

**WATSON TOWNSHIP
LYCOMING COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-09-19

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 4044.4 AND 4044.5 OF THE WATSON
TOWNSHIP ZONING ORDINANCE TO REGULATE SHORT-TERM RENTAL
UNITS WITHIN WATSON TOWNSHIP**

BE IT ORDAINED AND RESOLVED, following proper public notice and public hearing, it is hereby ordained and resolved by the Board of Supervisors of the Township of Watson, County of Lycoming, and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, as follows:

AMENDMENT:

WHEREAS, the Watson Township Zoning Ordinance shall be amended to add the following Section to Article IV – Supplemental Use Regulations:

SECTION 4044 SHORT-TERM RENTALS

4044.1 Title

This Chapter shall be known as and may be cited as “The Watson Township Short-Term Rental Ordinance”.

4044.2 Scope

- A. The provisions of this Section shall apply to all residential dwelling units, conversions of non-residential structures to residential dwellings, and all existing premises within the Township. The owner of the subject property shall be responsible for compliance with the provisions of this Section and the failure of an owner, agency, managing agency, local contact person, or renting occupants to comply with the provisions of this Section shall be deemed noncompliance by the owner.

- B. This Section shall also not apply to a resort, camp, hotel/motel/inn, bed and breakfast, boarding house, or group home, as defined within the Zoning Ordinance.

4044.3 Interpretation

This Section is not intended to, and does not, excuse any landowner from compliance with the Watson Township Zoning Ordinance, as amended from time to time. Whenever possible, this Section and the Zoning Ordinance should be construed and interpreted as being consistent, and not in conflict.

4044.4 Permit Required

No owner of any property in the Township shall operate a Short-Term Rental in the Township without first obtaining a Short-Term Rental Permit from the Zoning Officer. Operation of a Short-Term Rental without such Short-Term Rental Permit is a violation of this Section. Permits may be transferable to any new owner of the property within ninety (90) days of its issuance.

1. Permit Requirements

- A. Short-Term Rental Permit applications shall contain all the following information: The name, address, telephone number and email address of the owner. If the owner does not have a managing agency, agent, or local contact person then the owner shall provide a 24-hour telephone number. If the owner uses a managing agency, agent, or local contact person then that managing agency, agent or local contact person shall have written authorization to accept service for the owner. If the owner resides at a location over approximately fifteen (15) miles from the Short-Term Rental Property, an agent or local contact person must be selected to act as Person in Charge for the property.
 1. The name, address and 24-hour telephone number of the managing agency, agent, or local contact person.
 2. ~~Identify the maximum occupancy for the property, which shall be approved and/or can be revised in the sole discretion of the Zoning Officer.~~
The occupancy for the property shall be limited to two occupants per bedroom.
 3. Signatures of the owners.
 4. Trespass waiver signed by the owner allowing access to the property for the Zoning Officer for the purpose of inspection to verify compliance with this Ordinance.
- B. A Short-Term Rental Permit shall be issued only to the owner of the Short-Term Rental property.
 1. A Short-Term Rental Permit is effective for the duration of the ownership of the property by the applicant, unless revoked by the Zoning Officer or the Township as a result of a violation of this Ordinance at the sole discretion of the Township. If the property is transferred to a new owner, the Permit may be transferable to any new owner of the property as long as it is within ninety (90) days of the permit being issued, otherwise, the new owner shall be required to submit a new permit application for approval.

4044.5 Short-Term Rental Standards

- A. Outdoor parking for overnight and day guests shall be limited to available parking areas on the Short-Term Rental property. In no event shall parking for Short-Term Rental guests include spaces on any public street right-of-way.
- B. Overnight occupancy of recreational vehicles or camper trailers at the property where the Short-Term Rental is located shall not be allowed.
- C. A Short-Term Renter shall comply with all Watson Township Nuisance and Hazard Protection Standards found in Section 6100 of the Watson Township Zoning Ordinance.
- D. **The septic tanks of on-lot sewage systems must be pumped-out and a report issued by the Pumper stating that the system is functioning properly must be provided to the Zoning Officer prior to the issuance of a short-term rental permit.**
- E. **The septic system must be pumped-out annually and a report submitted to the Township by the Pumper stating that the system is functioning properly. If it is determined that the system is not functioning properly, the Short-term Rental Permit will be revoked until the system is brought into compliance with DEP regulations.**
- F. Compliance with the requirements of this section shall be considered the conditions for a Short-Term Rental Permit, the violation of which may result in a revocation of that permit by the Zoning Officer.
- G. In the event that a permitted owner is found to be in violation of this Ordinance, the property owner's permit shall become null and void in the Township's sole discretion.

4044.6 Enforcement Officer

The administrator of this article shall be the Zoning Officer or other Watson Township authorized representative as appointed by the Township, which shall include any appointed Assistant Zoning Officers. The Zoning Officer shall have the responsibility and authority to administer and enforce all provisions of this Section.

4044.7 Inspections Required

- A. All Short-Term Rentals shall be subject to inspections by the Zoning Officer or other Watson Township authorized representative to verify application information.
- B. The issuance of a Short-Term Rental Permit is not a warranty that the premises is lawful, safe, habitable, or in compliance with this Section.
- C. If there is reason to believe that any provision of this Section is being violated, the Board of Supervisors may or may cause, through an authorized representative of the Township,

entry onto premises for the purpose of inspection of any and all premises, properties, buildings and/or structures located within the Township for ascertaining the existence of violations. In those matters where the nature of an alleged violation is such that an inspection of the interior of a building or structure is necessitated, prior arrangements must be made with the owner or his agent to secure access thereof.

4044.8 Marketing

The marketing of a Short-Term Rental in which the advertised occupancy exceeds the maximum occupancy requirements permitted by this Section, or which promotes any other activity which is prohibited by this Section, shall be a violation of this Section.

The table contained in Article 3, Division 3300 - Application of Other Regulations shall be amended to be consistent with the amendments established in this Ordinance.

The following definitions shall be added to the Watson Township Zoning Ordinance:

PERSON IN CHARGE – A person or agent with actual authority to represent the owner for purposes of contact and communication regarding the owner’s Short-Term Rental. A Person in Charge must reside or have an office within approximately fifteen (15) miles of the Short-Term Rental Property and be able to act as legal agent for the owner. The Township must be notified, in writing, within fourteen (14) days if there is a change in the identity of the Person in Charge.

SHORT-TERM RENTAL – Any Dwelling Unit utilized as a single-family residence rented for the purpose of overnight lodging for a period of thirty (30) days or less.

SHORT-TERM RENTAL PERMIT – Permission granted by the Township to utilize a Dwelling Unit for Short-Term Rental Use.

REPEALER:

WHEREAS, all ordinances or parts of ordinances inconsistent with this Ordinance are hereby repealed insofar as they may be inconsistent herewith.

EFFECTIVE DATE:

WHEREAS, this Ordinance shall become effective five (5) days after enactment or as otherwise established by operation of law.

TO BE ENACTED AND ORDAINED by the Board of Supervisors of the Township of Watson, Lycoming County, Pennsylvania, on the 19th day of September, 2024.

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
TOWNSHIP OF WATSON**

ATTEST:

James Seltzer, Chairman

Secretary

James Potter, Vice-Chairman

Richard Macklem, Supervisor