

TOWNSHIP OF WANTAGE
COUNTY OF SUSSEX • STATE OF NEW JERSEY
PROPOSED ORDINANCE NO. _____ - 2026

**AN ORDINANCE REPLACING THE SHORT-TERM RENTAL PROVISIONS OF CHAPTER 8-6 AND
AMENDING CHAPTER 13 (ZONING) TO PERMIT AND REASONABLY REGULATE SHORT-TERM
RENTALS**

SUBMITTED FOR CONSIDERATION by the Sussex County Short-Term Rental Association. This is proposed model legislation, not an adopted ordinance.

WHEREAS, short-term rentals provide visitor accommodations, support local businesses and tourism, and help homeowners meet housing and maintenance expenses; and

WHEREAS, the Township seeks balanced standards protecting public safety, neighboring properties and community character without unnecessary restrictions based solely on acreage or zoning classification;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Township Committee of the Township of Wantage, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, as follows:

SECTION I. Chapter 8-6, Short-Term Rentals, is established or replaced in its entirety as follows:

§ 8-6.1. Purpose and applicability.

Short-term rentals (“STRs”) are permitted subject to this Chapter. The purpose is to encourage responsible tourism and lawful use of existing homes while establishing straightforward rules for guest safety, parking, noise, sanitation and enforcement.

§ 8-6.2. Definitions.

STR: Compensation-based rental of all or a lawful portion of a residential dwelling unit for a stay of 30 consecutive nights or fewer. OWNER: Record owner of the dwelling. RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Owner or designated manager available to address safety and nuisance concerns. LAWFUL BEDROOM: Sleeping room legally approved or otherwise lawful for residential occupancy.

§ 8-6.3. Eligible properties; permitted use.

A. STRs are permitted in lawfully established single-family detached dwellings, duplexes, triplexes and townhouses, in every district where such residences are lawfully permitted or lawfully existing, including the R-2 Residential District, subject to applicable building, fire, health and land-use law.

B. No special minimum acreage, owner-occupancy requirement, or annual limit on the number of rented days shall apply solely because a lawful dwelling is operated as an STR. A lawful shared driveway or private road shall not, by itself, disqualify a property, provided legal access and emergency access are maintained.

C. STRs shall not authorize unlawful dwelling conversions or be operated in rooming or boarding houses, dormitories, institutional care facilities, shelters, or structures not lawfully approved for residential occupancy. Lawful deed restrictions or private covenants remain enforceable by those entitled to enforce them.

§ 8-6.4. Annual STR permit and fees.

A. Before advertising or offering a dwelling as an STR, the owner or authorized agent shall obtain a permit from the Township Clerk. One permit is required for each rental dwelling unit; permits are valid for one year, are renewable, and are not transferable upon sale.

B. The initial permit fee shall be \$350; the annual renewal fee shall be \$125. Any inspection fee otherwise required by applicable law shall be separately identified. A renewal application may be filed up to 60 days before expiration; no daily late-payment penalty is imposed by this Chapter.

§ 8-6.5. Application; safety and insurance.

The owner shall provide: (1) owner and property information; (2) a 24-hour responsible-party phone number; (3) lawful bedroom count, proposed maximum guest occupancy and a simple parking sketch; (4) proof of at least \$500,000 general liability insurance covering STR use; and (5) certification that required fire-safety equipment, legal egress, sanitation, potable-water and sewage-disposal facilities comply with applicable law and approved capacity. The Township may conduct lawful inspections and require reasonable evidence of compliance; it shall not duplicate inspections or testing not otherwise required by law.

§ 8-6.6. Occupancy, parking and good-neighbor rules.

A. Maximum overnight occupancy shall be two persons per lawful bedroom plus two additional persons, but never more than permitted by fire, building, septic and other applicable capacity limits. Occupancy shall be stated in the permit and rental listing. Any request for higher occupancy requires documented code and facility approval.

B. Vehicles shall use lawful designated on-site parking areas or other legally available off-street spaces. Guests may not block streets, neighboring driveways, shared access, emergency lanes or fire apparatus access. Properties shall provide parking appropriate for approved occupancy without creating a separate acreage requirement.

C. Quiet hours are 10:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. Guests shall comply with existing noise, litter, parking, fireworks and public-safety laws. Trash and recycling shall be secured and disposed of under Township requirements. Ticketed events, commercial parties and gatherings beyond lawful property capacity are prohibited.

§ 8-6.7. Guest information; management and complaints.

The responsible party shall be reachable 24 hours a day during occupancy and shall respond to a Township-referred material complaint within two hours. The owner shall give guests written house rules stating maximum occupancy, designated parking, quiet hours, refuse instructions, emergency contacts and the manager's contact number. The STR permit number shall appear in public advertisements. Guest personal information need not be routinely filed with the Township unless required by other law or lawful process.

§ 8-6.8. Permit decisions and appeals.

Within ten business days after receiving a complete application and completion of any required inspection, the Township shall issue the permit or provide a written denial identifying specific unmet requirements. The applicant may appeal in writing to the Township Clerk within ten business days of denial; the Township Committee or its lawfully designated hearing officer shall schedule and determine the appeal within 30 days, subject to applicable law.

§ 8-6.9. Violations; proportional enforcement.

Violations are subject to the Township's otherwise applicable general penalty provisions. For non-emergency violations, written notice and a reasonable opportunity to cure shall precede suspension. After two separately substantiated material violations within 12 months, the Township may consider a permit suspension after written notice and an opportunity to be heard. Immediate action may be taken for an imminent threat to life or safety as authorized by law. A suspension or revocation decision shall state reasons and available appeal rights.

§ 8-6.10. Taxes; construction of Chapter.

Owners shall comply with applicable State taxes and any separately and lawfully adopted municipal transient-occupancy tax. This Chapter does not itself levy a tax, authorize unlawful residential uses, or impair rights under applicable State law.

SECTION II. Coordinating zoning amendment.

Chapter 13, Zoning, is amended to provide: "A short-term rental conducted pursuant to Chapter 8-6 shall be a permitted accessory residential use of a lawful single-family detached dwelling, duplex, triplex or townhouse in any district in which that dwelling is a permitted or lawful existing use, expressly including the R-2 Residential District. No additional STR-specific minimum lot area, conditional-use approval, or shared-driveway prohibition shall apply." The Township shall conform any conflicting zoning definitions or use tables to this provision.

SECTION III. Repeal; severability; effective date.

All ordinances or provisions inconsistent with this Ordinance, including prior provisions of Chapter 8-6 if enacted, are repealed to the extent of the inconsistency. If any provision is invalidated, the remainder shall continue in effect. This Ordinance shall take effect following lawful final adoption, publication and any required land-use procedures. Existing STR operators shall have 90 days after permit applications become available to seek compliance, unless an immediate safety hazard exists.