To Leelanau County Planning Commission
Submitted for Public Comment by Rod Jones
October 27, 2020
Re: Text Amendment Review PC09-20-04, Elmwood Township

My name is Rod Jones, 12684 S Cedar Lane, Elmwood Township. I support the proposed Elmwood Township Zoning Ordinance Amendment. Non-owner occupied short term rentals, a commercial-related use of property, will be allowed in some districts, but will not be allowed in R-1, which includes our residential neighborhoods, as they are not a compatible use.

Over a year ago, Kathy Egan from Networks Northwest did a presentation in which she said short term rentals are here to stay. However, she pointed out that each Township is unique, and would need to look at their own community, Master Plan, and Zoning Ordinance to determine where short term rentals should be allowed and what regulations might be needed (See the Elmwood Township Planning Commission Directive in Exhibit 4, Resolution #11 of 2019).

Looking at most of the townships in Leelanau County, we find their Master Plans (I have included excerpts from several, see Exhibit 13) specifically draw attention to the seasonal nature of their communities and that their economies are primarily anchored by tourism.

On the other hand, the major narrative and theme of the recently adopted Elmwood Township Master Plan (see excerpts attached in Exhibit 12) maintained its previous focus on the residential qualities of the Township, with consideration given to multigenerational and workforce housing. It notes that residents want limited commercial development within the Township and are satisfied with depending on Traverse City for their shopping, dining, and commercial needs.
Our Township demographics and high-density neighborhoods, especially in Greilickville, are very similar to those in Garfield, Peninsula, and Acme Townships, as well as in the City of Traverse City; none of them allow short term rentals in their residential neighborhoods (Exhibit 9).

Regionally, there is intense pressure on scarce housing stock by people who want to live in the community where they work, as well as by those who want to move to our area because they can work remotely. There has been no convincing argument by business owners that Elmwood Township should allow the single family homes in our residential neighborhoods to be converted into short term rentals, or to allow commercial activities unless a primary resident is present.

I respectfully request that you support the decision of the Elmwood Township Planning Commission that recommends adopting the Short Term Rental Zoning Amendment in its current form.

Thank you,
Rod Jones