

**Columbia Charter Township  
Jackson County, Michigan**

**Ordinance \_\_\_\_\_**

THIS ORDINANCE SHALL BE KNOWN AS THE  
“COLUMBIA CHARTER TOWNSHIP SHORT TERM RENTAL ORDINANCE”

Columbia Charter Township Ordains:

**Section 1: Purpose and Findings**

The Columbia Charter Township Board finds and declares as follows:

- A. The Township considers the current residential, lake living, and agricultural character of the community paramount to the welfare of the community.
- B. The transitory nature of occupants of Short-Term Rentals can be inconsistent with the historical residential, lake living, and agricultural character of the community.
- C. It is the intent of the Columbia Charter Township Short-Term Rental Ordinance to make the Short-Term Rental activity permitted by this ordinance consistent with the existing traditional residential uses in the community.
- D. Short Term Rentals provide a community benefit by expanding the number and type of lodging facilities available and assisting owners of Short-Term Rentals by providing revenue to help offset costs.
- E. The Township has received concerns involving excessive noise, disorderly conduct, overcrowding, traffic, keyholing, congestion and parking at Short Term Rental properties, as well as the potential loss of neighborhood character due to the number of Short-Term Rentals in the township.
- F. The provisions of this ordinance are necessary to prevent the continued burden placed upon county and township services and impacts on residential neighborhoods posed by Short-Term Rental homes.
- G. The township also has environmental concerns associated with the protection of water quality from over-occupancy and over-use of a dwelling’s septic system.

**Section 2: Applicability**

- A. This Ordinance applies to Columbia Charter Township outside the limits of the Village of Brooklyn and applies to all properties unless otherwise stated herein.
- B. This Ordinance applies only to the rental of an entire dwelling unit on a short-term basis as defined herein. This Ordinance does not apply to the short-term rental of individual rooms within a dwelling unit or portion of a dwelling unit, as these types of uses are regulated by the Zoning Ordinance.
- C. This Ordinance does not apply to the following: these uses are regulated by the Columbia Charter Township Zoning Ordinance:
  - 1. Rental of only a portion of a dwelling unit (Owner Occupied Rental).
  - 2. Legally permitted Bed & Breakfasts.
  - 3. Legally permitted and/or legally non-conforming motels, hotels, or resorts.
  - 4. Legally permitted and/or legally non-conforming Marinas.
  - 5. Adult Foster Care Facilities, Nursing Homes, or Senior Living Facilities.
  - 6. Other Uses permitted in the Commercial Zoning Districts.
- D. All requirements, regulations and standards imposed by this Ordinance are intended to apply in addition to any other applicable requirements, regulations and standards imposed elsewhere in other ordinances of the Township, including the Columbia Charter Township Zoning Ordinance.
- E. This Ordinance does not affect additional or more-restrictive requirements placed on the use of property (or a portion thereof) imposed by deeds, restrictive covenants, association rules, regulations, by-laws, rental agreements, *etc.*

**Section 3: Definitions**

Unless otherwise specified herein, the terms used in this ordinance shall be defined as follows:

**Bedroom:** A separate room with a door, closet, and window that is used or intended to be used specifically for sleeping purposes. A bedroom must be a habitable space not less than seventy (70) square feet, not less than seven (7) feet in one dimension, not located in an attic or basement without egress meeting standards in applicable building, residential and fire codes, and not a room by design intended to serve another purpose such as a kitchen, dining area, den, family rooms or living rooms.

**Bedrooms, Number of:** The number of bedrooms established and approved for a dwelling unit by the local health department or the Township on a current and valid permit or approval that was used to determine the size and adequacy of the septic field.

**Dwelling Unit.** A group of rooms located within a building and forming a single habitable unit having facilities which are used or intended to be used for sleeping,

cooking, eating, and bathing purposes.

**Good Neighbor Posting.** A notice prepared by the township and posted in the Short-Term Rental unit to inform the Occupants of their responsibilities under this ordinance.

**Immediate Neighbors:** The owners and occupants of any property/lot/parcel of which any portion lies within three hundred (300) feet of any portion of the short-term rental property/lot/parcel.

**Local 24-Hour Contact Person.** A local property manager, owner, or agent of the owner, who is available to respond to tenant and neighborhood questions or concern and authorized by the owner to take remedial action and respond to any violation of this ordinance.

**Occupant:** An individual living in, staying in, or otherwise having possession of a short-term rental, regardless of age.

