

MASTODON TOWNSHIP
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA
April 14, 2026

Call to Order/Pledge
Roll Call
Agenda Approval
Previous Board Meeting Minutes (March 10, 2026 and March 24, 2026 Budget Hearing)
Accounts Payable & Payroll Review
Treasurer's Report
Clerk's Report
Supervisor's Report
Road Commission Report
Assessor's Report
Fire Chief's Report
Planning Commission Report – No Meeting
Zoning Administrator's Report
Recreational Committee Report
Village of Alpha Report
Maintenance Report

Guest:

Public Comment Agenda Items:

Unfinished Business:

- Renewal Millages Resolutions
 - General Operating
 - Road Maintenance and Improvement
- Legal Representation Resolution

New Business:

- Short Term Rental Discussion and Proposed Resolution
- Agreement for Law Enforcement Services – UPSET Funding Commitment

Other Business:

Public Comments:

Board Comments:

Details of Next Meeting: May 12, 2026

Adjournment:

Rules of Public Comment:

Members of the public shall have an opportunity, under Public Comment, to address the board for no more than 3 minutes on any matter. Members of the public may talk longer with the approval of a majority vote of the Township Board. Members of the public shall be recognized in the order in which they entered their name on the provided public comment sign in sheets indicating their desire to address the board. Any additional person desiring to address the board who did not use the sign in sheets shall be recognized following those who have signed in.

Minutes

Draft Minutes

March 10, 2026

Regular Board Meeting

Draft Minutes

March 24, 2026

Budget Review Public Hearing

Mastodon Township Regular Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 10, 2026

A regular meeting of the Mastodon Township Board was called to order at 5:30pm by Supervisor Chad Skinner.

Pledge of Allegiance was said.

PRESENT BY ROLL CALL: Dave Smith, Mike Bjork, Karen Mallon, Chad Skinner, Stacey Watters.

Department members present: Dan Kurtz.

Public in attendance:

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Motion by Watters to approve agenda. Support: Smith. Call to vote: All ayes; no nays. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Bjork to approve the minutes of the February 10, 2026 Regular Board Meeting. Support: Smith. Call to vote: All ayes; no nays. Motion carried.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE & PAYROLL REVIEW: Bjork reported to the Board that he reviewed payables for General Fund check 32902, and payroll for checks numbers 32892-32902, and direct deposits DD1346-DD1356. Invoices presented for approval included invoices 14367-1442 in the amount of \$9,984.47. Mallon reported that checks 32903 to 32908 were used to reissue uncashed payroll checks in the amount of \$426.01. The reissued of checks has no effect on funds. Motion by Skinner to approve payables, invoices and payroll as submitted. Support: Watter. Call to vote. All ayes; no nays. Motion carried. Mallon requested approval to pay garbage reimbursement requests as they come in for this last period of the fiscal year without prior Board approval. Request granted.

REPORTS:

Treasurer: Written and submitted. Watters reported that 2025 tax season is complete. Settlement work and balancing is being completed with the County Treasurer.

Clerk: Written and submitted. Mallon stated that she has learned that a board representative can be appointed to the ZBA.

Supervisor: Working on policy changes. Will implement suggestions from MTA in Budget Resolution for spending approvals for Supervisor and department heads.

Road Commission Report: Smith reported that he was unable to attend the Road Commission meeting. Smith reported that seasonal weight restrictions are in effect. Highway US 2 road work will begin from the bridge to 424.

Assessor: Written and submitted.

Fire Chief: Written and submitted. Chief Fleming requested approval to purchase a gas monitor for the Fire Department. Motion by Skinner to approve purchase of a gas monitor not to exceed \$950.00. Support: Bjork. Call to vote. All ayes. No nays. Motion carried.

Zoning Administrator: Written report submitted.

Planning Commission: Bjork reported that the Planning Commission has completed an update of the Master Plan. The members will do a final review of the Master Plan and will be prepared to present it to the Board of adoption at the May meeting. Bjork reported that the Planning Commission will prepare an annual report to be presented to the Board at the May Board meeting. The Planning Commission would like Board Approval to use GEI for contract work for the Recreation Plan in order to make application for DNR grants for 2026-2027. The Zoning Ordinance is being reviewed. It is anticipated that it will be ready for review by the public and local municipalities early summer. There has been no applications for open positions on the Planning Commission.

Recreational Committee: Sherie Courchaine presented report to Board. She advised that the committee met on January 20, 2026 and is looking at projects for 2026 to present budgetary figures to the Board. She has presented information regarding Stager Lake Beach improvements and the naming of an Alpha Park. Both of which will be discussed during New Business.

Village of Alpha: No report submitted. It was reported that DTE met with village representatives and residents regarding the natural gas expansion to the Village of Alpha.

Maintenance: Written and submitted. Kurtz was asked to get quotes for a new dock for Buck Lake Park and have it presented at the Budget Hearing on March 24, 2026.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- **Budget Hearing Reminder:** The 2026-2027 Budget Hearing will be on Tuesday, March 24, 2026 at 9:00 am.
- **Buck Lake Special Assessment District:** Mallon advised the Board that a representative of the Buck Lake Lake Association has advised her that property owners are interested in moving forward with a special assessment district. Mallon is reviewing materials received and will present a roll to the assessor and supervisor for certification.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Road Commission Quote – Upper Dam Road:** A quote has been received by the Road Commission for gravel work on one mile of road on Dam Road. The quote came in at \$216,568.00. After discussion, the Board has opted to table this work.
- **Township Cleanup Day:** Township Cleanup day will be scheduled for June 13, 2026 from 8:00 am until 12:00 pm. One dumpster will be provided for general junk and one for tires.
- **Happy Lands, LLC – Retail Marijuana Renewal:** Motion by Skinner to approve the renewal for Happy Lands, LLC for 2026, contingent upon if ZA is required to inspect. Support: Mallon. Call to vote. All ayes. No nays. Motion carried. Mallon will contact ZA for clarification of need to inspect license renewals.
- **Open Position on ZBA:** Mallon advised Board she is interested in being the Board Liaison to the ZBA. Motion by Skinner to approve Mallon as ZBA Board Liaison. Support: Watters. Call to vote. All ayes. No nays. Motion carried.


Public Comment: None

Board Comments: None

Details of Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 14, 2026

Adjournment: Motion by Bjork to adjourn the meeting at 6:09 pm. Support: Smith. Call to vote: All ayes; no nays. Motion carried.

I hereby certify that the minutes contained herein are the draft minutes of the March 10, 2026, Regular Board meeting. Signed herein by the Mastodon Township Clerk, Karen Mallon on this the 13th day of March 2026.



Karen Mallon, Clerk

Mastodon Township
Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget Hearing Minutes
Tuesday, March 24, 2026

A Budget Hearing meeting of the Mastodon Township Board was called to order at 9:00am by Supervisor Chad Skinner.

Pledge of Allegiance was said.

PRESENT BY ROLL CALL: Dave Smith, Mike Bjork, Karen Mallon, Chad Skinner, Stacey Watters.

DEPARTMENT MEMBERS PRESENT: Dan Kurtz, Andy Fleming

PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE: None

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Motion by Bjork to approve agenda. Support: Watters. Call to vote: All ayes; no nays. Motion carried.

The budget has been recorded. The recording will remain in the Clerk's office for a period of 45 days. The recording is available to any member of the public who so wishes to listen and review the meeting.

BUSINESS:

The Board was presented with the proposed 2026-2027 budget by Skinner. Bjork discussed township fund reserves and stressed the importance that the Board maintains a 50% fund reserve. Smith reminded Board members of the fiduciary responsibility the Board has to the taxpayers of Mastodon Township.

