GANGES TOWNSHIP
ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN

SHORT TERM RENTAL ORDINANCE

ORDINANCE NO. 70
ADOPTED OCTOBER 13, 2026
EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 20, 2026

AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT SHORT TERM RENTAL REGULATIONS IN GANGES TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN.

SECTION 1: PURPOSE

The Township Board finds that the Short-Term Rental of Single-Family Dwellings within Ganges Township is a matter closely connected with the public health, safety, and welfare of the community. The Township Board passed this Ordinance to help balance the interests of residents, business owners, visitors, and property owners seeking to offer short-term rentals.

While visitors to the community who rent a Single-Family Dwelling on a short-term basis bring many benefits to the community, they can simultaneously create concerns surrounding issues of traffic, parking, congestion, litter, noise, and other similar issues. Meanwhile, issues related to fire safety and life safety codes must be considered in order to maximize the safety and well-being of all in the community. This Ordinance is intended to strike a balance between competing interests and is consistent with the overall goal of the 2023 Ganges Township Master Plan wherein it states, “Ganges Township's preferred future is focused on protecting and maintaining its existing rural character and high quality of life in an atmosphere of continued growth”.

The Township Board finds that all areas of the Township are susceptible to the negative effects of Short-Term Rentals. Furthermore, the Township finds that STR’s that are used solely for the purposes of rentals, with no occupancy by the owner during any part of the year, can be particularly problematic. Finally, the Township finds that in order to balance the interests of all stakeholders, it is prudent to place a limit on the number of available STR’s. Therefore, this Ordinance will regulate Short-Term Rentals of Single-Family Dwellings in all zoning districts in the Township. These Districts are currently designated as A-Agricultural, R/A- Residential/Agricultural, R-Residential, GNR-Glenn Neighborhood Residential, GHMU- Glenn Hamlet Mixed Use, and M-H C-Manufactured Home Community, and Commercial

SECTION 2: DEFINITIONS

The following words, terms, and phrases, when used in this article, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

Bedroom – A room which is intended, arranged, and designed to be occupied by one or more persons primarily for sleeping purposes, as determined by the zoning administrator. A bedroom must be not less than 70 square feet and not less than seven feet in any dimension.

Local Designated Agent - An individual designated to perform obligations under this article and to serve as contact person for the township for issues relating to a rental property. The designated agent must live or maintain a physical place of business within 30~~30~~ miles of the rental unit.

Full-time Short-term Rental - A residential dwelling that operates with no significant personal owner use. Significant personal owner use is defined as at least 30 days per year.

Dwelling or Dwelling Unit – Any building, or portion thereof, having cooking and housekeeping facilities (kitchen, bath and sleeping facilities), which is occupied wholly as the home, residence or sleeping place of one (1) family, either permanently or temporarily, but in no case shall a motor home, trailer coach, garage, automobile chassis, tent, or portable building be considered a dwelling.

- Single Family Dwelling. A building used or designated for use exclusively by one (1) family.

Maximum Occupancy Load - The maximum number of allowable occupants for a rental property as defined in the requirements for Registration. Unless otherwise approved, maximum occupancy of any Single-Family Dwelling shall be two persons per bedroom, plus two additional persons per finished level with appropriate means of emergency egress, up to a total of 12 persons.

Occupant - An individual living in, sleeping in, or otherwise having possession of a space.

Owner - Any individual or other person holding legal or equitable title to a property or to real improvements upon a property solely, jointly, by the entireties, in common, or as a land contract vendee or title to a mobile home or house trailer.

Premises - The land and the improvements on it, such as a building, store, shop, apartment, or other designated structure.

Property - Land, firmly attached structures and integrated equipment (such as light fixtures or a well pump), and anything growing on the land.

Rental Property - All types of rental Single-Family Dwellings and units.