**Owner:** The person or entity that holds legal or equitable title to the property (or portion thereof) used as a Short-Term Rental.

**Designated Parking Space:** A designated parking area legally available to the dwelling unit for parking of a motorized vehicle or trailer, meeting the standards contained in this ordinance, and meeting any state or local ordinance or traffic control order.

**Short-Term Rental.** The renting or leasing of a dwelling unit for a period of time less than thirty (30) consecutive calendar days.

#### **Section 4: Short Term Rental Permit**

It shall be a violation of this Ordinance to operate or advertise a Short-Term Rental in Columbia Charter Township without a Short-Term Rental Permit, unless exempted herein.

- A. The Columbia Charter Township Board shall adopt, by Resolution, a policy covering the procedures for application, issuance and renewal of Short-Term Rental Permits. These policies may be amended by the Township Board by Resolution.
- B. Short-Term Rental Permits will be issued by calendar year, with a duration as adopted in the Township Board Policy.
- C. The renewal of an active, compliant Short-Term Rental Permit will be guaranteed if the completed renewal application is received on or before the date specified in the Township Board Policy.

- D. The Columbia Charter Township Board shall, by Resolution, adopt a fee for the Short- Term Rental Permit, and may amend the fee by Resolution.
- E. A separate Short-Term Rental Permit is required for each Short-Term Rental.
- F. The Short-Term Rental Permit shall only be issued to the Owner of the property and cannot be transferred to another Owner or Property. The Short-Term Rental Permit is not transferrable and does not run with the Property Ownership.
- G. The Columbia Charter Township Zoning Administrator, and/or other persons designated by the Columbia Charter Township Board, shall be authorized to issue Short-Term Rental Permits under this Ordinance. The maximum number of Short-Term Rental permits that can be issued by the township in any calendar year is \*\*\* INSERT NUMBER??

**Section 5: Short Term Rental Standards**

**All Short-Term Rentals shall meet the following standards:**

- A. Only one (1) dwelling unit per parcel may be permitted for use as a Short-Term Rental.
- B. All rental lodging is to be exclusively within the dwelling unit and not in a recreational vehicle, camper, boat, or tent, etc.
- C. Maximum Allowable Occupancy of a Short-Term Rental:  
The Maximum Allowable Number of Occupants over the age of 5 in a Short-Term Rental will depend on the number of bedrooms approved by the Health Department and the number of Parking Spaces available as described below.

**The maximum allowable number of Occupants shall be the lower of the following number:**

- 1. Maximum Allowable Number of Occupants over the age of 5 of a Short-Term Rental based upon the number of bedrooms in the dwelling unit.

The Maximum Allowable Number of Occupants over the age of 5 of a Short- Term Rental shall be based upon the number of bedrooms in the dwelling unit, in accordance with the following:

- a. The Maximum Allowable Number of Occupants over the age of 5 in a Short-Term Rental shall not exceed the total number calculated as two (2) Occupants per bedroom.
- b. The number of bedrooms shall be determined by the number of bedrooms listed on a current and valid septic system permit or determination issued by the local Health Department having jurisdiction.
- c. This standard does not impose or imply any limit on the

number of occupants allowed in any single bedroom.

2. Maximum Allowable Number of Occupants over the age of 5 of a Short-Term Rental based upon the number of overnight parking spaces.

The maximum allowable number of occupants of a Short-Term Rental shall also be based upon the number of designated parking spaces provided as follows:

- a. A minimum of two (2) designated parking spaces shall be provided for any Short-Term Rental approved for up to four (4) Occupants.
- b. A minimum of four (4) designated parking spaces shall be provided for any Short-Term Rental approved for six (6) Occupants.
- c. One (1) additional designated parking space is required for each two (2) Occupants approved thereafter.

A designated parking space is a designated area legally available to the dwelling unit for parking of a motorized vehicle or trailer, meeting the standards contained in this ordinance, and meeting any state or local ordinance or traffic control order.

D. Local 24-Hour Contact Person:

Each Short-Term Rental shall have a designated Local 24-Hour Contact Person meeting the following criteria:

1. The Local 24-Hour Contact Person shall have access and authority to assume management of the unit and take remedial measures.
2. The Local 24-Hour Contact Person must be available by telephone twenty-four (24) hours a day during the rental period and be within thirty (30) minutes travel time of the Short-Term Rental during the rental period.