Salary Discussion: A proposed wage increase by department was presented to the Board for review and consideration. The changes in wages that were approved will be adopted with the FY2026-2027 Budget. The following changes were made after Board consideration:

Office	Current Rate	New Rate
Trustee – Per Meeting	\$75.00	\$125.00
Enforcement Officer – Annual	N/A	\$1200.00
Deputy Clerk - Hourly	\$15.00	\$17.50
Deputy Treasurer – Hourly	\$15.00	\$17.50
Buildings/Grounds/Maintenance Hourly	\$20/\$24/\$27	\$30.00
Board of Review (Meetings & Training)	\$15.00/hour	\$75 ½ Day; \$125 Full Day
Election Chair - Hourly	\$15.00	\$20.00
Election Inspectors – Hourly	\$15.00	\$17.50
Planning Commission – Chair Per Meeting	\$75.00	\$125.00
Planning Commission – Secretary Per Meeting	\$75.00	\$100.00
Zoning Board of Appeals – Chair Per Meeting	\$75.00	\$125.00
Zoning Board of Appeals – Secretary Per Meeting	\$75.00	\$100.00
Recreation Committee Members Per/ Meeting	\$0.00	\$25.00
Fire Department Cadets – Hourly	\$12.50	\$15.00

Township Reserves: The balances in Township savings accounts will be considered in the approval of the FY2026-2027 budget where project requests have been made. The Township Board will consider cost of project and available and estimated funding.

The following represents account balances as of March 24, 2026:

SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

General Fund	\$	136,717.38
Dunn Water	\$	20,848.41
Fire Department	\$	206,729.14
Recreation Plan	\$	34,149.02
Future Capital	\$	20,376.11
Marijuana	\$	241,462.76
Alpha Mastodon FD Relief	\$	2,440.76
Road	\$	278,866.84
Dunn Mine	\$	4,345.31
Total Cash on Hand:	\$	1,266,703.22

Total estimated general fund revenues for FY2026-2027 which include allocated millage funding, voter-authorized funding, licensing and permit funding, and intergovernmental funding is \$699,604.00. This estimated general fund revenue and savings accounts "cash on hand" will be the determining factor for the FY2026-2027 budget adoption.

Budget Review: The following proposed budget, by cost center, was reviewed and approved by the Board.

Cost Center	Budget
General Gov't – Supervisor	\$27,775.00
Legislative – Trustee	\$14,956.00
General Gov't – Elections	\$21,800.00
General Gov't – Township Office	\$113,300.00
General Gov't – Assessor	\$27,275.00
General Gov't – Clerk	\$32,639.00
General Gov't – Deputy Clerk	\$5,600.00
General Gov't – Board of Review	\$3,100.00
General Gov't – Treasurer	\$29,875.00
General Gov't – Deputy Treasurer	\$1,090.00
General Gov't – Township Hall	\$97,020.00
General Gov't – Garage	\$23,500.00
General Gov't – Cemetery	\$3,884.00
General Gov't – Twp Garbage Prg	\$48,200.00
General Gov't – Twp Library Prog	\$1,000.00
General Gov't – Fire Department	\$150,100.00
General Gov't – Planning & Zoning	\$39,895.00
General Gov't – Street Lighting	\$2,000.00
Park & Rec – Buck Lake Park	\$5,600.00
Park & Rec – Stager Lake Park	\$10,710.00
Recreation – 4 th of July	\$7,600.00
Park & Rec – Anderson Ball Park	\$3,930.00
Park & Rec – Triangle Park	\$2,100.00
Park & Rec – Partala Park	\$110.00
Gov't Facilities – Camp 5	\$2,937.00
Recreation & Culture	\$42,545.00
Worker's Compensation	\$8,000.00
TOTAL GF EXPENDITURES	\$726,541.00
Road - Expenditures	\$14,500.00
Dunn Mine Water Expenditures	\$1,700.00
Total Proposed Expenditures:	\$742,741.00

Projects, Programs, and Improvements approved:

The following projects, programs and improvements were approved by the Mastodon Township Board and included in the budget:

Office/Department	Description	Estimated Cost
All Boards and Commissions	MTA Online Subscription - Training	\$1,900.00
Financial, HR, Tax and Assessing – Capital Outlay	BS&A Cloud Upgrade	\$30,000.00
Township Website	ADA Compliance Upgrade	\$3,500.00
Township Office/Hall	Starlink Internet Services	\$5,000.00
Garage – Capital Outlay	New Mower and Other Tools, Signs	\$5,500.00
Township – Capital Outlay	Thrasher Building and Hall Building Improvements	\$50,000.00
Township	Garbage Voucher Program & Spring Clean Up Day	\$47,500.00
Fire Department – Capital Outlay	Supplies and Upgrades as needed	\$15,000.00
Township – 4 th of July	Support for Fireworks	\$7,500.00
Township/Fire Department	Camp 5 Building Repairs & Generator	\$5,000.00
Recreation – Alpha Parks	B-Ball Court Repair, Signs, Tree Removal & Landscaping	\$28,000.00
Recreation – Buck Lake Park	Building Power, Solar Lighting and Trail Signs	\$6,000.00
Recreation – Stager Lake Park	Picnic Tables, Solar Lighting and Sand	\$8,000.00
Township	LED Message Board	\$5,000.00
Township	Library Card Reimbursement	\$1,000.00

Budget Approval:

Motion by Mallon to approve and adopt the FY 2026-2027 Mastodon Township Budget. Support: Smith. Roll call vote: Bjork – yes; Mallon – yes; Skinner – yes; Watters – yes; Smith – yes. Motion carried, FY2026-2027 Budget approved and adopted.

Motion by Mallon to transfer \$14,000.00 from Recreation Savings account to General Fund to support budget funding; and to transfer \$45,000.00 from Marijuana Savings to General Fund to support budget funding; and to transfer \$5,000.00 from Marijuana Savings to Future Capital Savings to support funding for investment in a future purchase of a pickup truck; and to transfer \$20,000.00 from Marijuana Savings to Fire Department Savings to invest in the future purchase of a fire vehicle; and to transfer \$40,000.00 from General Fund Savings to Fire Department Savings to invest in a future purchase of a fire apparatus. Support: Skinner. Roll call vote: Mallon – yes; Skinner – yes; Watters – yes; Smith – yes; Bjork – yes. Motion carried. Treasurer will conduct bank transfers immediately.

Annual Resolutions:

Resolution, number 2026-0324.001, The General Appropriations Act was presented to the Board for adoption. Motion by Skinner to adopt the 2026-2027 General Appropriations Act Resolution number 2026-0324.001. Support: Watters. Roll call vote: Skinner – yes; Mallon – yes; Bjork – yes; Smith – yes; Watters – yes. Motion carried, and the resolution was duly adopted.

Resolution 2026-0324.002, Trustee Annual Salary was presented to the Board for adoption. Motion by Mallon to adopt Resolution number 2026-0324.002. Support: Skinner. Roll call vote: Skinner – yes; Mallon – yes; Smith – yes; Watters – yes. Bjork abstained from voting. Motion carried, and the resolution was duly adopted.

Resolution 2026-0324.003, Annual Meeting Dates was presented to the Board for adoption. Motion by Watters to adopt Resolution number 2026-0324.003. Support: Bjork. Roll call vote: Smith – yes; Bjork – yes; Mallon – yes; Skinner – yes; Watters – yes. Motion carried, and the resolution was duly adopted.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Kurtz appreciated the time that was invested to review and adopt the 2026-2027 budget.

BOARD COMMENTS: None

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Bjork to adjourn the meeting at 1:49 pm. Support: Watters. Call to vote: All ayes; no nays. Motion carried.

I hereby certify that the minutes contained herein are the draft minutes of the March 24, 2026, Budget Hearing meeting. Signed herein by the Mastodon Township Clerk, Karen Mallon on this the 13th day of March 2026.

