

Draft
Milton Township
Public Hearing Minutes
October 8, 2025

Members present: C. Weinzapfel, J. Beebe, L. Atkinson, J. Renis, B. Veliquette

Also present were 28 audience members.

Meeting called to order at 6:00 PM and The Pledge was recited.

Motion to approve the agenda as presented by Veliquette/ Renis. Motion carried 5-0.

Correspondence in opposition of STRs in general received from M. Hulteen, S. Hill, A. Sorgi, D. Larsen, D. Sajikowski, L. O'Leary, R. Kingon, and L. & D. Atkinson.

Correspondence in favor of STRs in general received from R. Vick.

Public Comment:

D. Watkins has reported bad behavior and ordinance violations to the zoning department. Would like to remind the Board that the Master Plan says, "Township Planners and residents are keenly interested in preserving the quality of life in Milton Township." Specifically mentions "peace and tranquility is a component of the quality of life." Current STRs do not do anything for quality of life of residents. Was at the original PC meetings for the ordinance. Understands original intent, but current situation is just commercial operation in residential zone. Neighborhoods have become commercialized instead of being residential. Concerns about knowing who is living next to you day to day. Happy to see so much public participation. Would like to see board phasing out STRs.

D. Fitzpatrick talked about speaking to the unknowns. Looking at the ordinance, he says that STRs are to "not be detrimental to the character and livability of surrounding neighborhoods." Driving down N. West Torch Lake Drive would be contrary to this statement. Also, with the limited stores/ restaurants how does it help the local economy? Quoting the ordinance, "Vacation Rentals should not be established as income and/ or profit producing enterprises in residential neighborhoods." Asked if anyone believed this? Does not understand the enforceability – questions the number of people on the property, the six-week limit, very difficult to enforce. Rentals are getting a lot of money and

Fitzpatrick did not find the fines to be high enough in relation to the amount of rental income the STRs are bringing in.

Did research and found loopholes – if a parent LLC owns an LLC, the parent LLC owns the rental license and can pass it to another LLC if “in the family.”

Does not understand why the board is supporting the STRs at all. They do not add value to Milton Township. The widow or widower paying the taxes is not necessarily the case anymore.

R. Gray started asking the board about clarification. Page 11/12 under permitted transfers – immediate family member needs to be defined. Refers back to D. Fitzpatrick’s concerns as well. On pg. 11 – 113.116 A. In the event of an unauthorized transfer – the question remains, why would any unauthorized transfer be allowed?

Appreciates the board taking the time to listen to the public. We came to the area for a reason and would like to see it return to that type of area. Spoke to not knowing who your neighbors are in STRs. Registered sex offenders need to register in their own homes, but no such information provided to vacationing neighbors. State has established reasons for the state registry, but when on vacation may not register. (There is a time restriction for this.) Lives next to a rental and would hate for that to be an issue with kids and grandkids. Township could change the ordinance so that the owner/property management could know the name and addresses of the people in their rental and to check with the state on a registry. Neighbors should be notified if on the list.

R. Vick – in favor of STRs. Family has been in area for 50 years. Lives in home and represents the group of people that are NOT a corporation. Shares concerns of trash, noise, and parties. Very careful about who is allowed to rent home, wants to make sure friends and neighbors are safe. She would even consider checking sex offender list.

Seasonal restrictions should be lifted. Septic requirements required her to do \$20,000 worth of improvements. Vick hears the concerns of the people who have spoken at the meeting against STRs, but wants people to remember that not everyone is like that. Encourages board to focus on the behavior of the STR guests (the noise, the trash, the overparking) and not the existence of the ordinance itself. We all want the same thing. A safe, respectable, and thriving community. Balanced and fair rules for the people who care about this community.

D. Meyer – at the 9/29 meeting, stated against STRs, they are inconsistent with the Master Plan. Feels that it is impossible to enforce. Board took a reasonable approach – moratorium for a year and take enforcement more seriously. Feels that this is a good way to go. May have preferred a more severe approach, but understands. Would like to understand what “more enforcement” means. Wants to know exactly what measures will be taken? And how do I/ fellow township residents monitor progress?

M. Whitehouse – agrees with everything that has been said. Homeowner vs. corporate owners is the bigger concern. Thanked the board for recognizing this issue is a problem.

According to the ordinance, STRs “should not be established as income and/ or profit producing enterprises in residential neighborhoods.” However, taxation code can make “profit” a difficult thing to prove/ disprove. Asked how enforcement would occur with this, would tax records be required?

Also, the ordinance states, “Provisions of this ordinance are necessary to prevent the continued burden on County and Township services and impacts on residential neighborhoods posed by Vacation Rental properties.” How much will this cost and what’s the process? If enforced appropriately, it may increase the burden to the taxpayers.

Transparency is a problem with trying to contact owners for concerns. There should be online forms and an online database to look at complaints, what was done, and what was the conclusion.

Ideally, we would have no STRs. But since the objective of the Board is interested in seeing how enforcement will change things, he would like to know specific metrics to be used for change within a year.

