

Lake Township property owner survey concerns

August 28, 2025

I continue to be concerned about short-term rentals (STRs) in Lake Township. Here, I turn my attention to the current township survey, sent out at considerable taxpayer cost (approximately \$2,500), regarding potential ordinance changes, including STRs.

As a retired social studies teacher and chairperson, I know a thing or two about surveys. This survey has many flaws! All of which could have easily been avoided. Yet, they were not, even after public concerns were raised in the last township meeting.

There are concerns with survey security, as well as survey integrity and validity. Best practices were not observed.

Wording is not consistently objective. Take question one as an example regarding STRs. There is no current legislation in Michigan that would supersede a township's ability to restrict or ban STRs.

House Bill 5438 was introduced in 2024 and referred to committee. It explicitly would allow townships to ban STRs and only affect townships that permit them. Past proposed legislation has always failed in committee when it would prevent a township from banning STRs.

Thus, the survey statement in question one: "Without some sort of ordinance in Lake Township allowing short term rentals, the State of Michigan could, in the future, force us to allow them" is an extremely misleading scare tactic. It appears designed to steer people to choose a board's preferred answer. It's biased. Don't fall for it!

I do have concerns on the remaining questions: fences, building setbacks, ordinance enforcement and township growth.

Why not do a fully objective and secure survey? Why include misleading information as a lead-up to a question on STRs? Are agendas at play trying to drum up support for something that otherwise would not be there without scare tactics?

Surveying township residents on these matters is a nice idea. However, doing it properly and objectively is essential, especially given the taxpayer costs of doing so. I give this survey an "E."

Jeff Smith