 _____, Karen Mallon, Clerk

Draft

Accounts Payable

General Fund

Check 32963-32996 - \$18,841.06

Payroll

March 2026

Checks 32955 - 32962

DD1357-DD1372

\$12,973.67

04/01/2026

CHECK REGISTER FOR MASTODON TOWNSHIP
CHECK DATE FROM 03/12/2026 - 03/31/2026

Check Date	Check	Vendor Name	Description	Amount
Bank CVCU COVANTAGE CREDIT UNION				
03/19/2026	32963	DENNIS STACHOWICZ	Garbage Reimbursement	\$ 233.90
03/19/2026	32964	STEVE MARACINI	Garbage Reimbursement	\$ 179.00
03/19/2026	32965	MIKE MICHELA	Garbage Reimbursement	\$ 95.99
03/19/2026	32966	JANET MILLIGAN	Garbage Reimbursement	\$ 198.00
03/19/2026	32967	DYNAMACORE	Garbage Reimbursement	\$ 250.00
03/19/2026	32968	BEKA WIKSTEN	Garbage Reimbursement	\$ 90.00
03/19/2026	32969	DOLORES HOHOLEK	Garbage Reimbursement	\$ 82.02
03/19/2026	32970	DAVID MORTON	Garbage Reimbursement	\$ 500.00
03/19/2026	32971	PATTI STEINBERG	Garbage Reimbursement	\$ 426.00
03/23/2026	32972	COVANTAGE CREDIT UNION	Visa Bill	\$ 2,961.15
03/31/2026	32973	JOHN & LORNA ANDERSON	Garbage Reimbursement	\$ 250.00
03/31/2026	32974	MIKE BJORK	Garbage Reimbursement	\$ 500.00
03/31/2026	32975	ED OR SUE BORSCH	Garbage Reimbursement	\$ 500.00
03/31/2026	32976	ROBERT BRIGGS	Garbage Reimbursement	\$ 198.00
03/31/2026	32977	JACKIE CLANCEY	Garbage Reimbursement	\$ 90.00
03/31/2026	32978	MATTHEW COLLIE	Garbage Reimbursement	\$ 159.68
03/31/2026	32979	DON & SUE ECHOLA	Garbage Reimbursement	\$ 25.00
03/31/2026	32980	DARYL GREENE	Garbage Reimbursement	\$ 250.00
03/31/2026	32981	COUNTY OF IRON	Treasurer's Office - Supplies	\$ 595.35
03/31/2026	32982	TERRYJARDEEN	Garbage Reimbursement	\$ 250.00
03/31/2026	32983	WILLIAM KAPELES	Garbage Reimbursement	\$ 25.00
03/31/2026	32984	KEANE'S AUTOMOTIVE SPECIALISTS	Garbage Reimbursement	\$ 119.31
03/31/2026	32985	PETER LAPIN	Garbage Reimbursement	\$ 250.00
03/31/2026	32986	CHARYL MCCOLE	Garbage Reimbursement	\$ 99.00
03/31/2026	32987	MIKE MICHELA	Garbage Reimbursement	\$ 102.66
03/31/2026	32988	MICHAEL PREMO	Garbage Reimbursement	\$ 118.20
03/31/2026	32989	CINDY RAHOI	Garbage Reimbursement	\$ 250.00
03/31/2026	32990	JASON RUSCH	Garbage Reimbursement	\$ 250.00
03/31/2026	32991	SHERI SKRZYNIARZ	Garbage Reimbursement	\$ 360.41
03/31/2026	32992	HANNAH TIEDT	Garbage Reimbursement	\$ 47.93
03/31/2026	32993	TTR, INC.	Fire Trucks (1, 5 & 6) Mainten	\$ 3,794.46
03/31/2026	32994	AL TUELL	Garbage Reimbursement	\$ 25.00
03/31/2026	32995	DOUG WILLIAMS	Garbage Reimbursement	\$ 250.00
04/01/2026	32996	ACCIDENT FUND INSURANCE COMPANY	Worker's Comp Ins Prem	\$ 5,315.00
Total of 34 Checks:				\$ 18,841.06
Less 0 Void Checks:				\$ -
Total of 34 Disbursements:				\$ 18,841.06

04/01/2026

Check Register Report For

For Payroll ID: 258 Check Date: 03/11/2026 Pay Period End Date: 03/11/2026

Check Date	Check Number	Name	Check Amount
03/11/2026	32955	BJORK, MICHAEL J	301.73
03/11/2026	32956	CORNELIA, DAMION	26.42
03/11/2026	32957	CORNELIA, WADE	120.05
03/11/2026	32958	CREEL, STUART	754.21
03/11/2026	32959	FLEMING, ANDREW C	929.40
03/11/2026	32960	JENSEN, PAMELA	70.42
03/11/2026	32961	SMITH, DAVE	444.91
03/11/2026	32962	WHITE, DONALD E.	26.43
03/11/2026	DD1357	COURCHAIINE, SHERRIE L.	414.30
03/11/2026	DD1358	HENDRICKSON, TAMMY L.	1,835.42
03/11/2026	DD1359	HOFFMAN, JENNIFER M	26.43
03/11/2026	DD1360	HOFFMAN, WILLIAM	26.43
03/11/2026	DD1361	KINSEY, ASHLEE	66.08
03/11/2026	DD1362	KURTZ, DANIEL G	925.04
03/11/2026	DD1363	LUFT, ADAM D	70.48
03/11/2026	DD1364	MALLON, KAREN M	2,079.08
03/11/2026	DD1365	MALLON, KAREN M	1,068.87
03/11/2026	DD1366	MALLON, PAUL D	193.94
03/11/2026	DD1367	MILLER, KATHLEEN	46.25
03/11/2026	DD1368	PICKART, JONATHON	350.93
03/11/2026	DD1369	SKINNER, CHARLES	1,644.64
03/11/2026	DD1370	STANEK, DAVID E	193.93
03/11/2026	DD1371	WATTERS, STACEY	1,305.42
03/11/2026	DD1372	WINGER, ADAM M	52.86
Totals:			12,973.67

Invoices for Approval

For Board Approval

Invoices
General Fund \$

Invoice
Water Fund \$



[\(<https://michigantownships.org>\)](https://michigantownships.org)

Short-Term Rentals

Protect your township's ability to zone for short-term rentals!

Local governments count on zoning to shape their communities and preserve the quality of life so important to their residents. Past legislative efforts—which may continue in the current legislative session—sought to eliminate your township's ability to do so. Those efforts would have preempted your township's local zoning authority to regulate short-term rentals.

Many communities across the state have enacted regulations to address detrimental impacts short-term rentals have had on the quality of life in neighborhoods. Each community has accomplished this in a manner that best meets the needs of residents and short-term rentals. These local efforts should not be undermined and replaced with a one-size-fits-all approach from the state.

Past legislative efforts threatened the ability for local municipalities to manage the number and location of rentals across Michigan, undermining local control and upsetting the delicate balance between property rights and the established, transparent process for local decision-making.

Many times, commercial interests purchase multiple homes in a community for the sole purpose of renting them on a short-term basis—daily, weekly or monthly—with no intent for the owner to ever occupy the residential property. MTA believes locally elected township boards are best positioned to balance the unique needs of their community when addressing zoning issues and to protect the health, safety and welfare of residents, vacation visitors and renters.

MTA opposes such attacks on local decision-making.

Michigan Township voice



A LEGISLATIVE UPDATE FOR TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS | MAY 2019



New short-term rental bills would allow local zoning

For the last few years, a battle has brewed over short-term rentals and where they should be allowed in communities.

As residents complain that their neighborhoods are being transformed into transient tourist communities, local units have turned to zoning for a solution. They've adopted ordinances to address the location and/or the registration of short-term rentals in their community. Both this year and last legislative session, lawmakers have proposed bills to essentially strip townships and other local governments of any ability to regulate vacation and short-term rentals in residential zones.

But this month, a package of bills was introduced to tackle the issue with a new approach. **House Bills 4554-4563**, under primary sponsor Rep. Jim Lilly (R-Park Twp.), would allow local zoning authority of short-term rentals while maintaining the statutory provision prohibiting exclusionary zoning. The package would create a state short-term rental registry, require properties to carry a certain level of liability insurance and subject properties to fines for violations.