E. All parking associated with a Short-Term Rental shall meet the following standards:

1. Parking shall be on an improved stable area such as a driveway, garage, or stable surface legally available to the dwelling unit.
2. No vehicle shall be parked closer than three (3) feet from any edge line (white outer lane line) of a public road, or, in the absence of an edge line, fourteen (14) feet from the centerline of the public road. In the case of a private road or easement, no vehicle shall be parked closer than three (3) feet from the edge of the private road. This standard does not supersede any applicable winter parking requirements.
3. Parking shall meet all state or local ordinances or traffic control orders, including winter overnight parking regulations on public roads, as

enforced by state, county, or local law enforcement.

- F. Special events, outdoor events, lawn parties, weddings or similar activities are not allowed on the site for more than the number of permitted occupants.
- G. Dogs and other pets shall be governed by the Jackson County Animal Control Enforcement Ordinance. This Ordinance requires that Pets shall be secured on the property or on a leash at all times, and that Dogs shall not be allowed to whine, yelp, bark, or howl for a period of ten minutes or longer.
- H. Any discharge of Fireworks on the rental property shall be in accordance with the Columbia Charter Township Consumer Fireworks Ordinance.
- I. Campfires shall be located in a designated area no closer than twenty (20) feet from a property line. Fires shall be contained in a non-flammable enclosure, shall not be left unattended and must be fully extinguished. Campfires must comply with any state, county, or local ordinance, regulation, or order.
- J. Provisions for trash disposal must be provided. Trash must be contained in properly sealed receptacles. There must be no overflow that will be attractive to vermin. Recycling locations must be posted in a prominent location in the Short-Term Rental.
- K. Septic Systems:
  - 1. Any Short-Term Rental that is determined to have a failing septic system, as determined by the Jackson County Health Department, shall immediately cease Short-Term Rental operations until approved by the Health Department.
  - 2. Short-Term Rentals using a septic system for sewage disposal shall have the septic tank(s) pumped at least once every three (3) years. Proof of septic tank pumping within the past three (3) years must be provided prior to issuance of a Short-Term Rental Permit or Renewal, unless the dwelling is connected to a municipal sewer system.
- L. Quiet hours for Short-Term Rentals shall be observed every night from 10:00 PM to 8:00 AM. Noise during quiet hours must be limited to that which does not disturb the quiet, comfort or repose of a reasonable person of normal sensitivities.  
The Columbia Charter Township Noise Ordinance also covers noise within the township that is louder than reasonable.
- M. Keyholing (Shared usage of waterfront property):  
It shall be a violation of this Ordinance to advertise or allow occupants of a short- term rental the use of any separate, distinctive, non-continuous, private waterfront parcel for recreational purposes. This provision does not apply to

designated, approved open spaces or parks that the subject parcel has the recorded right to use (such as Association parks).

- N. The address of the Short-Term Rental shall be clearly marked in accordance with the Jackson County Address Ordinance.
- O. Violations of any County or Township Ordinance, including, but not limited to Nuisance, Noise, Junk, Fireworks, Animal Control, or Disturbance of Peace Ordinance shall constitute a violation of this Ordinance.

### **Section 6: Owner Responsibilities**

- A. The Owner shall be responsible to notify all Immediate Neighbors of the application for a Short-Term Rental Permit, the 24-Hour Local Contact name and number, and the township Short-Term Rental Hotline number on a form acceptable to Columbia Charter Township and submit a signed affidavit to the township that immediate neighbors were notified.
- B. The owner shall be responsible to notify the Short-Term Rental occupants of the Standards contained in this Ordinance.
- C. The Owner shall post the Short-Term Rental Permit, Local Contact Numbers, and the Good Neighbor Posting in a conspicuous place in the Rental and shall provide these documents to renters prior to occupancy.
- D. The Owner shall notify the township of any changes to the Local 24-Hour Contact.
- E. The Owner shall submit an annual log of rental activity to the township for each calendar year prior to March 1 of the following year. The log must show the dates of overnight stays and number of occupants per visit.
- F. The Owner shall physically mark the address of the Short-Term Rental in accordance with the Jackson County Address Ordinance.
- G. The Owner is responsible for notifying Occupants of the designated parking spaces, quiet hours, trash disposal, pet regulations, and campfire regulations.
- H. The Owner is responsible for the occupants of the Short-Term Rental compliance with the standards in this Ordinance. The owner shall use reasonable efforts to assure that the occupants of the Short-Term Rental do not create unreasonable noise or disturbances, engage in disorderly conduct, or violate provisions of this ordinance or any other local or state law pertaining to noise or disorderly conduct by notifying the occupants of the rules regarding Short Term Rentals and taking appropriate action to abate the violative conduct when notified that occupants are violating laws

regarding their occupancy.

