

There were some items discussed during the Plan Commission only session regarding a Short Term Rental Ordinance that may have received comments if the public participated.

Comments on the July STR Listening Session

It was mentioned that at the July Town Board session there was little support for an STR ordinance, and significant opposition. The July session included a presentation from Janet Slater, President of Home Hosts. Home Hosts had also encouraged their STR owning members to attend the July session days in advance. Looking at the approved Town Board minutes from the July session, if one assigns whether a person who spoke during public comment was “for” or “against” Jacksonport having an STR ordinance, the tally was 13 Against an Ordinance, and 9 For an Ordinance. Yes, more opposed than in favor, but not as lopsided as implied by the comments during the Plan Commission discussion session. Given that Home Hosts encouraged their STR owners to attend, the 13 to 9 count is not a surprise.

Following the July session, some wondered what is “Home Hosts”? It turns out they have a website:

<https://homehosts.org/>

The website has lots of information. From a section of the “about” page (<https://homehosts.org/about/>) the following is a “cut and paste”:

ADVOCACY
We stand up for responsible short-term rentals at all levels of government, and we provide hosts and managers resources to advocate for yourselves.

REGULATORY SUPPORT
We provide regular updates on the latest in ordinances and laws, as well as support tools to help you get your permits, pay taxes, and more.

BEST PRACTICES & EDUCATION
We create content and events for hosts and managers of all experience levels to professionalize and improve your hosting business.

COMMUNITY & NETWORKING
We foster opportunities to grow your network. Whether you're looking for a vendor or business partner, or you just want to connect with other hosts, Home Hosts of Door County is your community.

[SEE MORE ABOUT MEMBER BENEFITS](#)

Note Advocacy is listed first. If one clicks on the “See More About Member Benefits” bar, the following page appears:

Become a Home Hosts Member

Sign up to get the most robust hosting resources and other members-only benefits.
Payments are tax-deductible as allowable under IRS code.

<p>Platinum Membership</p> <p>\$1000/year</p> <p>For larger property management companies, and owners and hosts interested in further supporting our mission. Includes promotional opportunities.</p> <p>JOIN</p>	<p>Silver Membership</p> <p>\$250/year</p> <p>For owners and hosts with more than one rental property, and local service providers interested in connecting their business with Home Hosts.</p> <p>JOIN</p>
<p>Gold Membership</p> <p>\$500/year</p> <p>For smaller property management companies, and owners and hosts interested in further supporting our mission. Includes promotional opportunities.</p> <p>JOIN</p>	<p>Bronze Membership</p> <p>\$149/year</p> <p>For STR owners and hosts with one rental property.</p> <p>JOIN</p>

During the public comments at the Plan Commission meeting, a concern was mentioned about property companies possibly coming in to buy up properties for STRs. The Home Hosts organization seeks membership from property management companies as shown on the membership webpage, so that concern may not be far-fetched based on the above “cut and paste” from the Home Hosts site.

As part of Home Hosts advocacy, they did have a page informing their members in advance of the Jacksonport Plan Commission meeting and encouraged the members to attend.

<https://homehosts.org/jacksonport-plan-commission-meeting-strs-on-the-agenda/>

Here is a small “cut and paste” from that page:

We have learned that the residents/second homeowners will be proposing restrictions, potentially a 6-night minimum rental and owner-occupied requirements. Although the plan commission is not likely to recommend ordinance elements this severe, **it's important to have them hear from us**—that we are good neighbors and aren't having issues with our neighbors. Our question is, "What problem are we solving?"