While MTA has presented the bill sponsor with technical amendments, we support this package as it would continue to empower townships to respond to residents' needs and shape their community's needs.

Short-term and vacation rentals are nothing new along Michigan's picturesque lakeshores and lush forests. But in recent years, rental homes are increasing in areas where year-round residents live. In what's known as today's "sharing economy," a growing number of people are using Airbnb.com and other online services to rent houses, condos

or even a single room in their home. The result is homeowners now living side by side with short-term renters on vacation. While not the case in all situations, this has negatively impacted the quality of life of some residents due to noise, late-night parties, parking and other disturbances.

As local units have crafted ordinances that best suit their residents, both the real estate and rental industries have pushed for legislation to preempt local regulations. **HB 4046**, sponsored by Rep. Jason Sheppard (R-Bedford Twp.), tackles this issue by effectively stripping local units of their authority to regulate the location (zoning) of vacation and short-term rentals of 28 days or less. MTA vehemently opposes this bill, as townships must retain their authority to protect and preserve the atmosphere and nature of their communities and residential neighborhoods.

in this issue

- 2 Out-of-town military could return ballots electronically
- Bills tackle PFAS in firefighting foam
- 3 New alternative energy tax exemptions proposed

MTA

In recent weeks, Rep. Lilly proposed what's called the "Michigan Short-Term Rental Promotion Act" as an alternative approach. Under **HB 4554**, the primary bill in the package, all short-term rentals of no more than 30 consecutive days would be required to register their property with the state. The bill clarifies that personal information, such as the street address and owner's name, is exempt from the Freedom of Information Act. Additionally, the bill states local units cannot have any zoning ordinance that effectively prohibits short-term rentals in compliance with the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act.

The bill would require that anyone who owns a short-term rental to carry \$1 million in liability insurance, either on their own or through their hosting platform, such as Airbnb. The owner must also pay all taxes and assessments required by law. Any owner who violated the act would be subject to a fine of as much as \$15,000.

HB 4554 would also create a workgroup of stakeholders, including local units, the tourism industry and real estate professionals. The group would be tasked with assisting the state Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) with developing best practices and model short-term rental zoning.

The other bills in the package have bipartisan sponsorship and would amend various statutes to reflect the changes, including **HB 4563**, sponsored by Rep. Joseph Tate (D-Detroit), which amends the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act. HB 4563 clarifies that a residential property that's rented out for no more than 14 days in a calendar year is a residential use and is permitted in all residential zones.

As written, the Zoning Enabling Act states that a local zoning ordinance or decision shall not have the effect of totally prohibiting a land use in a local unit with a demonstrated need for that land use either in that local unit or the surrounding area. HB 4563 proposes to add "including, but not limited to, a short-term rental" to the current statute.

MTA is working with Rep. Lilly on amendments to these bills, which have not yet been considered in committee, and is part of a workgroup to address legislative changes. We will update members on their progress.

Out-of-town military could return ballots electronically

Members of the military may already vote by an absent voter ballot when their service requires them to be out of town on Election Day. Now, pending legislation in the Senate would allow their ballots to be returned electronically.

Senate Bill 117, sponsored by Sen. Ruth Johnson (R-Holly Twp.), and **SB 297**, sponsored by Sen. Paul Wojno (D-Warren), were recently reported by the Senate Elections Committee. Both bills are being monitored by MTA as they move to the full Senate for a vote.

Currently, townships and other local units are required, upon request, to send members of the military absent voter ballots, which are returned by mail to the proper location. Together, the tie-barred bills would allow the military member to skip the mailbox. Rules establishing policies and procedures for electronically returned ballots would be required to be established by the secretary of state, including reasonable steps to ensure integrity and secrecy. The latter could be an issue, as to how to maintain secrecy, if a ballot is returned to the local clerk as an attachment.

If enacted, the secretary of state must promulgate rules to implement the change by Jan. 1, 2020, and would have to allow for ballots to be electronically returned by eligible members no later than the August 2020 primary election.

Bills tackle PFAS in firefighting foam

The fight to protect Michigan's water resources took a major step backward with the discovery of PFAS in public water supplies. The insidious chemical, also called per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, has increasingly been linked to negative health effects, including liver and testicular cancers.

Since the 1940s, PFAS was a common ingredient in commercial household products from water- and stain-repellant fabrics to cleaning products and even nonstick pots and pans. It was also a key ingredient in firefighting foams, especially at airports and military bases where firefighting training occurs.

Firefighting foam was identified as a major source of PFAS water contamination, especially at the former Wurtsmith Air Force Base in Oscoda, where it was used to douse fires sparked by flammable liquids. Three bills currently being considered in the House Natural Resources Committee were written to help curb future pollution from firefighting foam containing PFAS.

House Bill 4389, sponsored by Rep. Sue Allor (R-Wolverine Twp.), and HBs 4390-4391, sponsored by Rep. Jeff Yaroch (R-Richmond), would require fire chiefs to report any use of PFAS-containing foam to the state Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) within 48 hours. This would include the reason the foam was used, where it was used and any potentially affected bodies of water, as well as the quantity and name brand of the foam and practices used for cleanup.

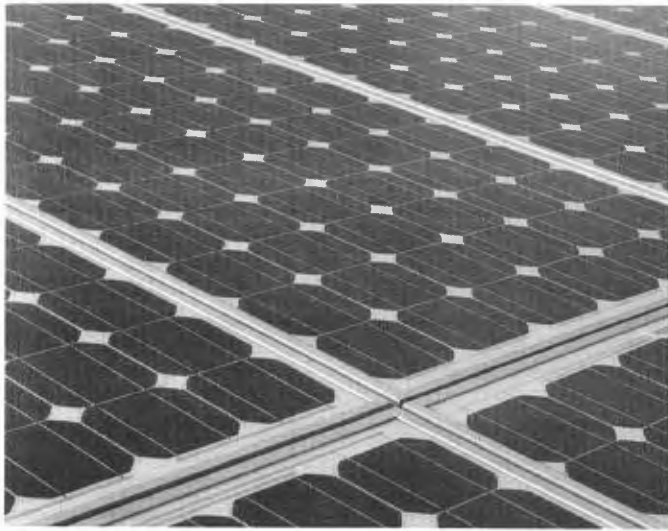
Additionally, as introduced all firefighters would receive training about the chemical. This would include its proper use, handling and storage, as well as the best environmental and public health practices, including containment and proper disposal. The actual PFAS foam would be prohibited from use in training.

EGLE would be required to establish a collection program for firefighting foam containing PFAS chemicals with a carbon chain of more than six. Under the program, EGLE must accept the foam free of charge and take responsibility for its proper disposal. However, this program would be contingent on the Legislature providing the funds to cover costs.

One concern raised during discussion on the legislation is that some fire departments have already moved away from using PFAS containing foam. Departments have argued they shouldn't be required to be trained on the chemical when their firefighters won't encounter it. On the other hand, smaller departments may not have the money to use PFAS-free foam for training procedures and would struggle with the cost this package would place on them.

To tackle this issue, House Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Committee Chair Rep. Gary Howell (R-North Branch) appointed a workgroup of stakeholders. This group includes the state fire marshal, fire chiefs, firefighters and environmental groups, as well as any other interested Natural Resources Committee members. Issues being discussed by the group include the definition of PFAS, and whether it includes all forms or only the chemical used in firefighting foam; training requirements for fire departments, and whether all firefighters must be trained in the use and cleanup of the foam, or only those that have it in stock or provide mutual aid to a department that uses it.

MTA has not taken a position on these bills but is monitoring them for their potential impact on township fire departments. We will update members as these bills move through the legislative process.



New alternative energy tax exemptions proposed

As concerns over climate change grow, more homeowners and businesses alike are turning to alternative energy. Whether it's a rooftop solar panel or a wind turbine towering over a field, these environmentally friendly methods of producing energy are becoming more common.

While alternative energy systems were previously offered tax exemptions, none are currently on the books. Two sets of bills in the House and Senate, however, would effectively exempt small alternative energy systems from taxes.