Short-term Rental - The rental of any rental unit for a minimum of 2 days, and not more than 30 days, but does not include the use of campgrounds, hotel rooms, transitional housing operated by a nonprofit entity, group homes such as nursing homes and adult foster care homes, hospitals, or housing provided by a substance-abuse rehabilitation clinic, mental health facility, or other healthcare related clinic. Rentals of less than 2 days are prohibited.

Violation Notice - A writ issued by the township ordinance officer, advising an owner, or the Local Designated Agent, of a violation of this ordinance. Violation notices shall list all infractions and corrective measures necessary to comply with this ordinance and a period within which corrections must be complete

SECTION 3: APPLICABILITY

This Ordinance shall apply only to Short-Term Rentals of Single-Family Dwellings as described herein. No Single-Family Dwelling unit with adjoining walls such as joined condominiums, units in apartment buildings, and duplexes may be used as short term rentals Additionally, no shed, garage, gazebo, "yurt", trailer, tent, recreational vehicle, motorhome, vehicle, semi-truck trailer, or makeshift/nontraditional shelter may be used or licensed as a Short-Term Rental.

SECTION 4: REGISTRATION REQUIRED

(A) *Annual Registration required.* All Short-Term Rentals **must** be registered with the Township. No Single-Family Dwelling may be used as or advertised for a Short-Term Rental unless registered in accordance with this Ordinance. Any owner who advertises or rents a dwelling unit as a short-term rental without an approved registration is subject to penalties as described in Section 8.

(B) *Application.* To register a Short-Term Rental, the Owner shall satisfy the following requirements.

(1) The Owner shall provide and certify as true the following on a form provided by the Township:

(a) Name, address, email address, copy of government issued ID, and telephone number of the Owner of the Single-Family Dwelling to be used as a Short-Term Rental (if the Owner does not reside within 45 miles of the Single-Family Dwelling, the Owner shall name a Local Designated Agent); acknowledgement by the Owner, or Local Designated Agent of the requirement to be on site within one hour of being contacted by the Township or law enforcement concerning an issue regarding the Short-Term Rental;

(b) The address of the Single-Family Dwelling to be used as a Short-Term Rental validated through the postal service;

(c) A floor plan showing the number and location of bedrooms in the Single-Family Dwelling to be used as a Short-Term Rental; The plan should also show the location of all utility service connections, and the location of all corresponding utility shutoff points.

(d) The number of off-street parking spaces provided for the Single-Family Dwelling to be used as a Short-Term Rental (this information must also be included in the rental agreement and any online or other advertising for the Single-Family Dwelling); Documentation of Premises. A drawing or photograph(s) of the premises on which the short-term rental will be located that

includes all buildings on the premises and the location where all motor vehicles, electric powered vehicles, boats, campers, and trailers will be parked, which must specify the number of available parking spaces.

(e) The maximum number of occupants for the Single-Family Dwelling to be used as Short-Term Rental, subject to any applicable local, state, or federal laws, regulations, or ordinances (this information must also be included in the rental agreement and any online or other advertising for the Single-Family Dwelling);

(f) The number of days at a time the Owner intends to rent the Single-Family Dwelling as a Short-Term Rental, and the months of the year during which Owner intends to do so;

(g) The rental agreement for the Single-Family Dwelling to be used as a Short-Term Rental;

(h) A statement that the Single-Family Dwelling to be used as a Short-Term Rental is in compliance with all requirements of this Ordinance;

(i) A statement that the applicant and/or property owner have no outstanding Township taxes, permit or inspection fees, escrow deposits, water bills, or other amounts due and owing to the Township, County or State;

(j) An agreement signed by the property owner permitting inspections of the subject property by officials of the township upon reasonable notice.

(k) Such other information as the Township Board deems appropriate.

(2) Change in Information. An Owner or Local Designated Agent shall notify the Township in writing within 15 days of any change in the information provided on the application form. The Owner of a short-term rental unit shall notify the Township in writing within 15 days of any change in the designated Local Designated Agent.

