

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Cader-Thompson, Janice](#); [Karen Nau](#); [Pocekay, Dennis](#); [Barnacle, Brian](#); [Shribbs, John](#); [Healy, Mike](#); [McDonnell, Kevin](#); -- [City Clerk](#); [Housing](#)
Subject: Petaluma Tenant Protection Ordinance
Date: Saturday, February 4, 2023 10:58:50 AM

---Warning: Use caution before clicking any attachments. THIS EMAIL IS FROM OUTSIDE OUR EMAIL SYSTEM.---

Jcaderthompson@cityofpetaluma.org Janice Cader-Thompson

knau@cityofpetaluma.org Karen Nau

dpocekay@cityofpetaluma.org Dennis Pocekay

bbarnacle@cityofpetaluma.org Brian Barnacle

jshribbs@cityofpetaluma.org John Shribbs

mhealy@cityofpetaluma.org Mike Healy

kmcdonnell@cityofpetaluma.org Kevin McDonnell,
Mayor

cityclerk@cityofpetaluma.org Kendall Sawyer, City
Clerk

housing@cityofpetaluma.org Karen Shimizu, Housing
Manager

February 2, 2023

Dear Mayor, Council Members & Planning Staff,

We bought our first home here in Petaluma in 1986.

Both of our two children were born while we lived in that home and it holds many special memories for us of our family and friends.

In 1995 we took needed jobs in the South Bay and put our home into the rental market with the plan of moving back to Petaluma when feasible. We now are back in Petaluma, but we live in another part of town and continue to rent out the house to supplement our teachers' retirement pensions. Over the years we used the rental income to send our children to college; our youngest one is due to graduate from Sonoma State at the end of May and the mortgage on the house has only a few more years before it is paid off.

Over the years we have had a small number of excellent and mostly long-term tenants. However, two years ago, we had our first problem tenant.

He precipitated a fight with a neighbor across the street, which in turn led to a gun being fired on our property by that neighbor. But the fact that this incident led to a police helicopter hovering over the neighborhood and a SWAT team blocking off a street that is known for its neighborliness and friendship was shocking to everyone on Wallace Court and nearby. Unprecedented. All because of a conflict precipitated by that tenant. Imagine our shock to see the coverage in the news, including our house visible in the background beyond the police vehicles.

Additionally, this man avoided interaction, and made a habit of peeking into windows. A police report was filed.

He had been living there for less than 10 months and we decided not to renew his annual lease. He moved promptly within legal limits, but left extensive damages to this lovely 1930's home, over \$5,000 worth, the lion's share of which we paid for out of pocket. It would've been significantly more costly if we hadn't done a good part of the work ourselves. Between 3 months' of lost rental income when we did repairs to make it rentable again plus the property damage, we calculated that his brief tenure had cost us over \$10,000. Additionally, imagine our stress level, as he then sent us a series of rancorous, threatening emails about retaliation.

Since then, we again have found excellent tenants, and all is well with the rental income that pays the mortgage. All's well that ends well.

However, a new concern has surfaced: the tenant protection ordinance passed in Petaluma last October means that a couple like us with income from a single rental would not have been able to end the previous tenant's lease for a very long time. With a problem tenant, the costs incurred by us could far exceed any income we receive. Income which currently pays the mortgage on the house.

Needless to say, if the City Council votes to keep current rental guidelines as written in the new Tenant Protection Ordinance, making no distinction between owners like us and larger multi-unit rental owners and corporate development, we reluctantly need to be serious about taking our home out of the housing market.

We are retired and depend on the rent for part of our income. Stress-wise and financially we cannot afford the usual maintenance costs, plus relocations payments to tenants, and potentially quite lengthy period of rent non-payment allowed to tenants as specified in the current language of the ordinance.

As a landlord in Petaluma, we'd be vulnerable to losing control of our one and only rental, a property of sentimental as well as financial value to us. If the language of the ordinance becomes permanent, it increases the possibility that our home could become an unaffordable drain instead of the asset that we've been slowly building for the past 37 years; it might be a wiser choice to move into it ourselves sooner than we intended or to (reluctantly) sell it.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please contact either of us if you wish.

Dan & Maureen Svenson

Owners, [REDACTED] Petaluma, CA