House Bills 4069 and **4465**, sponsored by Reps. Bronna Kahle (R-Clinton Twp.) and Youssef Rabhi (D-Ann Arbor), were introduced in the House, while **Senate Bills 47** and **48**, sponsored by Sen. Tom Barrett (R-Benton Twp.), were introduced in the Senate. Each set of bills would exempt alternative energy equipment (producing not more than 150 kilowatts) used residentially, commercially or industrially from taxes. While the bills could potentially reduce local revenue, MTA took a neutral position based on the negotiation of amendments on similar legislation last year that were incorporated in the bills. The legislation is a reintroduction of bills that received final passage last legislative session but were ultimately vetoed by former Gov. Rick Snyder.

Alternative energy equipment, particularly solar panels, have been assessed and interpreted differently over time. From 2003 to 2013, solar panels could be exempt from property taxes under a specific provision classifying the property as "alternative energy personal

Township Insights, MTA's weekly e-newsletter, offers timely information and updates about legislative happenings, as well as news, programs and resources that can help you better serve your community. Look for the latest on what's happening in Lansing, grant opportunities—and more! Not receiving *Township Insights* in your email? Contact legislation@michigantownships.org.

property." However, that exemption was not renewed. In June 2013, the State Tax Commission (STC) issued a memorandum classifying solar panels as industrial personal property, exempting them from the 6-mill state education tax and the 18-mill non-homestead levy earmarked for local schools.

Then, with the passage of personal property tax reform in 2014, solar panels could be tax-exempt under the small taxpayer exemption, as long as their true cash value was less than \$80,000. Last year, in February 2018, the STC classified residential solar panels as residential property, to be assessed as a component of the real property, meaning the value of residential solar panel installation would be included in a home's assessed and taxable values. Homeowners who installed solar panels most likely faced higher property taxes beyond the taxable value cap.

The House and Senate bills were introduced in an effort to encourage more people to install environmentally beneficial systems rather than make them more cost prohibitive.

Both HB 4069 and SB 47 address residential property. Currently, the General Property Tax Act states that a home's true cash value can't increase based on expenditures for normal repairs, replacement and maintenance until the property is sold. This section includes a list of maintenance and repair activities, such as inside and outside painting, gutters, furnaces or hot water heaters. The bills would add installing, replacing or repairing an alternative energy system to that list. This would be the case as long as the system had a generating capacity of no more than 150 kilowatts, the annual energy output of which does not exceed the home's annual energy consumption.

HB 4465 and SB 48 would eliminate the certification and resolution process that was once used to certify alternative energy personal property as eligible for an exemption. Instead, the personal property tax exemption already in effect would apply to alternative energy. This exemption would apply only if two conditions were met—the personal property had a generating capacity of no more than 150 kilowatts and was used solely to offset all or a portion of the commercial or industrial energy usage, and if installed after the bill's effective date, the personal property must have a true cash value of no more than \$80,000.

MTA will continue to update members as these bills are considered in the House and Senate.

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Short Term Rentals, Long Term Consequences

By Clifford H. Bloom, Esq.
Bloom Sluggett Law PC
Grand Rapids, Michigan
www.bsmlawpc.com

You likely have been hearing quite a bit recently about short-term rentals in Michigan. What is a short-term rental and why does it matter?

There is no specific legal definition of a short-term rental. However, for purposes of the controversy raging regarding short-term rentals throughout Michigan, a short-term rental (“STR”) is typically an otherwise single-family dwelling, cottage, cabin or condominium unit that is rented to someone other than the owner of the dwelling. In most cases, an STR involves only one family or couple renting a dwelling unit at one time. Such rentals can be for such disparate time periods as 30 days, two weeks, one week, a long four-day weekend or even two days. The shorter the rental time period, the more objectionable is the STR to many neighbors and other property owners in the community. Long-term rentals of a dwelling to a single family or couple (for example, a year or longer) are normally not objectionable.

Why do so many neighbors and community members often object to an STR? Typically, there are multiple reasons. First, the rental of a single-family dwelling to a family or couple for relatively short periods of time tends to have a commercial “feel” to such rentals. Long-term rentals to a couple or single family for a particular dwelling tend to have more characteristics of an owner-occupied property. The second objection is what has sometimes been referred to as the “rental car syndrome.” Just as many people tend to treat a rental car with much less caution and care than their own vehicle that may also be the case with regard to short-term tenants. Finally, there is a general perception that an STR lowers the property values for the neighborhood or community involved.

Interestingly enough, until fairly recently, there were few municipal ordinances in Michigan that either regulate or prohibited STRs. Given the increase in the number of dwellings that are being leased for STRs and the rising controversy, an increasing number of municipalities have recently begun adopting STR ordinance provisions. While some municipalities prohibit STRs altogether or put a “cap” on the number allowed in certain areas, most municipalities have chosen to simply regulate STRs by means of registration, general rules and regulations and building or health codes. Typically, where a municipal zoning ordinance does not expressly address STRs, they are considered lawful single-family residential uses, so long as a dwelling is rented to only one family or couple at a time.

Given the increasing controversy regarding STRs, some rental and real estate groups have become alarmed at efforts by local municipalities to regulate or even ban STRs. Hence, legislation has been introduced in the Michigan Legislature to prohibit local municipalities from prohibiting or even significantly regulating STRs. As of the date that this article was written, the two bills involved are SB 329 and HB 4503. If enacted into law, such legislation would “preempt” or preclude local municipal prohibition and even significant regulation of STRs.

Unfortunately, preemption by legislation (i.e., taking away local zoning and ordinance controls over certain matters) is on the increase. Special interest groups have been able to enact legislation in Michigan that severely limits, and in some cases actually prevents, the ability of local governments (i.e., cities, townships, villages and counties) to regulate uses such as mining, intensive farm livestock operations, landfills, foster care group homes, neighborhood daycare operations, oil and gas wells and pipelines and commercial water withdrawals for bottling. Such loss of local control should alarm all property owners and taxpayers.

Why should any of this matter to riparian property owners? If legislation taking away local control of STRs is enacted into law, STRs could flourish in many lake neighborhoods. That could have a negative impact upon area property values, traffic, the intensity of use of waterfront dwellings and even noise levels. If you have any concerns about the proposed preemption legislation, you should contact your local Michigan senator or representative.

Recent News

Michigan Audubon Seeks Purple Martins

Reports

Unfinished Business

Mastodon Township
General Operating Millage Ballot Language Resolution

WHEREAS, townships may impose and levy ad valorem property taxes to finance lawful operating costs, as authorized by the Michigan Constitution of 1963 and other laws; and

WHEREAS, the Township Board of Mastodon Township wishes to levy 1.5 mils to provide for Township operating costs;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Board of Mastodon Township, Iron County, approves the following millage ballot question language and directs the Clerk to submit it to be placed on the November 2, 2021 election ballot:

“Shall the previously voted-upon increase in the tax limitation imposed under Article IX, Sec. 6 of the Michigan Constitution in Mastodon Township of 1.5 mils (\$1.50 per \$1000 of taxable value), be renewed and levied for five (5) years, 2027 – 2031 inclusive, for the use of Mastodon Township’s general operating costs and placed in a restricted General Fund? This levy would raise an estimated \$151,807.00 in the first year the millage is levied (2027). This millage is a renewal of a tax levy which expires in 2026.”

Motion made by _____ Seconded by _____

Upon roll call vote the following voted:

Aye:

Nay:

The Supervisor declared the resolution adopted.

Certificate

I, Karen Mallon, the duly elected and acting Clerk of Mastodon Township, hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by the Mastodon Township Board by a roll call vote at a regular meeting of the Board held on April 14, 2026, at which meeting, a quorum was present; and that this resolution was ordered to take immediate effort.

