

Sonia Rzyz-Ryski
17 Half Moon Ridge
Nelsonville, NY, 10516
February 14, 2021

Village Board of Directors,
258 Main Street
Nelsonville, NY, 10516

Dear Mayor Bowman and Nelsonville trustees,

I am writing to address the draft proposal of the law regulating short-term rentals in Nelsonville. My husband Rudolf and I built our dream house on 5 secluded acres 20 years ago. We have raised three boys here, two of whom are in college and one still at Haldane. We have never wanted to live anywhere else.

This draft proposal on STR will affect our way of life dramatically. The proposed restrictions will impact our way of life, may cause us financial hardship, and poison the sense of freedom that we are accustomed to enjoying. My husband Rudolf and I would like to know the catalyst for such draconian regulations.

Our Airbnb listings make up 3 out of the 4 listings currently offered in Nelsonville. We love using Airbnb. It allows us to vet potential guests through an extensive review system, which beforehand was unavailable to us. It also provides peace of mind with a comprehensive insurance policy that we have luckily never had to use. We have over 600 5 star reviews, Super-Host status, and we are proud of that accomplishment.

Our house was built for entertaining. We have hosted West Point families for their graduation celebrations, and local families who need extra space for their own events. We provide a space for families to stay together in a communal setting in lieu of staying in a large, impersonal hotel in Fishkill. Our guests do their shopping here in our community, which benefits our local economy. We have never had a negative experience. We enjoy the interaction and love sharing our home, often keeping in touch with many guests.

We have also always enjoyed sharing our house with friends and family, hosting fundraisers, milestone birthdays, New Years Eve celebrations and occasionally weddings. These gatherings are often the highlight of our year and we wish to continue to enjoy our home in the manner we are accustomed to, without regulation restricting our ability to celebrate as we wish.

It was brought to our attention through an alarming and cryptic letter from the Building Inspector, that we had “several complaints” against us. This was very alarming as we always strive to be excellent neighbors and abide by all ordinances. However, upon requesting a copy of these complaints from the Village Clerk we were notified that there are no complaints against us. This reinforces our concern that this proposed legislation may be arbitrary and not based on any real complaints, only perceived fears expressed in an ***anonymous survey***. In order to justify making these dramatic changes that disproportionately affect our lives in particular, we ask that the board not rely on an ***anonymous survey***, citing petty grievances and undocumented complaints but instead use documented instances of issues related to STR to generate an accurate portrayal of the impact of STR specifically upon our community. We ask that this anonymous survey not be used to draft legislation, as there is no way to know who has participated and how many times, or if they are actual Nelsonville residents.

Nelsonville is a community with various styles of housing and restrictions that may make sense on Main Street do not necessarily make sense on Half Moon Ridge. My heart goes out to MaryLou Cachetta and her situation, but a simpler solution could easily suffice. We already have different rules for different zoning districts here in Nelsonville. Prohibiting parties in a village setting is different than prohibiting parties in a wooded, more secluded property on a private road. Also, there is already a noise ordinance in effect and there are parking rules in place. We question the need for new rules and regulations that will disproportionately affect us, and possibly cause us financial hardship. We have already been losing sleep over this proposed legislation.

It is difficult to feel that this is not a personal attack on our lifestyle and our freedom to enjoy our private property as we wish to, and as we have been doing for many years without one single incident. I ask the board to identify the problems they are seeking to remedy with this legislation, and to see documentation of such problems. I also would like to know how this proposed legislation addresses these specific problems.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sonia Rzyz-Ryski

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