

**LAKE TOWNSHIP, ROSCOMMON COUNTY, MICHIGAN
OFFICIAL PUBLIC EXPLANATION – REFERENDUM ON ORDINANCE NO. 55D**

(WATERFRONT FENCES)

At its October 22, 2025 meeting, the Lake Township Board adopted Ordinance No. 55D, which amended Section 802C of the Lake Township Zoning Ordinance to allow split-rail and other see-through fences not exceeding four (4) feet in height in the R-1 Waterfront Residential District from the front corner of a dwelling to the water's edge.

Previously, fences were not permitted between the dwelling and the waterline in this district. This amendment would permit limited fencing in those waterfront areas.

Background

Prior to adopting this change, the Township Board—led by Supervisor John Hibbard—conducted a community survey sent to all Lake Township taxpayers. The majority of respondents opposed allowing fences to the waterfront, citing concerns about visual obstruction and the overall impact on the lake's scenic quality. Despite these results, the Township Board voted to adopt the amendment permitting fences in waterfront areas.

Arguments Against Ordinance 55D

Opponents believe allowing fences from the dwelling to the water's edge will:

- Diminish the open aesthetic and natural beauty of Houghton Lake's shoreline.
- Reduce shared scenic views that define the community's waterfront character.
- Create visual clutter and potential barriers along the lakefront, undermining the traditional open-lawn appearance valued by residents and visitors.
- Conflict with the intent of past zoning standards designed to preserve the lake's visual integrity and maintain uniform waterfront setbacks.

Arguments in Favor of Ordinance 55D

Supporters of the amendment state that:

- Split-rail and see-through designs can define property boundaries and provide limited safety or decorative function without fully blocking views.