Karen Mallon, Clerk

**Mastodon Township
Road Millage Ballot Language Resolution**

WHEREAS, the Township Board of Mastodon Township wishes to provide road improvements and maintenance service; and

WHEREAS, townships may provide road improvements and maintenance services, as authorized by Public Act 51 of 1951, MCL 247.670; and

WHEREAS, townships may contact and cooperate with other entities to provide road improvements and maintenance services, as authorized by the Michigan Constitution of 1963 and other laws; and

WHEREAS, townships may impose and levy ad valorem property taxes to finance lawful public services, as authorized by the Michigan Constitution of 1963 and other laws; and

WHEREAS, the Township Board of Mastodon Township wishes to levy 1.5 mils to provide for road improvements and maintenance services;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Board of Mastodon Township, Iron County, approves the following millage ballot question language and directs the Clerk to submit it to be placed on the August 4, 2026 election ballot:

“Shall the previously voted-upon increase in the tax limitation imposed under Article IX, Sec. 6 of the Michigan Constitution in Mastodon Township of 1.5 mils (\$1.50 per \$1000 of taxable value), be renewed and levied for five (5) years, 2027 – 2031 inclusive, for the use of Mastodon Township’s Road Improvement and Maintenance and placed in a restricted Road Fund? This levy would raise an estimated \$151,807.00 in the first year the millage is levied (2027). This millage is a renewal of a tax levy which expires in 2026.”

Motion made by _____ . Seconded by _____ .

Upon roll call vote the following voted:

Aye:

Nay:

The Supervisor declared the resolution adopted.

Certificate

I, Karen Mallon, the duly appointed and acting Clerk of Mastodon Township, hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by the Mastodon Township Board by a roll call vote at a regular meeting of the Board held on April 14, 2026, at which meeting, a quorum was present; and that this resolution was ordered to take immediate effort.

Karen, Clerk

MASTODON TOWNSHIP
TOWNSHIP LEGAL REPRESENTATION RESOLUTION

The monthly meeting of the Mastodon Township Board, Iron County, Michigan, was held at 5:30 p.m. on April 14, 2026, at the Township Hall in Mastodon Township.

PRESENT:

ABSENT:

The following Resolution was offered to the Board by _____ and supported by _____:

RESOLVED that for Township legal business or representation, Ryan Lynch to only complete current township lawsuits which are on file with Ryan Lynch AND Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes PLC. can be used on an “as needed” basis or any other legal representative as deemed proper and in the best interest of Mastodon Township.

AYES:

NAYS:

CERTIFICATION

I, Karen Mallon, Clerk of the Township of Mastodon, Iron County, Michigan, do hereby certify that the above is true and correct of that certain Resolution adopted by the Mastodon Township Board at the monthly meeting held at 5:30 p.m. on the 14th of April, 2026.

Karen Mallon, Clerk

New Business

MASTODON TOWNSHIP
SHORT TERM RENTAL ORDINANCE

ORDINANCE NUMBER _____

MASTODON TOWNSHIP HEREBY ORDAINS:

1) DEFINITIONS

- a) Caretaker - A caretaker is an individual, other than the license holder, who is responsible for the oversight and care of the short-term rental.
- b) License - A license is an annual short-term rental license duly issued by Mastodon Township.
- c) License Holder - The owner or authorized agent of the property, who applies for and receives a short-term rental license.
- d) Renter - As used in this Ordinance, a renter is an occupant or renter of a short-term rental pursuant to a rental agreement. The term "renter" as used herein does not include guests of the occupant or renter who are visiting between the hours of 7:00 am and 11:00 pm.
- e) Short-Term Rental - A short-term rental means a dwelling unit in which guests (transient) are provided lodging for a period less than 30 days in return for payment and which the dwelling is not occupied by the owner/caretaker in any way.
- f) Qualified Professional - means a person with experience and training with on-site sewage systems. The professional conducts field evaluations to determine soil types, ground water elevations, distances to surface waters and other site conditions that may affect the suitability for on-site sewage disposal.

2) LIMITS

The total number of short-term rental licenses available within Mastodon Township shall not be subject to a cap at this time. However, all license holders must remain in full compliance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations. The Mastodon Township Board of Trustees reserves the right to modify or establish licensing limits in the future based on their discretion and the evolving needs of the community.

3) LICENSE REQUIRED

An owner of any dwelling unit located anywhere within Mastodon Township shall not rent or allow to be rented, a dwelling unit or a portion thereof to another person for less than 30 nights at a time, unless the owner or the owner's authorized agent has obtained a short-

term rental license for that dwelling unit in accordance with the requirements of this ordinance. A License issued by the Mastodon Township Zoning Administrator or other authorized personnel is required prior to the rental of any dwelling for a period of less than 30 days. Provided, however, an accessory dwelling as defined in the Mastodon Township Zoning Ordinance shall not be eligible for a short-term rental license under this ordinance.

- a) A license shall expire on December 31 of the year in which it was issued, or upon a change of ownership in the year in which it was issued, whichever occurs sooner.
- b) A license is required for each dwelling to be rented on a short-term basis.
- c) A license will be issued within 30 days of receipt of a complete application.
- d) The license shall indicate the maximum number of guests that can be accommodated at the rental in accordance with the standards listed in this Ordinance.
- e) A license and license holder shall be subject to all of the standards and penalties of this Ordinance.
- f) Licenses will expire on December 31st of each calendar year. Applicants may apply for a license anytime for a license effective in the same calendar year. Applicants may apply for a license beginning no sooner than October 1st for the upcoming calendar year.

4) APPLICATION

An application provided by Mastodon Township for a short-term rental license shall include the following at a minimum:

- a) Property owner name
- b) Address of short-term rental property
- c) Owner phone number
- d) Notarized signature(s) of property owner(s) and caretaker
- e) A floor plan indicating the location and number of bedrooms in the dwelling.
- f) Contact information including: name, address, and 24-hour contact phone number for the owner of the property and the caretaker who must be available at any time during the tenure of an active short-term rental.
- g) A site plan indicating location of and number of parking spaces in the driveway and/or garage, as well as all structures on the property.

h) Copy of the Well and septic inspection report (due once every three years)- conducted by a qualified expert documenting the system is in good working order. If the structure is connected to a municipal wastewater system, the septic inspection is not necessary. The inspection report will also indicate the number of bedrooms that can be accommodated pursuant to the Iron County Health department regulations concerning tank sizes and bedrooms by the current septic system. This report will be good for three years or until such time that the system fails or there is a proposed change to the number of bedrooms.

i) This information must be kept up to date in the records of Mastodon Township.

j) It is the license holder's responsibility to inform Mastodon Township of any change in license or contact information for the license holder or caretaker.

k) An application fee as established and set forth in the Mastodon Township fee schedule. This fee schedule shall also establish an "after the fact" fee that must be paid when an otherwise lawful short-term rental is operated but without first complying with the procedural requirements of this Ordinance. This "after-the-fact" fee is not intended to be a penalty but shall consist of the normal application fee plus an amount equal to the legal and administrative costs incurred by the Township as the result of the applicant's failure to initially comply with the requirements of this Ordinance.

5) STANDARDS

a) **Parking.** No on-street parking of any motor vehicles or any trailered vehicles (including by way of example but not limited to boats, jet skis, trailers and snowmobiles) on any public or private roadways shall be permitted in association with a short-term rental. For purposes of this Ordinance, "roadway" includes the pavement, gravel road, shoulder, grass and full road easement or right-of-way.

b) **Trash.** Refuse and recyclables shall be stored in appropriate containers with tight-fitting lids and shall be regularly picked up by a licensed waste hauler weekly or taken to an appropriate disposal location.

c) **Capacity Limit.** The maximum number of renters to be accommodated shall be equal to two (2) people per legally conforming bedroom or studio apartment, plus two (2) persons per dwelling age 15 and under, or as permitted by the Iron County Health Department or third party well and septic report, regarding tank sizes and bedrooms whichever is less.

d) All applicable local, state and federal laws, rules, regulations and ordinances shall not be violated.

