

MINUTES
Initial Meeting of the Short-Term Rental Issue Advisory Committee
April 11, 2017

Draft: 4/13/17

Present

Organizers: Allan Overhiser, Mary Campbell, John Barkley, Paul Macyauski, Kathy Stanton

Committee: Chris Barczyk, Valerie Bass, Marilyn Darby, Karen Hart, Carson Leftwich, Kirk Leftwich, Bret Morgan, Maureen Moravec, Doug Nickerson, Terese Orban, Tom Tucker, Kathy Watt, John Weaver, Bill Garrity, Darren Massey, Priscilla Massey, Patricia Gibbons, Dave Campbell.

Observers: Judy Graff, Trish

Welcome and Overview of Meeting

Allan called the meeting to order at 6:10 pm, and thanked the participants for returning to participate. He stated that he was happy to see those people back who had participated before and stated that he is grateful for the time and energy they are putting into this effort.

Recap of Previous Meeting

Allan noted that the notes from the first meeting were distributed with the invite for this meeting. He briefly went back over the four areas prioritized in the first meeting:

- Reporting Process
- Good Neighbor Policy
- Noise, Potential Safety Concerns, and Vehicle Guidelines
- Successful Rental Business

Allan explained that we will pick up where we left off and that tonight's goal is to capture input on the Good Neighbor Policy statement and the Voluntary Short-Term Registration form. He stated that we are working toward a delivery date of May 1 for distribution of these tools, as was recommended by the group. And he explained that tonight's input would be incorporated and taken to the board's meeting on Monday.

He then talked about the status of the noise ordinance and plan for finalizing it. He then explained that Kurt is here and will answer questions regarding the Noise Ordinance, and other areas of interest.

Kurt provided an information on a list of issues that had come up at the previous meeting.

Noise/Ordinance – Kurt is getting a decibel reader to help enforce the new Zoning Ordinance since it is based on the decibel readings at a certain distance from the disturbance. Questions were asked about where the noise is measured – from the edge of the property, from inside the complainant's home, from the street? And Kurt is going to clarify that. The proposed ordinance is available on the township website for review.

Call 911 – he encouraged using 911 for almost any call to the Sheriff's Department. He explained that the dispatchers will prioritize the calls into 3 categories. #1 calls will get an immediate response from Kurt if he is on duty or from the closest car if he isn't. A #2 call will get an as soon as we are free level of response and a #3 call may not get a response until the next day. Examples might include:

#1 call – personal attacks, domestics, car accident with injuries, or worse

#2 call – car vandalized, property damage, noise disturbance

#3 call – trash in the road, complaint about a neighbor’s dog digging in the yard

He explained that there are contracted deputies for Casco and Lee township. The township is part of a “section” that also includes Ganges, Lee, Clyde, and Casco. When the Casco officer is off duty, the section car is “first called”.

Whether a car responds immediately or not depends on the priority of the call. They will respond to the highest priority call 1st.

Fireworks – The State of Michigan repealed to old firework law and now almost all forms of fireworks are now legal. On the day before, day of, and day after the holiday the State Law supersedes the Township Noise Ordinance on the day before, day of, and day after state holidays. If someone is being very unreasonable in the middle of the night, still call because they can try to persuade someone to stop shooting off fireworks even if they are legal.

Questions were asked about fireworks in areas that are zoned Agricultural and clarification is needed because agricultural areas are exempt in some cases.

Exemptions can be requested for “special events” such as weddings if requested.

Low Speed Vehicles: they are allowed on “25mph roads” around the township if there is a safety/slow moving vehicle sign on the vehicle. Off-road vehicles are not allowed on roads unless a township passes a special ordinance to allow them.

Parking is allowed on roadways, in a way that it doesn’t impede traffic or access for emergency vehicles.

Kurt talked about tracking the calls from Casco, whether he responds or one of his fellow officers. He indicated that he will take all the calls, sort them, and record them on a spread sheet so the Planning Commission and board of Trustees can consider the volume and types of calls when doing long term planning for rental standards.