(3) An Owner who wishes to rent or advertise a Single-Family Dwelling as a Short-Term Rental must register the Single-Family Dwelling for each calendar year during which the rental or advertisement shall occur. The Owner shall pay an annual administrative fee, the amount of which shall be established by resolution of the Township Board. Any Owner who rents or advertises a Single-Family Dwelling as a Short-Term Rental after January 1, 2028 without having registered it pursuant to this Ordinance shall pay an increased fee, the amount of which is also to be set by motion or resolution of the Township Board.

(a) Acceptance of completed application. An application is not considered accepted by the township until the township ordinance officer schedules the inspection of the premises and delivers to the owner a written acknowledgement of a completed application.

(b) Applications will be reviewed in the order they are received. If an application is deemed incomplete during the review process, it will be placed on hold until the applicant submits the necessary information. Meanwhile, the township will proceed with reviewing the next application in line.

(c) Consistent with the purpose and objectives of this ordinance as set forth herein, the Township Board hereby establishes a maximum limit on the total number of short term rental licenses of 175.

(d) Once the total number of short term rental licenses issued pursuant to this ordinance reaches the maximum limit established by the Township Board, the STR Admin shall not accept or approve any additional applications for short term rental licenses until an existing license expires or is revoked, or voided, thus creating an available license.

(e) Consistent with the purpose and objectives of this ordinance as set forth herein, the Township Board may review and, by resolution, amend the maximum limit on short-term rental licenses and may adjust the limit as it determines to be advisable. Such revisions shall not be the basis for termination or non-renewal of a license previously issued.

SECTION 5: SHORT-TERM RENTAL REGULATIONS

Single-Family Dwellings used as a Short-Term Rental are subject to the following requirements and performance standards.

(A) *Street address posted within the Single-Family Dwelling.* The street address of the property shall be posted in at least two prominent locations within the Single-Family Dwelling in order to assist occupants in directing emergency service personnel in the event of an emergency. The address should be posted near the kitchen and near any telephone or pool.

(B) *Map of Property with property lines.* A map of the property indicating the location of the boundaries with neighboring properties shall be provided with all rentals.

(C) *Maximum occupancy.* the maximum occupancy of any Single-Family Dwelling used as a Short-Term Rental shall be as follows.

(1) Maximum occupancy in a Single-Family Dwelling used as a Short-Term Rental shall not exceed the lesser of 12 total occupants or two occupants per bedroom plus two additional occupants per finished story, which meets the applicable egress requirements for occupancy in the Michigan Construction Code, and subject to any other local, state, or federal requirements.

(2) In addition to the maximum occupancy specified in subsection (1) above, a Single-Family Dwelling used as a Short-Term Rental may have a total number of people on site, including occupants and day-time guests (allowed to be present at most from sunrise to sunset), up to 2 times the maximum number of occupants allowed by subsection (1) (a fractional number of people allowed shall be rounded up);

(D) *Smoke detectors and carbon monoxide devices.* Single-Family Dwellings used as Short-Term Rentals must possess:

(1) Operational smoke detectors in each bedroom, which must be tested at least every six months to ensure that they are properly functioning; and

(2) At least one operational and approved carbon monoxide device of the type described in the Michigan State Construction Code (MCL 125.1504) on each floor, which must be tested at least every 6 months to ensure proper functioning.

(E) *Zoning compliance.* All Single-Family Dwellings used for Short-Term Rental are also regulated by the Ganges Township Zoning Ordinance, and nothing in this Ordinance shall be construed as excusing compliance with zoning requirements.

(F) *Attics and basements.* No attic or basement can be counted for the purpose of determining the maximum number of occupants in a Single-Family Dwelling used as a Short-Term Rental, unless the Owner has given the Township, in writing, consent for the Township to inspect the premises to Michigan Construction Code, the Michigan Residential Code, and the applicable fire codes.

