847  
or Alison at [alisond@warrencountyreport.com](mailto:alisond@warrencountyreport.com) • 540-551-2072

# Opinion

## Rental hostility: Unintended consequences

Editor,

Our High Knob neighbors didn't realize the unintended, county-wide, consequences of protesting our [short-term rental] permit. Every permit in the pipeline, most unopposed, may be unnecessarily delayed. It seems the county is also heading toward a mysterious new ordinance, and apparently that ordinance will rule out short-term rentals except on agricultural land or properties over 5 acres.

Would a wise investor purchase 5 acres for a vacation rental when the return on investment would be dismal? – Doubtful.

The irony of the situation is that High Knob was founded as a second home resort and the original organizers opposed full-time occupants in their community.

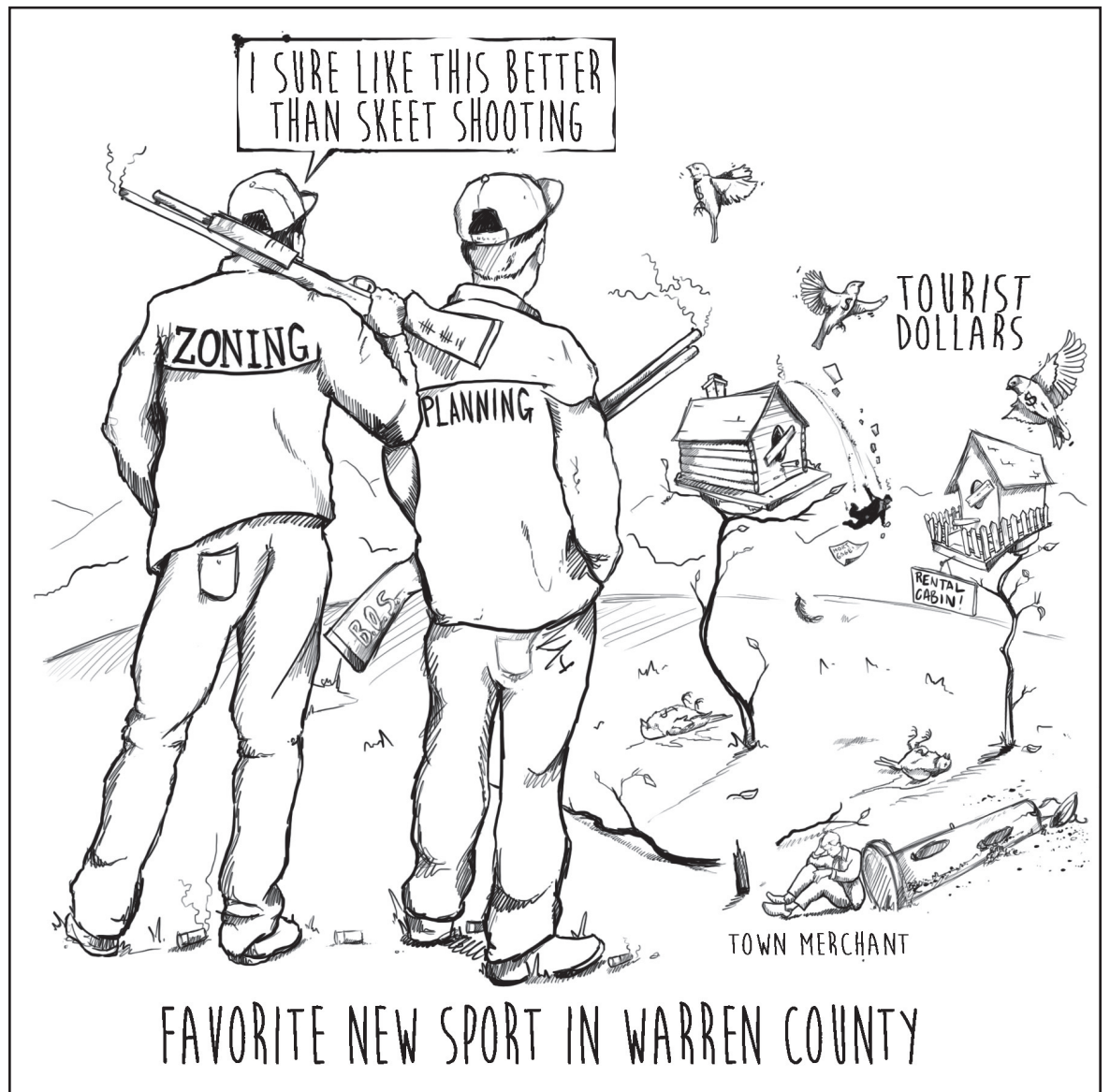
There are 332 owner-occupied homes and 183 renters/second homes in High Knob. That is a total of 515 homes. Seventy four people on a petition, or who show up at a public hearing represents a very small subset of the community. Yes, they are loud, but should they hold sway?

