

From: [Derith Smith](#)
To: [Maggie Bacon](#); [Linda Chase](#); [March Dye](#); [Sue Palmer](#); [Thomas Rademacher](#); [Meg Walton](#); [Chris Webb](#); [Bob Chase](#); [Carey A. Ford](#); [Alacia Acton](#)
Subject: Fwd: short term rentals ordinance committee
Date: Friday, March 22, 2024 9:27:09 PM

FYI - please see message below

Derith A. Smith

Empire Village Clerk
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Empire, MI 49630
231-326-5466

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> ----- Original Message -----

> From: Pamela Murray <pj2fish@gmail.com>
> To: clerk@villageofempire.com
> Date: 03/22/2024 4:29 PM EDT
> Subject: short term rentals ordinance committee

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>

> Dear Clerk Smith,

>

> I am writing in response to both a letter I received several months ago, and a text I received from my next door neighbors in the New Neighborhood.

> Both were concerned that members of the Village Council are considering enacting an ordinance related to short term rentals in Empire.

> Since I own a cottage in the New Neighborhood which I rent short term, I am reaching out to provide some information to your ordinance committee, since they did not bother to contact me to ask any questions they might have had, nor express any concerns.

> My next door neighbors, Debra Dewiit and Roy Sonnema, have already written such a long and sharp analysis of the situation, I will try to keep my comments short, since I agree with their views whole-heartedly.

> I will break my explanation into benefits to Empire and possible concerns.

>

> BENEFITS: 1) I purchased two New Neighborhood lots in 2014. (which meant a local developer and a local realtor made money off of me)

> 2) I built a cottage on one of my lots. (which meant a local builder and his crew, and the licensing and permitting offices, made money off of me)

> 3) I paid taxes on both my empty lot and my cottage (which meant Empire, both Village and Township, made more money off of me than they were getting before, because a cottage is taxed at a higher rate than an empty lot, and since my cottage is not my primary residence, my taxes are even higher than my neighbors who live in Empire year-round.)

> 4) I hired another local contractor to fix everything the original builder did not quite get right, and he has provided me with crews to fix all those issues plus regular maintenance. (so I have paid local tradespeople for 4 years, even after my initial build.)

>

> 5) I sold my empty lot to Deb DeWitt and Roy Sonnema, and they built a house on it. (so now they pay more taxes than I originally did, because there's a house on that lot too.)

> 6) I rent my cottage to friends and New Neighborhood neighbors at a break-even price (just enough to cover taxes and utilities), so I can afford to continue paying Empire taxes.

> This has allowed me to rent to the following types of people:

- > - Deb and Roy, my next door neighbors, who stayed at my cottage for two weeks so they could watch their house being built while they vacationed and prepared to live in Empire
- > - the family of a New Neighborhood neighbor who needed an extra place for them to stay for his wife's memorial service
- > - the grandchildren and children of my other New Neighborhood neighbors
- > some of my downstate friends:
- > - a Michigan notable author, Joseph Harris, who wrote most of his award winning collection of stories at the cottage
- > - another Michigan author, Matthew Piper, and his husband Michel, who manages a boutique hotel in Detroit, where he shows guests his Empire vacation photos
- > -a Detroit NPR host and development director and her wife
- > - a Wayne State professor and her family
- > - my friend Basia, who is my unofficial property manager, since she stays at the cottage more than I do. She is planning on retiring to Leelanau and uses her free time from remote work to research the area, each time becoming more certain that she has found her happy place.

> 7) Because I charge very low rent, I ask my guests to clean up for the next guests, and spend their extra money at local businesses. Grocer's Daughter, Joe's Friendly Tavern, the art galleries, the farmer's market, and Tiffany's Ice Cream all benefit.

> 8) Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore benefits from every guest every year they buy their new park passes. I am 63 now, so I bought my lifetime pass last year. I am done, but my guests buy over 20 additional passes for each car that visits the park.

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> POSSIBLE CONCERNS: We might make noise, or forget to put out the garbage on the right day, or park in the wrong spot, so the neighbors might need to remind us.

> In the 6 years since the cottage has been there, every neighbor who has had to call me about helping a guest with something has later called me to rent my cottage for their family or friends. I think things are working fine the way they are. But if you have concerns, you have my email, so you can communicate directly with me. I think that is a more effective way to deal with the few problems you have.

>

> Sincerely,

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> Pam Murray