(G) *Inspections.* The Owner must consent to inspections of the Single-Family Dwelling used as a Short-Term Rental by the township ordinance officer. The Owner must also consent to, and pay for, a septic inspection by the Allegan County Health Department or a private third party that is registered with the township and must obtain a certificate indicating the Single-Family Dwelling used as a Short-Term Rental has adequate septic pumping, which shall be renewed every three years.

(H) *Outdoor Address Markers.* The Single-Family Dwelling used as a Short-Term Rental must have a reflective address marker near the street. Green reflective address markers are currently available from the Ganges Township Fire Department (269-277-3806).

(I) *Insurance.* Single-Family Dwellings used as Short-Term Rentals must be insured as a commercially, rented property with a liability policy of at least $1,000,000. The Owner shall provide to the Township confirmation of the existence of the insurance each time the Short-Term Rental is registered with the Township.

(J) *Notice of Township Rules and Policies.* Renters of Single-Family Dwellings used as Short-Term Rentals must be provided copies of or information regarding the following:

(1) This Ordinance;

(2) The Registration number for the Single-Family Dwelling;

(3) The Township's Good Neighbor Policy with the address portion of the policy completed with the renter's information;

(4) Information regarding trash receptacle pick-up, property boundaries, on-site parking, limitations on day-time visitors per subsection (b)(2) above, and common areas which are available for the renters' use; and

(5) The Ganges Township Anti-Noise and Public Nuisance Ordinance (20A Effective Oct 27, 2018).

(K) *Trash receptacles.* All Single-Family Dwellings used as Short-Term Rentals must have adequate closed trash receptacles such that all trash is contained within the receptacles (trash in plastic bags, or open containers shall not be left at the street). Trash receptacles (and any recycling receptacles) must not be left at the street after the day of trash pick-up

(L) *Parking.* All motor vehicles, boats, campers, and trailers associated with the short term rental, whether owned or operated by the Owner, Local Designated Agent, tenants or visitors, shall be parked solely on the short-term rental premises in areas designated for parking and not parked on or along any public roadway or private road open to the general public.

(M) *Pets.* All pets must be confined to the property or kept on a leash at all times. Any tenant's or visitor's pet that creates frequent or prolonged noise disturbing the comfort or repose of persons in the vicinity shall constitute a violation of this Ordinance

SECTION 6: EXCEPTIONS AND EXEMPTIONS

Rental property registration under this article is NOT required where occupancy of a Single-Family Dwelling unit occurs, under the following circumstances:

(A) *Accessory Dwelling - Family occupancy*. Any member of a family (and that family member's guests) may occupy a Single-Family Dwelling as long as any other member

of that family is the owner of the Single-Family Dwelling or Single-Family Dwelling unit. Family occupancy also exempts guest houses or similarly separate Single-Family Dwelling units located on the same premises as the owner's domicile, when occupied by family guests, exchange students, visiting clergy, medical caregivers, and childcare givers, without remuneration 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 remuneration, without a rental Single-Family Dwelling property registration.

(C) *Single-Family Dwelling sales*. Occupancy by a prior owner after the sale of a Single-Family Dwelling under a rental agreement for a period of less than 91 days following closing. Rental property registration is required if legal or equitable ownership is not transferred in its entirety within 90 days of execution of the conditional sales agreement.

(D) Estate representative. Occupancy by a personal representative, trustee, or guardian of the estate and his family, with or without remuneration. The estate shall notify the township of the owner's name, date of death, and name of the person occupying the premises.

SECTION 7: INSPECTIONS, ISSUANCE OF FINAL REGISTRATION AND PERMIT

Final approval of the application and permit is contingent upon a fire safety inspection and compliance with the township fire code. Subsequent to the filing and acceptance of a completed registration application, the rental property shall be inspected by the township fire code official.