6) SEPTIC AND WELL STATUS REPORT/ INSPECTION

A well and septic inspection shall be conducted by a qualified expert documenting that the system is in good working order. The inspection will also indicate tank and drain field sizes. This inspection will be forwarded to the Iron County Health Department (ICHD) by the property owner with the required well and septic status report form for determination by ICHD regarding the number of bedrooms the system can accommodate.

The completed well and septic status report form will then be filed with the application for the annual short term rental license and be valid until such time that the system fails or there is a proposed change to the number of bedrooms.

- a) If a septic system malfunction occurs, short-term rental of the property shall be immediately discontinued and the Township notified of the malfunction. The use of the property as a short-term rental shall not resume until the malfunction is corrected in accordance with Iron County Health Department requirements and verification provided to the Township of same.

7) EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The license holder or a caretaker representing the property owner must be available by telephone at all times and must be physically located within a 30-minute travel distance of the property in the event of an emergency or an issue that requires immediate attention.

8) REMEDY

When notified of an issue of immediate concern, (such issues may include, but are not limited to, noise or quiet hour violations) the license holder or a caretaker shall resolve the issue immediately. Issues of a non-immediate concern (such issues may include, but are not limited to, failure to include the license number in advertisements or incorrect guest capacity included in advertisements) shall be satisfactorily addressed within five (5) days.

9) LICENSE

- a) The unique short-term rental license number issued by Mastodon Township shall be included in any advertisement for the rental.
- b) The street address for the short-term rental shall be signed in accordance with the Iron County Street and Road Numbering Ordinance and clearly visible from the street.
- c) Quiet Hours. Short-term rentals shall observe quiet hours between 11:00 pm and 7:00 am.
- d) Pets. Pets shall be secured on the premises or on a leash at all times.

e) Campfires. Any campfires at a short-term rental property shall:

- i) Be contained within a fire ring or other comparable container
- ii) Be located no less than 10 feet from any structure or any combustible material and be located away from overhanging tree branches.
- ii) Be under the direct supervision of an adult at all times.
- iii) Be fully extinguished prior to leaving the fire.

10) APPLICABLE RULES

The license holder or caretaker shall provide written notification to an occupant and/or a guest, of all of the rules and that an occupant may be cited for a violation of this ordinance.

11) PENALTY

- a) Any person who violates any provision of this Ordinance shall be responsible for a municipal civil infraction as defined in Public Act 12 of 1994, amending Public Act 236 of 1961, being Sections 600.101-600.9939 of Michigan Compiled Laws, and shall be subject to a fine of not more than Five Hundred and 00/100 (\$500.00) Dollars. Each day this Ordinance is violated shall be considered as a separate violation.
- b) Any person providing false or misleading information on the application for a short-term rental license shall be deemed to be in violation of this ordinance and may be subject to the penalty provision in subsection a) above.
- c) In addition, any person who knowingly files a fraudulent, false or fictitious complaint about a short-term rental shall be deemed to be in violation of this ordinance and may be subject to the penalty provision in subsection a) above.

12) ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

The Mastodon Township Enforcement Officer and other individuals appointed by the Mastodon Township Board are hereby designated as the authorized township officials to issue municipal civil infraction citations directing alleged violators of this Ordinance to appear in court.

13) NUISANCE PER SE

A violation of this Ordinance is hereby declared to be a public nuisance or a nuisance per se and is declared to be offensive to the public health, safety and welfare.

14) INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

In addition to enforcing this Ordinance as a Civil Municipal Infraction, Mastodon Township may initiate proceedings in the Circuit Court to abate or eliminate the nuisance per se or any other violation of this Ordinance.

15) VALIDITY

If any section, provision or clause of this Ordinance or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect any remaining portions or application of this Ordinance which can be given effect without the invalid portion or application.

16) EFFECTIVE DATE

This Ordinance shall become effective thirty (30) days after being published in a newspaper of general circulation within the Township.

THE ORDINANCE WAS DECLARED ADOPTED.

Dated: _____

MASTODON TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR
Chad Skinner

CLERK'S CERTIFICATE

I, the undersigned, the Clerk of the Mastodon Township, Iron County, Michigan, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of certain proceedings taken by the Mastodon Township Board of Trustees of said municipality at its regular meeting held on the _____, that said meeting was conducted and public notice of said meeting was given pursuant to and in full compliance with the Open Meetings Act, being Act 267, Public Acts of Michigan, 1976, and that the minutes of said meeting were kept and will be or have been made available as required by said Act.

Dated: 5-30-25

Karen Mallon
Mastodon Township Clerk

Publish Date: _____
Effective Date: _____

Published on _____ in Iron County Report general circulation Effective on

Karen Mallon, Clerk
Mastodon Township

Proposed

MEMORANDUM

To: Mastodon Township Zoning Board of Appeals

From: Stuart Creel, Zoning Administrator

Date: March 27 2026

Subject: Short-Term Rental (STR) Use in Resort Residential Districts – Zoning Interpretation and Recommended Enforcement Direction

Purpose

This memo provides a zoning interpretation regarding short-term rental (STR) use within the **Resort Residential (RR)** zoning district and outlines recommended actions for ZBA direction. The goal is to ensure consistent enforcement of the zoning ordinance, preserve residential character, and establish a clear process for property owners seeking to continue STR operations.

Background

The Mastodon Township Zoning Ordinance regulates land use by district. **Section 302 – Resort Residential District** identifies the following **Permitted Principal Uses**:

- Single-family dwelling
- Home occupations
- Public parks
- Fishing and trapping

Short-term rentals are **not listed** as a permitted principal use.

Michigan zoning practice generally does **not** classify STRs as home occupations because they involve:

- Advertising and commercial marketing
- Guest turnover and lodging activity
- Cleaning and maintenance services
- Revenue-generating business operations
- Impacts on traffic, noise, and neighborhood character

These characteristics exceed the “incidental and subordinate” nature required for a home occupation.

Zoning Interpretation

Based on our ordinance language and prevailing Michigan zoning standards:

1. STRs are *not* a permitted principal use in the Resort Residential district.

They do not fall under any listed use category in Section 302(B).

2. STRs do *not* qualify as home occupations.

Their commercial nature and operational characteristics exceed the scope of Section 1800 (Home Occupations).

3. STRs may only continue through a Special Use Permit (SUP).

Under **Section 1501 – Special Land Uses**, the Township may authorize uses not permitted by right if they meet standards for:

- Compatibility with surrounding uses
- Public health, safety, and welfare
- Traffic, noise, and environmental impacts
- Site plan and operational conditions

This provides a legally defensible pathway for STRs while preserving Township authority.

Recommended Township Action

A. Notify Existing STR Property Owners

Send written notice to all known STR operators in the Resort Residential district stating:

- STR use is not a permitted principal use under Section 302.
- Continued STR operation without approval constitutes a zoning violation.
- Property owners wishing to continue must apply for a **Special Use Permit** under Section 1501.
- Failure to apply will result in enforcement action.

B. Require SUP Applications for STR Continuation

Applications should include:

- Site plan showing parking, access, and dwelling layout
- Maximum occupancy and bedroom count
- Septic capacity documentation
- Emergency contact information

- Noise, parking, and guest management plan
- Proof of compliance with county and state health regulations

These materials allow the Township to impose reasonable conditions to protect neighborhood character.

C. Establish Standard STR Conditions

Conditions may include:

- Maximum occupancy limits
- On-site parking requirements
- Quiet hours
- Prohibition on events or large gatherings
- Local contact available 24/7
- Septic system verification
- Annual compliance review

These conditions are common in Michigan communities and help ensure predictable, enforceable standards.

Additional STR zoning ordinance considerations and permit applications are attached to this memo.

With regards to our Resort Residential district, in Michigan, short-term rentals **do not qualify as resorts** under proposed state law.