## **Section 7: Exceptions and Exemptions**

A dwelling unit does not need a short-term rental permit as required in this Ordinance when the occupancy of the dwelling unit occurs under the following circumstances:

- a. *Family occupancy.* Any member of a family (and that family member's guests) may occupy a dwelling as long as any other member of that family is the owner of the dwelling or dwelling unit. Family occupancy also exempts guest houses or similarly separate dwelling units located on the same premises as the owner's domicile, when occupied by family guests, exchange students, visiting clergy, medical caregivers, and child care givers, without compensation to the owner.
- b. *House-sitting.* During the temporary absence of the owner and owner's family the owner may permit non-owner occupancy of the premises, without compensation to the owner, without a short-term rental permit.
- c. *Dwelling sales.* Occupancy by a prior owner after the sale of a dwelling under a rental agreement.
- d. *Estate representative.* Occupancy by a personal representative, trustee, or guardian of the estate and his family, with or without compensation.

## **Section 8: Administration, Violation and Administrative Penalties**

- A. Columbia Charter Township may retain a firm to assist with compliance monitoring and maintenance of a 24-Hour Short Term Rental Hotline for complaints.
- B. The following conduct is a violation of the Short-Term Rental ordinance:
  1. Any advertising, rental, or leasing of a short-term rental without first having obtained a short-term rental permit.
  2. Failure by the Owner and/or Occupants to comply with the Short-Term Rental Standards section of this ordinance.
  4. Failure to comply with any of the provisions of this ordinance.
  5. Any false or misleading information supplied in the application process.
- C. The penalties for violations specified in Section 7.1.B are as follows:
  1. For a first violation within any calendar year, the penalty is a warning notice of violation which may be verbal and/or written.
  2. A second violation within the same calendar year shall be subject to a municipal civil infraction punishable by a fine of not less than two hundred



fifty (\$250) dollars nor more than five hundred (\$500) dollars. All owners, regardless of their interest in the property, may be responsible for the civil infraction. The Township Zoning Administrator and other officials designated by the Township Board are hereby designated as the authorized officials to issue municipal civil infraction citations directing alleged violators of this ordinance to appear in court. Each day the violation remains may be a separate offense.

3. A third violation within the same calendar year shall be subject to a municipal civil infraction punishable by a fine of not less than twice the amount of any previous fine but not more than one thousand (\$1000) dollars, and the permit shall be revoked. An owner may reapply for a permit no sooner than twelve (12) months after revocation of a permit.
  4. If there are one or more violations each year during any three (3) consecutive year period, the permit may be revoked.
- D. A violation of this ordinance shall be a nuisance per se. The Township shall have the right to commence a civil action to enforce compliance with this ordinance.
- E. Nothing in this Ordinance shall prevent any person who has suffered, or alleges to have suffered, damage to person or property for a violation of this ordinance from seeking relief in a court of competent jurisdiction against the Owner of the Short- Term Rental.
- F. The Columbia Charter Township Zoning Administrator and/or other persons designated by the Columbia Charter Township Board are authorized to issue all permits under this Ordinance and is also authorized to issue civil infraction violation notices and/or civil infraction citations for violations of this Ordinance.

**Section 9. Severability.**

If any section, clause, or provision of this Ordinance is declared unconstitutional or otherwise invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, said declaration shall not affect the validity of the remainder of the Ordinance as a whole or any part thereof, other than the part so declared to be unconstitutional or invalid.

**Section 10. Effective Date:**

A Notice of Adoption of this Ordinance shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation within the township, and the Ordinance will become effective and enforced thirty (30) days after publication.

Motion by:  
Support by:

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas:

Nays:

Absent:

**Motion Carried - Ordinance Adopted**

I certify that this true copy of Ordinance No. \_\_\_\_ was adopted at a regular meeting of the Columbia Charter Township Board of Trustees on \_\_\_\_\_, 2024 and published in the Exponent on \_\_\_\_\_, 2024.

Date of Township Board Approval:

Date of Publication:

Effective Date:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Columbia Charter Township Clerk