(A) *Rental property registration inspections.* Within 60 days following the acceptance of an application for rental Single-Family Dwelling registration and permit, the dwelling shall have an inspection for compliance with the requirements of the township's fire safety standards.

(B) *Governing fire safety standards.* The provisions of the International Fire Code as amended, hereinafter referred to as the "fire code", as adopted by the township and included by reference in chapter 16, article II of the Code, shall govern the minimum conditions and standards for fire safety relating to the structures and the exterior premises of rental Single-Family Dwellings regulated under this article, including the fire safety facilities and equipment to be provided.

(C) *Approval.* Upon a finding of compliance with the fire safety standards of the township, by the township fire code official, the rental property registration and permit shall be declared approved and a final rental property permit for the rental property shall be issued to the owner by the township ordinance officer. The date of issuance shall be assigned by the township ordinance officer and shall be affixed to the permit and the permit shall be posted near the main entrance.

(D) *Changes in registration information*. During the approved permit period, the owner or Local Designated Agent shall provide written notification to the township of any change in the information required.

SECTION 8: VIOLATIONS, REVOCATION OF REGISTRATION

(A) *Violations as municipal civil infractions.* Any violation of the provisions of this Ordinance shall be a municipal civil infraction. Each day that a violation continues constitutes a separate violation. Notwithstanding any other Township ordinance, violations of this Ordinance are subject to the following fines:

(1) *Short-term rental of unregistered Single-Family Dwellings.* The operation of an unregistered Short-Term Rental is $500 for a first violation and $500 per day for each subsequent violation. Violators may also be subject to agency costs/attorney's fees/enforcement fees.

(2) *Maximum occupancy.* The fine for exceeding the maximum occupancy permitted for a Short-Term Rental is $250 for a first offense and $500 for each subsequent offense. Violators may also be subject to agency costs/attorney's fees/enforcement fees.

(3) Other provisions. Fines for other violations of this Ordinance are $100 for a first offense, $250 for a second offense, and $500 for each subsequent offense. Violators may also be subject to agency costs/attorney's fees/enforcement fees.

(B) *Injunctive Relief*. In addition to other relief as described, the Township shall have the right to proceed in any court of competent jurisdiction for the purpose of obtaining an injunction, restraining order, or other appropriate remedy to compel compliance with this Ordinance.

(C) *Revocation of registration.*

(1) Offenses warranting revocation. The Township may revoke, or reduce, the rental registration for any dwelling used as a Short-Term Rental which is the site of at least three separate incidents (occurring on three separate days) within a calendar year resulting in a plea of responsibility (with or without an explanation), a plea of guilty, a plea of no contest, or a court's determination of responsibility or guilt by the Owner or any renter. At its discretion, the Township may opt to reduce the period of registration by 6 months after 3 incidents rather than issue a complete revocation. Regardless, a complete revocation will be made after the fourth incidence. Revocation will be made for a violation of one or more of the following:

(a) Any provision of this Ordinance;

(b) Any provision of any other Township ordinance, including its Noise Ordinance, or permit or approval process; or

(c) Any violation of any other local, state, or federal law or regulation.

(2) Revocation Procedure. Upon a determination by the township ordinance officer that the Short-Term Rental registration is subject to revocation, the ordinance officer shall issue a notice to the Owner that the Township intends to revoke the rental registration. The notice shall inform the Owner of a right to a hearing to show cause as to why the registration should not be revoked, if a hearing is requested within 14 days of the service of the notice. If a hearing is timely requested, the Township shall schedule the hearing before the Township Board and notify the Owner in writing of a time and place for that hearing. At the hearing, the Owner may present evidence that the requirements for revocation provided in subsection (b)(1) are not satisfied, or that the Owner should not be held responsible for one or more of the three requisite violations due to extenuating circumstances. Extenuating circumstances may include circumstances such as: (i) the violation was committed by a non-renter and the renter(s) attempted to prevent or halt the violation; (ii) the violation resulted from an act of God; or (iii) other circumstances that the Owner could not reasonably anticipate and prevent, and could not reasonably control.