Breakout Sessions: Mary explained that there would be two groups - one would review the Voluntary Registration Form and one the Good Neighbor Policy. She explained how the documents were put together using the information generated at the previous meeting and samples from the community. She explained their assignment:

Prepare a summary of what you would recommend changing:

- Are there items that you would delete and why?
- Are there items you would change and why?
- Is there other information that you think we should include and why?

The group counted off to create the teams:

Group 1 – Short-Term Rental Registration Form	Group 2 – Good Neighbor Policy
Valerie Baas	Patricia Gibbons
Bill Garrity	Marilyn Darby
John Weaver	Bret Morgan
Darran Massey	Chris Barczyk
Therese Orban	Dave Campbell
Maureen Moravec - presenter	Carson Leftwich
Kirk Leftwich	Doug Nickerson
Priscilla Massey	Kathy Hart
Kathy Watt	

The groups were given 20 minutes to discuss their respective documents and to prepare their report back to the larger group. The desire is to keep each of the documents to a single page so the teams were asked to keep the content to what was essential.

Each of the groups reported back to the larger team.

The Short-Term Rental Registration Form – suggested the following:

1. Add number of expected rental days per year
2. Eliminate asking for MI Business EIN number
3. Eliminate homestead exemption question
4. Add “Do your guests have the ability to call 911?”
5. Add “Is your property advertised”
6. Add “Do you want your contact number publicly available?”
7. Add “Contact present dwelling within an hour”

Discussion and feedback from the group included:

- Agreement for eliminating #2 – not relevant
- Agreement for eliminating #3 – not relevant
- Agreement that #4 is really about making sure the guests have the ability to call 911 – suggested the question is really about having a land line
- The question about advertising (#5) is not relevant but some people feel that knowing who is advertising provides clues about how careful the screening is, how connected the owner is.
- The contact questions blurred during the discussion and ultimately landed on there being a contact locally, with authority, who can respond to an issue from the police or neighbors within an hour.

Good-Neighbor Policy:

- Edit entire Document
- Call 911 for urgent issues
- Shorten
- Use larger font
- Use simple language

- Use bullet points
 - Noise 11-8 or 10-7
 - Trash – covered trash
 - Fireworks
 - Pets on a leash
 - Fires must be attended
 - Parking
 - Vehicles
 - Water Safety

A number of people felt that the document needs to be much shorter...bullet points only. Chris Barczyk feels that it should be edited by some of the committee members who write as part of their job. Mary explained that the timing involved in getting this out for this season may not allow for that.

There was some discussion about the audience for this document and the group appeared to agree that while the rental guests are the primary audience, it needs to be shared and worded for the entire township because it is relevant and applies to everyone.

It was suggested that the statutes that apply to the main points in the document be included where relevant.

There was also a strong feeling that the document needs to be posted in the rental property and that we need to strongly encourage owners to make sure it is posted.

The next step is to update both documents (Mary will do this) and get them to the board before their meeting on Monday.

John shared progress that has been made on collecting information about rental properties in the area. He built a collaborative spread sheet per a request from Judy Graff that will continue to be populated with information. He explained that this information can be synced with the information that Kurt collects for a comprehensive body of information on rentals to help inform the Planning Commission and Board of Trustees as they move forward with a long-term rental plan.

The Short-Term Rental Registration form and the Good-Neighbor Policy will be completed and mailed as close to May 1 as possible. The documents will also be available on the Casco website. It is still undecided exactly how the registration forms that are submitted will be managed and/or shared.

The Short-Term Rental Advisory Committee will regroup in late July/early August to assess how the 2017 rental season is going.

Allan talked about a small subgroup he is putting together and how they can help contribute to the work the Planning Commission and the external consultant are doing.

Allan thanked the committee for giving their time and energy to this effort of finding some short-term tactics to improve the situation and inform the longer-term solution.

The meeting ended around 8:15 as people continued to discuss the issues amongst themselves.