There are 33 homes currently for sale in High Knob.

High Knob has multiple abandoned homes and a high non-owner occupied rate of 44.9%. This means they are either rentals or getaway homes for second home owners.

Why do landlords go short-term rental? They are able to attract higher quality 'tenants'. They are able to have a manager on site, weekly, to inspect the property. They are able to make a cash flow sufficient to beautify the property and to keep it well maintained. Finally, they want personal use of the real estate for their own family.

Marshal Wile, former President of the Virginia Hospitality and Travel Association, says that citizens frequently protest applications for hospitality venues, citing that they will blight the community and increase traffic. What he observed during his tenure was quite the opposite, "Travelers who choose home-style lodging are high-expendable income folks who desire a unique travel experience. They don't increase traffic. And, they



spend more money than the average traveler on theme parks, restaurants, boutiques and antiques. In regard to the concerns about negative impact on property values, tourist rentals usually win the town beautification awards, year after year."

Why should the Board of Supervisors defend, rather than deter the rights of short term rentals?

First, it makes good economic sense.

Renting a private home to a tourist or business traveler brings visitors to town for a longer time, so more tourist dollars are captured. It also encourages repeat visitors, when a family finds a home that fits their needs they tend to start a tradition.

Small businesses, especially, depend on the out of town visitors to keep their doors open. These tourists

create jobs as these businesses prosper. The landlords themselves are small business people and support multiple small businesses from pest control to cleaning services.

To allow neighbors or even neighborhood associations to dictate what one can do with personal property is letting the tail wag the dog. Unless it is expressly prohibited by covenant, the Supreme Court of Virginia says that short term rentals are a legitimate residential use.

Discouraging investors from buying real estate in the county could start a downward spiral of decline in real estate values that would be hard to reverse. A hostile regulatory climate, such as now exists in Warren County, is all that is needed to send investors elsewhere.

Second, the rights of individuals need to be upheld in our constitutional republic. New homeowners are often ill equipped to defend themselves against the neighborhood clique and gossip mill. The unfriendly neighbor is so common as to be a proverb. Common sense tells us that Mr. Unfriendly next door should not rule over his neighbor's property.

The Conditional Use Permit process should never be used as a hammer to shut down an owner's ambitions for his land. The highest and

best use of the CUP is to mitigate neighbor's concerns, not shut down free enterprise. Reasonable concerns can and should be incorporated as conditions under which a property can be rented short term. Wild imaginings and worst case scenarios are never likely to happen, and so should not trump property rights.

I urge the Board of Supervisors to take a long term view of this issue, and stop letting our neighbors worst fears dim the bright future of Warren County.

Kimberly Hartke  
Executive Director of the Shenandoah Lodging and Tourism Alliance (Hartke and her husband own <Bearlodgecabin.com>)

**SALES**  
Frederick County Report is seeking sales representatives  
in Winchester and Frederick County.  
Email: [dan@areaguides.com](mailto:dan@areaguides.com)

**Letters to the Editor  
are welcome but  
must include the  
author's name and  
town and should be  
emailed to:  
[editor@warrencountyreport.com](mailto:editor@warrencountyreport.com)**