(3) Revocation Period and Effect. Upon revocation of registration, a Single-Family Dwelling cannot be re-registered as a Short-Term Rental for a period of one year, and cannot be used for Short-Term Rentals until re-registered.

SECTION 9: REVIEW AFTER IMPLEMENTATION

Review after implementation. Not later than one year after implementation of this ordinance, the Township Board shall begin a review of this Ordinance to determine whether its implementation has achieved its intent; to determine whether the fees received by the Township for the registration of Short-Term Rentals approximately equal the costs of enforcement incurred by the Township pursuant to this Ordinance; and to determine what, if any, amendments should be made to this Ordinance

SECTION 10: EFFECTIVE DATE

This Ordinance was approved and adopted by the Township Board of the Township of Ganges, Allegan County, Michigan, on October 13, 2026. This Ordinance shall be effective 30 days after publication of its contents or a summary of its contents in a local newspaper of general circulation in the Township.

John Hebert, Township Supervisor Robin Phelps, Township Clerk

CERTIFICATE

I, Robin Phelps, Clerk for the Township of GANGES, Allegan County, Michigan, certify that the foregoing Short Term Rental Ordinance was adopted at a regular meeting of the Township Board held on October 13, 2026. The following members of the Township Board were present at that meeting: Hutchins, Reimink, Hebert, Phelps, and Thomspon. The following members of the Township Board were absent: None. The Ordinance was adopted by the Township Board with members of the Board Reimink, Hebert, Phelps, and Thompson voting in favor and member of the Board Hutchins voting in opposition. The Ordinance or a summary was published in the Allegan County News on October 22, 2026 .

Robin Phelps, Township Clerk

Ganges Township Good Neighbor Policy

Single-Family Dwelling Address:___
Single-Family Dwelling Phone Number:_____

Call 911 for ALL Emergency Issues.
Other violations should be reported to the Ganges Township Ordinance Officer at (269) 906-2102.

NOISE – (Ganges Township Ordinance # 20-A)
Renters are required to follow the townships Anti-Noise and Public Nuisance Ordinance, a copy of which will be posted within the Single-Family Dwelling.

TRESPASSING – A map of the rental property will be provided to all renters. Renters shall not trespass onto a neighboring property without permission.

FIREWORKS – (Ganges Township Fireworks Ordinance #59)
Fireworks are restricted to national holidays and the day before and after the holiday • Fireworks on the day before and after the holiday are not allowed from 11 p.m. to 8 a.m.

FIRES
Campfires are allowed in fire rings or other suitable structures, and must be attended at all times

P**ARKING (Ganges Zoning 17-1)**
Park only in designated spots on the property
Parking must not impede the passage of any emergency vehicle on the roadway

PETS (Allegan County Dog Control Ordinance (ACDCO) 1008.01)
Pets must be on leash when off your property (ACDCO Sec. 701)
Barking dogs are a violation of the township noise ordinance (**Ganges Township Ordinance #20A)**
Picking up after your dogs on walks is required (ACDCO Sec. 705)

VEHICLES (Various State laws & Ganges Ordinances)
ATVs are only allowed on a private beach (The Handbook of Michigan Off-road Vehicle Laws)
Low-speed" vehicles require tags and insurance (MCL 257)
Minors cannot drive "low-speed" vehicles or golf carts (MCL 257.301)
Motor homes/recreational vehicles are prohibited for paying guests.
Jet Skis (PWC) use is restricted to 200 feet or more from the shoreline – minimum age is 14 with a boating safety certificate and other restrictions (Michigan Boating Laws)

COURTEOUS AND COMMON-SENSE REQUESTS (non-legislated)
Please be considerate of all neighbors
Stay off the bluffs to protect the environment

TRASH
Place all trash in covered containers. Trash containers must not be left at the street after the day of pick-up.