L. Spevacek – 2 riparian properties – Wants to talk about the funneling. Upland properties are being rented with people going to the waterside. No provisions against a private resident having 50+ people over every day. We should focus on what impact this has on the water. What is the purpose and what outcomes are we trying to achieve?

B. Ford – involved in the development of the original ordinance. Nobel idea at the time, but has been taken advantage of and is no longer successful. Based on this he would like to see all STRs ended. Attorney said they could be eliminated. But if we don’t do that, the ordinance – 113.102 G – the intent is to eliminate over time.

113.106 – Violations – 6 ways to lose your license. This says you can lose your license in these 6 specific ways.

113.108 – Posting rental license by front door. Is this a rental unit? Allows for more knowledge of who is there and if there is an event happening. If there is a complaint then the property owner is clearly displayed.

113.109 – Questions about enforcement procedure. How does hotline work? If I call, what happens? If complaint is anonymous, does it get recorded? If name and number is given with complaint, is it recorded? Maybe put language in ordinance to show how to have the complaint taken care of. Likes the idea of the hotline. If violations and complaints are investigated, this would be great.

Understands how difficult it was to put together. It would be great if it ended 10/31, but if not please review concerns. Look at eliminating through attrition. Also would like to see the transfers language be cleaned up. Blue Lake has good ordinance to review.

** Veliquette made clarification that the paper had the wrong time so we would be waiting through at least 7:00 for those that read the paper.**

M. Whitehouse – Differentiating between ag zoning and R-1 zoning is difficult. Difficult to make sure you're in the right one. Besides the blurring lines of zoning, the LLCs are confusing. Some of the owners/ officers are the same.

C. Dakoske asked about list of STRs

D. Fitzpatrick asked about putting list online. If truly committed to enforcing, put them online.

J. Stepaneck – only allow properties that can be homesteaded for STRs. LLCs could not homestead, so corporations couldn't do it for profit. Look at the Homestead Act.

S. Kelley - Asked about revenue from STRs that will be used for enforcement costs. Townships cannot "make profit" from fees for STR licensing. Suggests looking at linking costs for the two (fees and costs of enforcement).

With new arrivals, discussion started discussing property that was attempting to get high density housing approved. Why was road name allowed? Explanation given that the parcel

was NOT subdivided. One parcel with 16 addresses. County Equalization requested name approval.

D. Meyer – Looking long term, common theme of ordinance – who understands the full ordinance? It seems to have many loopholes. Would like to explore possibilities, in the spirit of the original ordinance, for a less complicated one. Would it be simpler to enforce? Is it legal to simplify? Can we introduce a new ordinance that is short, sweet, and enforceable?

D. Ginther – If the intention to eliminate STRs is really the plan, this should be decided immediately. Changes how the ordinance is enforced.

B. Veliquette stated that the board did not take the position that the intention is to eliminate. Lots of discussion around that, but the board has not taken that specific position. Also stated he feels that there is a benefit to some residents in Milton Township. Many changes can be made (online info), but we will see how this goes. Needs to see the actual enforcement. 6 of the 34 licenses seem to be the majority of the concerns.

Audience member asked about how the whole board feels about this.

L. Atkinson agrees with waiting and seeing if enforcement is possible. Costs of enforcement? We need to wait and see. This needs to be evaluated after a year. Cost effective?

Public wants to know what metrics will be for measurement.

This is something the board is waiting for guidance from zoning about.

C. Stebineck wants to know how board feels and if they are STR owners. Veliquette has stated his opinion. Renis stated that he likes the faux pas from zoning that the rentals be eliminated through attrition. Wants to see better enforcement. Atkinson does not own STR. Neither does Renis. Weinzapfel does not have a stance, would like to discuss with attorney and has not been in contact with attorney with a finished ordinance. Does not love the current ordinance. Beebe feels that we need to see a cleaner ordinance and see what actual enforcement does.

Questions from the audience:

Does it make any sense to do lottery?

What happened to 1000-foot buffer? Atkinson explained that since we weren't issuing any more licenses it wouldn't be necessary.

Michigan anti funneling rule? Can we incorporate that language in our ordinance?

Weinzapfel explained that Milton Township does have a funneling ordinance.

Weinzapfel expressed appreciation to everyone coming in and expressing thoughts. The board is working on revisions.

Audience member wants to know when revisions will be available?

Weinzapfel explained changing ordinance should be done by October 20, before licenses are renewed. Revisions should be online.

Veliquette asked if changes will be finished before renewals are done? Waiting for zoning to provide ordinance. Enforcement officer will be used for more than just the STRs.

Weinzapfel will look to changing fees to cover enforcement officer. That doesn't need to be figured out before the ordinance is finalized and renewals are processed.

Clarification from S. Kopriva with some of the concerns that board members had and the new ones from the public. Renis asked to email concerns.

Meeting adjourned by order of the chair at 7:37 pm.

These minutes are subject to approval at the October 20, 2025 meeting. A copy of these minutes is available at MiltonTownshipMI.gov.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Beebe, Clerk