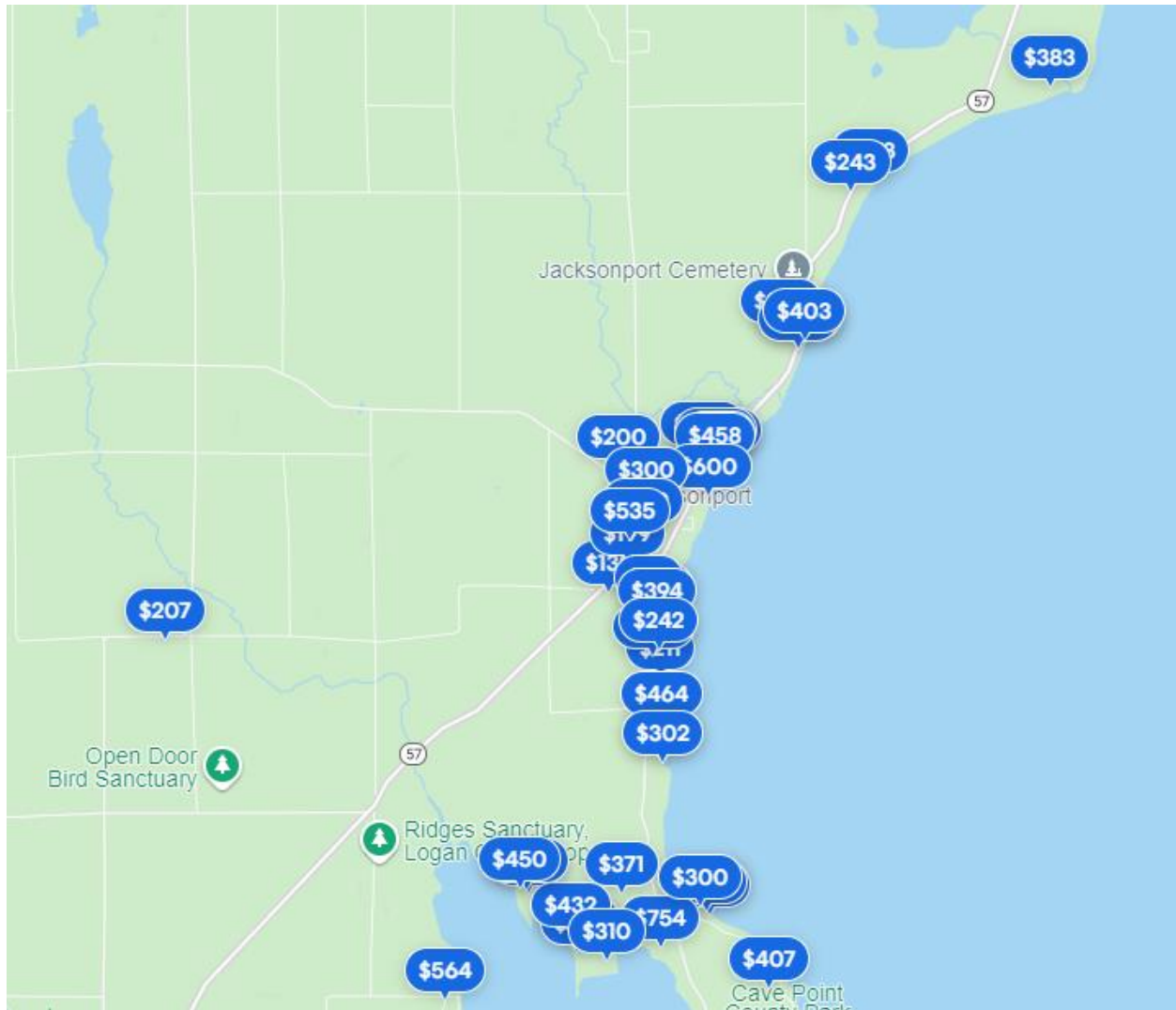
It makes a difference, as it did at the July Public Meeting, for the Plan Commission members to **see us** as reasonable people who share their love of the area, just as they do, vs. the inconsiderate, party-hosting, bad neighbors that the small band of residents/second homeowners want to paint us as.

It is absolutely proper for Home Hosts to band together STR owners and advocate their position. It is just worth noting that they are a county wide organization with financial resources available to oppose a STR Ordinance that the people in Jacksonport who are impacted by STRs and support an STR Ordinance don't have available.

