

To: Empire Village Council (Please read at next Council meeting)

Date: April 3, 2024

Re: Immediate action needed! Council Committee

Whereas the Empire Village President appointed two council members to a short term rental registration ordinance committee who have no experience with short term rentals,

Whereas the Empire Village President appointed two council members to a short term rental ordinance committee who have demonstrated at meeting after meeting levels of disrespect for the existence of short term rentals in Empire ranging from disdain to outright contempt,

Whereas the Empire Village President (and by default the entire Village Council) has sat in virtual silence as an overwhelming number of letters have been sent to the Village Council requesting reconsideration of a registration ordinance,

Whereas the Empire Village President (and by default the entire Village Council) has mismanaged the entire Short Term Rental Report and Ordinance process,

Whereas the Empire Village President has shown a disturbing level of favoritism toward a single group of residents by immediately taking action to address concerns about appraisals, environmental studies and real estate negotiations about a Village Office purchase in the making for more than 6 years when faced with just 2 letters read into the record, while leaving those who have submitted 25 or more letters (written by locals and STR owners alike) sitting on the sidelines like stepchildren in the Village,

Whereas the State of Michigan Legislature has been unable to pass legislation that states short term rentals in Michigan are deemed to be commercial in nature,

Be it Therefore Resolved; the Village Council will immediately take the following actions:

- A. Disband the Short Term Rental Ordinance Committee for the following reasons:
 - a. Lack of relevant, concrete data to support a registration ordinance,
 - b. Current lack of enforcement infrastructure support needed for any implementation,
 - c. Cease the division being created by pitting neighbor against neighbor,
 - d. Any documents written will only serve to say, "we did it" and will be meaningless.
- B. Formally acknowledge that Empire is unlike other Villages or Townships in Leelanau and Benzie County in that the STR clientele are families looking to participate in outdoor pursuits and not prone to "frat parties".
- C. Formally acknowledge that court cases are not the law because they are based on a specific set of facts for a specific case, and further,
- D. Cease referring to STR in Empire as a commercial venture until such time as a law is passed to that effect.

Resolved; The Village Council consider a contracting with a planner or consultant to complete an objective survey related specifically to short-term rentals, and

Resolved; Said planner work with the Village Planning Commission to recommend further action for the Village Council to consider. (This will take the politics out of it).

We respectfully request the Village Council act on this resolution at your next meeting via motion and roll-call vote. Favoritism has no place within our Village Government. You have acted with great haste to appease a small number of homeowners in one section of the Village about the purchase of a Village Office that we believe will serve the residents and the staff and was a justifiable and planned for expense.

Do your jobs, now, to start healing the wounds that have been inflicted with unsubstantiated claims of problems and statements made at committee meetings such as "I'm okay treating our visitors differently than our residents", "We don't have to take your comments" (made to the public), "It breaks my heart that [a house] was sold to be a short term rental and didn't go to a family", "I am just glad I don't live in area in Empire where people are coming and going every week", "Empire is changing, get over it" and our favorite, "A public hearing will be held" which suddenly became 'we don't have to have a public hearing'.

We, the undersigned, have agreed to have our names published. We have been asked to keep 17 other names (locals, mostly) off this list due to fear of retribution and the existing system of favoritism demonstrated by the current Empire Village Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Jordan and Anna Tank
(Wilce Street, Empire) and Traverse City and Argentina

Frances and Julia Dezelski
(Lake Street, Empire) and Hyattsville, MD

Christopher & Amy Pohlod
(Washington Street, Empire and Lainsburg, MI

Scott and Kelly Cogan
(Union Street, Empire) and East Lansing, MI

The Weaver Family Trust
(Niagara Street, Empire) and Oakland, CA