Short-Term Rentals vs. Resorts in Michigan

- **Short-Term Rental Definition:** under proposed Michigan House Bill 5438 defines a short-term rental as the rental of a single-family residence, a dwelling unit in a one-to-four-family house, or a unit in a condominium for up to 30 consecutive days.
- **Resort Exclusion:** The same bill explicitly states that short-term rentals **do not include** hotels, motels, hotel condominiums, or homes/condos located within a resort that offers amenities such as golf, skiing, restaurants, or group meeting accommodations.
- **Tax and Regulation Differences:** Resorts are subject to different regulatory and tax structures, including assessments for amenities and commercial operations. Short-term rentals, if rented more than 15 days per year, may be subject to a 6% tax but are not classified as resorts.

Zoning and Legal Interpretation

- Michigan courts have generally held that short-term rentals **violate residential use restrictions** in communities with deed covenants, classifying them as commercial activity in some cases.
- However, the Michigan Short-Term Rental Association argues that STRs should be considered residential use, not commercial, especially when operated without resort-style amenities.

Zoning Ordinance Considerations

In our proposed 2026 zoning ordinance under review, we should consider these:

- Define STRs as a **separate use category**, not a home occupation.
- Clarify allowable zones, permit requirements, and operational limits (e.g., occupancy, parking, quiet hours).
- Reference Michigan case law and local precedents to support enforcement and avoid ambiguity.

Section X: Short-Term Rental Use Classification

Definition:

A *Short-Term Rental (STR)* is the rental of a dwelling unit, or portion thereof, for a period of less than 30 consecutive days to transient guests for compensation. STRs may include single-family

homes, duplexes, or accessory dwelling units but shall not include hotels, motels, resorts, or bed-and-breakfast establishments.

Use Classification:

Short-term rentals shall be classified as a **transient lodging use**, distinct from:

- **Home Occupations**, which are incidental business activities conducted by a resident within their dwelling, subject to Section 302 of this ordinance.
- **Resorts**, which are commercial properties offering amenities such as golf, skiing, restaurants, or group meeting accommodations.

Permitting Requirements:

- STRs shall require a **Short-Term Rental Permit** issued by the Township Zoning Administrator.
- STRs shall comply with the following operational standards:
 - Maximum occupancy: [insert number based on septic capacity or fire code]
 - Off-street parking: Minimum [insert number] spaces per unit
 - Quiet hours: 10:00 PM to 7:00 AM
 - Fire safety: Smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, and emergency egress signage required
 - Sanitation: Proof of adequate waste disposal and septic capacity
 - Insurance: Proof of liability coverage

Exclusions:

- STRs shall not be considered a home occupation and may not operate under a home occupation permit.
- STRs shall not be permitted in zoning districts where transient lodging is prohibited.

Inspection and Enforcement:

- STR properties are subject to annual inspection by the Township Building Official or designee.
 - Violations may result in fines, permit revocation, or civil infraction proceedings.
-

Mastodon Township Short-Term Rental Permit Application

Applicant Information

- Full Name: _____
- Mailing Address: _____
- Phone Number: _____
- Email Address: _____

Property Information

- STR Address: _____
- Parcel ID: _____
- Zoning District: R-1 R-2 AG C-1 Other: _____
- Property Owner (if different): _____

Rental Details

- Type of Unit: Single-Family Duplex Accessory Dwelling
- Max Occupancy Requested: _____
- Number of Bedrooms: _____
- Number of Off-Street Parking Spaces: _____
- Rental Platform(s): Airbnb VRBO Direct Other: _____

Required Attachments

- Proof of ownership or lease agreement
- Site plan showing parking and dwelling layout
- Septic system capacity documentation
- Proof of liability insurance
- Fire safety plan (extinguishers, smoke/CO detectors, egress)
- Local contact person (within 30 miles):
Name: _____ Phone: _____

Acknowledgments

- I certify that the information provided is true and complete.
- I agree to comply with all applicable Township ordinances.
- I understand that violations may result in permit revocation.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Short-Term Rental Compliance Checklist

Mastodon Township STR Compliance Checklist

To be completed by applicant and verified by Township staff

Requirement	Description	Applicant Initials	Verified by Township
Zoning Compliance	STR is permitted in zoning district	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Septic Capacity	Supports proposed occupancy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parking	Off-street parking meets minimum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire Safety	Smoke/CO detectors, extinguishers, egress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quiet Hours	10 PM – 7 AM enforced	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trash Management	Weekly pickup or secure disposal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Contact	Available 24/7 within 30 miles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Insurance	Proof of liability coverage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Signage	No commercial signage visible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rental Platforms	Registered with platforms (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

STR Property Inspection Form

Mastodon Township – STR Annual Inspection Form

To be completed by Building Official or designee

Inspection Item	Pass	Fail	Notes
Address clearly visible from road	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Smoke detectors in all sleeping areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
CO detectors on each floor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Fire extinguisher (min. 1 per floor)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Emergency egress from all bedrooms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Electrical panel accessible and labeled	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Heating system operational and safe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Septic system appears functional	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Trash storage secure and animal-proof	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
General cleanliness and safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Inspector Name: _____

Date of Inspection: _____

Signature: _____



U.P.S.E.T.
Upper Peninsula Substance Enforcement Team
P.O Box 86 Marquette, MI 49855
(906) 228-1002 Fax (906) 228-0756

Mastodon Township Clerk
1371 Hwy US 2 South
Crystal Falls, MI 49920

February 4, 2026

Dear Board Members,

The Upper Peninsula Substance Enforcement Team (UPSET) is a multi-jurisdictional narcotics task force committed to the safety and well-being of the citizens in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. UPSET is seeking funding to assist with operating expenses which greatly enhance investigative efforts in your community.

Established in 1988, UPSET started out as a small drug team which primarily arrested drug users and smaller dealers. Today, UPSET has become a driving force for narcotics education, awareness, and enforcement. UPSET consists of multiple federal, state, and local agencies and serves all 15 counties of the Upper Peninsula and by working together as one, the enforcement impact on a community is like no other. UPSET has the only clandestine methamphetamine lab team with specialized training in enforcement and education. This specialized training is essential to minimizing drugs that are distributed in communities that have limited police services. UPSET provides drug awareness in schools, to civic groups, law enforcement, fire departments, medical staff, and local businesses.

Unfortunately, UPSET does not receive operating expenses from state government. UPSET is primarily funded by local municipalities, grants, and private donors. Due to economic difficulty, many of these resources have either significantly decreased or ceased their funding. Like many other organizations, UPSET continually seeks additional funding avenues to carry on our mission.

The funding you provide can significantly assist UPSET to enhance our enforcement, awareness, and education services in your community. Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

D/Lt. Tim Sholander
UPSET Commander



U.P.S.E.T.
 Upper Peninsula Substance Enforcement Team
 P.O Box 86 Marquette, MI 49855
 (906) 228-1002 Fax (906) 228-0756

AGREEMENT FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

This agreement was made and entered into on the date set forth below and between the Upper Peninsula Substance Enforcement Team, hereinafter known as UPSET, its Board of Directors, and MASTODON Township, hereinafter known as Township, located in the County of IRON, State of Michigan by and through the Township officials.

WHEREAS the Township is desirous of contracting with UPSET for the performance of narcotics law enforcement functions within the Township and,

WHEREAS UPSET is agreeable to provide such services within the Township on the following terms and conditions:

1. UPSET agrees to provide enforcement of narcotics and/or controlled substance laws and the prevention and detection of related criminal activities, solution of crimes concerning these laws, and in apprehension of criminal suspects within the Township, including all Township owned properties and privately-owned properties within the Township.
2. UPSET agrees that such investigations shall be provided in a workmanlike and reasonable nature with similar professionalism to that now provided by UPSET.
3. UPSET agrees to provide drug awareness presentations as requested by the Township.
4. UPSET agrees that it should provide services for consideration as set forth in this contract.
5. In consideration for the above services, the Township agrees to pay UPSET the sum of \$_____ upon execution of this Agreement.
6. It is understood by the parties that the law enforcement officers shall be under the direct and sole control of UPSET and shall be responsible only to UPSET.

_____ Township

UPSET

Title: _____

Title: UPSET Commander

Signature: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

Other Business