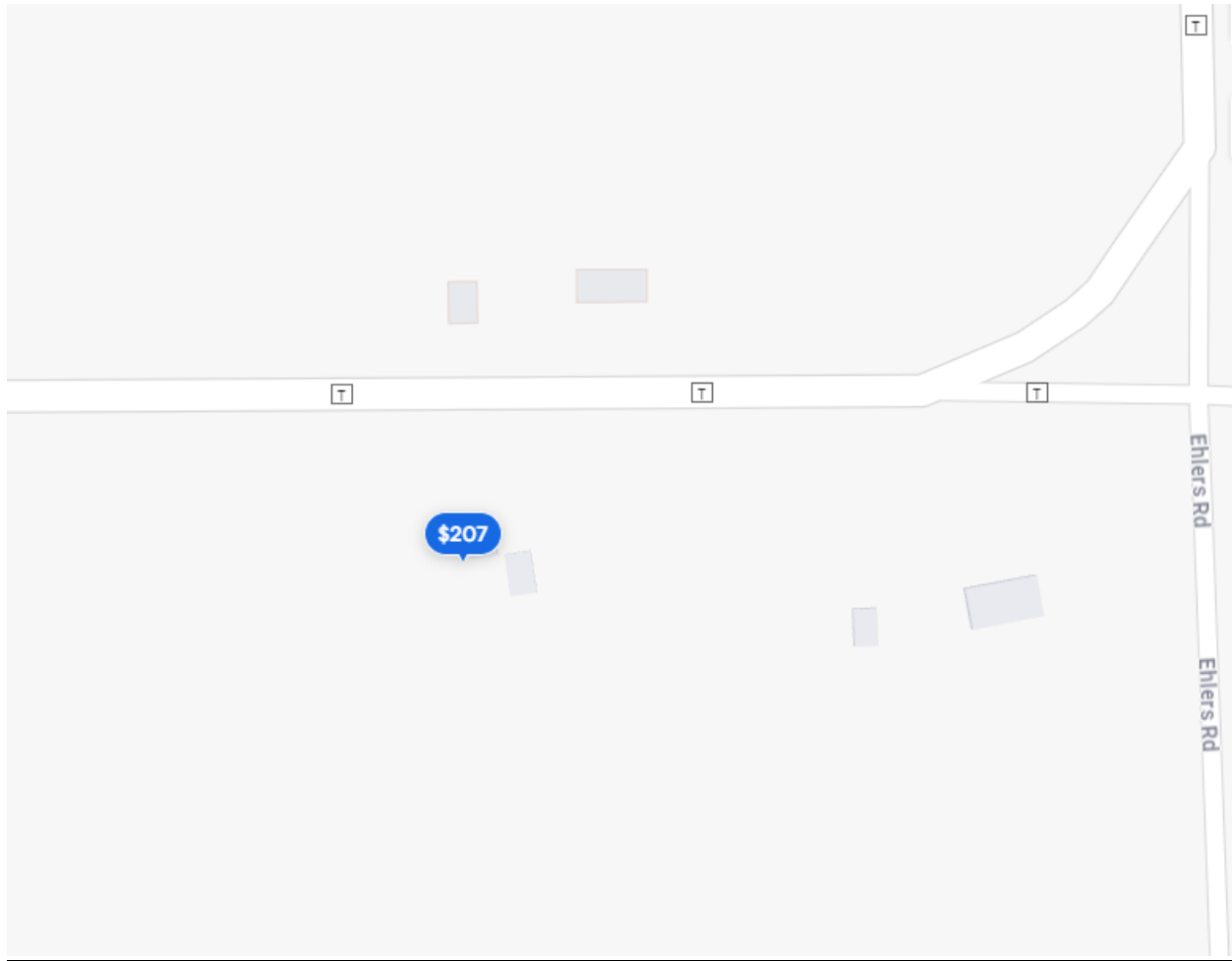
Comment from Plan Commission member that STRs aren't a problem

It is important to say that the majority of STRs in Jacksonport are well managed and do not cause ongoing problems. The ongoing problems that do exist are recent, mostly from STRs with "absentee landlords", and are concentrated in a few neighborhoods in Jacksonport. Insights may be gained from looking at a map from the VRBO site of a Jacksonport search showing their short term rental locations. (Note: not all Jacksonport STRs list with VRBO). Most of the issues for neighbors in Jacksonport have come where there is a recently developed concentration of VRBOs/AirBnBs.

