

Village Council of Empire and Short Term Rental Committee;
(Please read at both council and committee)

It is ironic to read the quote from Meg Walton on the front of the Leelanau Enterprise last week regarding short term rentals (STR) in Empire - "I think the biggest surprise is how much misinformation is going around..." - despite the STR report she coauthored concluding that no problems (past or present) with STRs exist in the Village of Empire. Village Council trustees Walton and Dye are basing the committee's work on hearsay which they repeatedly refer to during meetings but for which they have never provided any evidence.

It is unfortunate that the work of the STR committee to date is based on a back of the envelope, unverified estimates of STRs in Empire. As STR owners in Empire, we were never surveyed about our STR and rental experience, nor were any of the other STR owners with whom we have spoken.

Empire is a seasonal village and no action on STR regulation should be taken until 1) the majority of property owners are present and able to participate in the discussion (i.e., in the summer) and, 2) an independent survey of all property owners can be conducted so that decisions can be based on facts rather than conjecture.

The Village Council should not be rushing to enact a policy that flies in the face of the kind of small town, neighborly, welcoming resort community that Empire has always been. That is the character we should be trying to preserve.

- Concerned Citizens of Empire- -Dave Taghon- Michigan St -Mark & Tina Dunphey- Zelmer St
- Holly Decker- E Front St