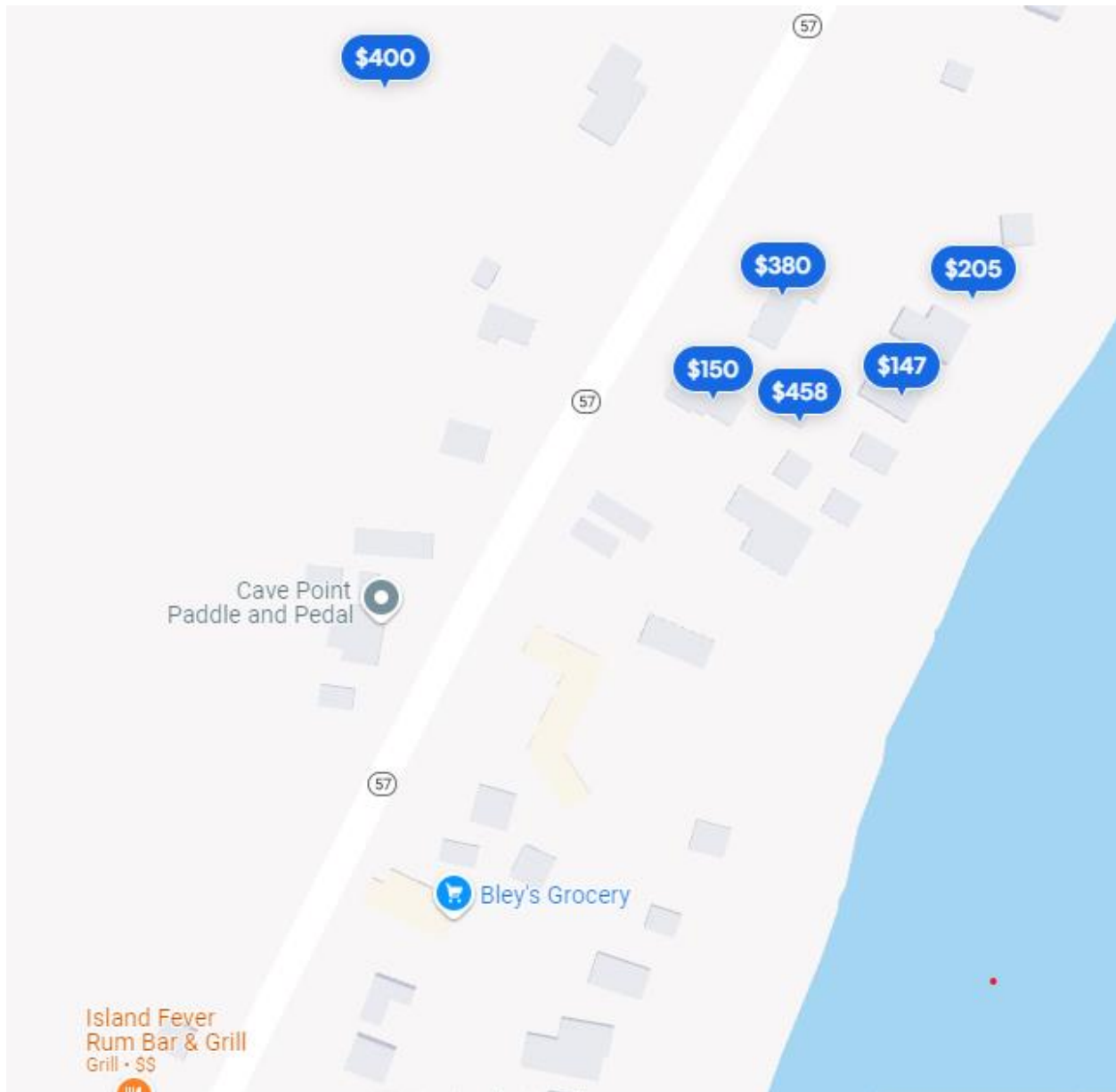
Al Birnschein mentioned during the Commission-only speaking session that he is an STR owner and has not received any complaints or had renter problems. Below is a map of active VRBOs in Jacksonport. As seen on the map, there are neighborhoods in Jacksonport with concentrations of VRBOs: a few locations along the Lake Michigan shore, the north side of Clark Lake, and the area west of Highway 57 south of the town hall. (FYI, the dollar values on the map are average nightly rates over the year before fees, commissions and taxes.)



It may be worth noting that Al Birnschein's STR is the one by itself on the left side of the VRBO map (labeled \$207). A close-up from the VRBO map around Al Birnschein's STR suggests a good reason why he has been problem and complaint free. The buildings are spread out, with no very close neighbors that renters could disturb, and no other nearby VRBO listings.



As a comparison to the situation near Al Birnschein's STR, below is a similar close up of the area just north of the town park on Highway 57. There are 5 VRBOs spread among non-rentals, all in close proximity. There have been more than a few problems of different types over the last three seasons from renters in some of these VRBOs after being purchased by non-local owners. As an additional note, the two small gray rectangles just east of Highway 57 on the map are small homes that used to house year-round renters who lived and worked locally, but the houses were purchased this year by a new remote owner who is in the process of converting them to STRs for the 2025 season.



Therefore, the calm situation in and around an isolated short term rental can contrast significantly with other areas in Jacksonport where they are clustered. It is these cluster areas that most have a near-term need for a Short Term Rental Ordinance.

[Comment on the wake boarding ordinance issue relative to the STR Ordinance situation](#)

During the Plan Commission discussion of the wakeboarding issue, one of the summary comments was that a Jacksonport ordinance should be the same as adopted by Sevastopol and Baileys Harbor for consistency. That approach is logical, and makes perfect sense.

One can also make a similar observation with respect to Short Term Rentals. A Jacksonport STR Ordinance would also be best aligned with Sevastopol and Baileys Harbor as well, for consistency, as all 3 townships have Michigan Lakeshore and populated inland lake areas with concentrations of STRs.

As always, thank you for your time and effort on behalf of Jacksonport.

Mike Desmond and Shelly Larson
October 2024