

## Fruitport Township treats home renters as second class citizens

By Ron Cooper

The room was filled at the township board meeting Monday, October 23rd. Most of the people were there because of the creating or changing of two ordinances. One ordinance had to do with the animals or pets allowed in residential areas of the township. The other had to do with a requirement of inspecting residential properties that are rented. There were not enough, if any, copies of the ordinances available to the audience and the people affected seemed to be confused along with the board members as to what was in the new ordinances and why.

After hearing comments from the audience, the pet ordinance was voted on but the board did not seem to follow proper procedure and it was confusing as to what was voted into law.

If you own or are buying your home, the government must get a warrant signed by a Judge to enter your home. Usually it would require evidence of criminal activity for a Judge to do that.

Under the ordinance for rental properties, as explained, the township officials can enter and inspect a renters home with little notice.

The renters ordinance was presented by both the township board and Ron Bultje, the Fruitport township attorney, as something required by the State.

But questioning by upset rental property owners revealed and finally admitted to by the board and township attorney that the State was requiring inspection for multiple family dwellings of three units or more and not (individual) homes for rent. The board obviously decided to add individual homes to what the State required. The rental ordinance was already voted in at a previous meeting. Many of the concerned owners of rental

properties were unaware of it and felt that was intentional.

Several people testified that they were told they would be notified when such an ordinance would be discussed and voted on, and were upset that they were not notified as promised. One of those individuals that I recognized was Frank Pietrowski.

The board was told of problems with the ordinance, especially with the older homes that were built according to the requirements that were in effect when built but would not meet the requirements of the new ordinance. It was pointed out that a rebuilding of some homes would be needed and the cost would have to be passed on to the renters. Many people renting the older homes are paying lower rent and will be unable to pay the rent required to cover the cost of renovations even if it is possible to do it. Intended or not, this ordinance will result in getting lower income citizens out of the township.

Several homeowners said that there is already a shortage of affordable homes for rent in Fruitport Township and this will make it worse.

It was brought up that if the ordinance was implemented between when renters left and new renters moved in, it would be less disrupting because the renovations could require people to find another place to live while the renovations take place. This was not a popular option but better than no option.

The board said that some homes might be grand fathered in and would not have to meet the latest ordinance requirements, but the township lawyer disagreed with that.

The board started out telling everyone that the cost to register each home would only be \$10. After questioning by the audience, the board acknowledged that as soon as they walked across the hall to the inspection department, there would

be an additional \$40 or \$50 fee, it wasn't clear. Then there would be the cost of meeting the demands of the new ordinance which could be thousands of dollars.

The board was firm in their decision and presented it as done and unchangeable. One trustee, Jeff Jacobs, even questioned why these people were allowed to present their concerns because it had been previously voted on, it was over. After most of the concerned citizens had left the meeting, the township attorney suggested two amendments to the ordinance that evidently was not done correctly and it was voted to make those changes. So obviously changes can be made if desired by the board.

Public Safety Director, Bryan Michelli stated that if the renters didn't like having to have inspectors in their home, they should buy their own house so that their home could not be entered without due process. He also mentioned that some people are hoarders and indicated that its a problem. Evidently the township government would like to tell people how to clean their house and would like to determine whether or not they are hoarders. He also was concerned about more than one family sharing a home and the dividers used to accommodate that arrangement. Michelli was obviously in favor of being able to inspect the homes of people who are renters.

Most rental property owners were upset that this ordinance was voted in without them being notified and having the opportunity to voice their concerns.

Township Supervisor Heidi Tice represented the board and did most of the talking with Trustee Jeff Jacobs offering a couple comments of support. The rest of the board supported Heidi with their silence.

Trustee Greg Hulka was not at the meeting.

## How to help a caregiver during National Family Caregivers month

**Ann Arbor, MI – October 13, 2017** – November is National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month and National Family Caregivers Month. The Alzheimer's Association is marking these events by recognizing and honoring the more than 15 million family members and friends across the U.S. who are currently caring for a person living with Alzheimer's.

According to a recent Alzheimer's Association survey, people overwhelmingly agree (91 percent) that caring for someone with Alzheimer's or another form of dementia should be a group effort among family or close friends, yet one out of three caregivers are not engaging others in caregiving tasks.



More than four in five caregivers would have liked more support in providing care for someone with Alzheimer's or another form of dementia, especially from their family. With 15 million Alzheimer's caregivers across the country, that leaves a lot of people in need of support.

This November during National Family Caregivers Month, the Alzheimer's Association is encouraging people to lend a hand to caregivers. Here are some ways that you can help.

**Learn:** Educate yourself about Alzheimer's disease – its symptoms, its progression and the common challenges facing caregivers. The more you know, the easier it will be to find ways to help. The Alzheimer's Association has a vast amount of resources and information available at [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org).

**Build a Team:** The Alzheimer's Association Care Team Calendar is a free, personalized online tool to organize family and friends who want to help with caregiving. This service makes it easy to share activities and information within the person's care team. Helpers can sign up for specific tasks, such as preparing meals, providing rides or running errands. Users can post items for which assistance is needed. Visit the Care Team Calendar here: [www.alz.org/care/alzheimers-dementia-care-calendar](http://www.alz.org/care/alzheimers-dementia-care-calendar).

[asp](#).

**Give a Break:** Make a standing appointment to give the caregiver a break. Spend time with the person with dementia and allow the caregiver a chance to run errands, go to their own doctor's appointment, participate in a support group or engage in an activity that helps them recharge. Even one hour could make a big difference in providing the caregiver some relief.

**Check In:** Almost two out of every three caregivers said that feeling isolated or alone was a significant challenge in providing care for someone with Alzheimer's or another form of dementia. What's more, half of all caregivers felt like they couldn't talk to anyone in social settings or work about what they were going through. So start the conversation - a phone call to check in, sending a note, or stopping by for a visit can make a big difference in a caregiver's day and help them feel supported.



**Tackle the To-Do List:** Ask for a list of errands that need to be run – pick up groceries, dry cleaning or even offer to shuttle kids to and from activities. It can be hard for a caregiver to find time to complete these simple tasks outside of the home that we often take for granted.

**Be Specific and Be Flexible:** Open-ended offers of support ("call me if you need anything" or "let me know if I can help") may be well-intended, but are often dismissed. Try making your offer of help or support more specific ("I'm going to the store, what do you need?" or "I have free time this weekend, let me stop over for a couple of hours so you can do what you need to do.") Don't get frustrated if your offer of support is not immediately accepted. The family may need time to assess its needs. Continue to let the caregiver know that you are there and ready to help.

**Help for the Holidays:** Holiday celebrations are often joyous occasions, but they can be challenging and stressful for families living with Alzheimer's. Help caregivers around the holidays by offering to

help with cooking, cleaning or gift shopping. If a caregiver has traditionally hosted family celebrations, offer your home instead.

**Join the Fight:** Honor a person living with the disease and their caregiver by joining the fight against Alzheimer's. You can volunteer at your local Alzheimer's Association office, participate in fundraising events such as the [Walk to End Alzheimer's](#) and [The Longest Day](#), advocate for more research funding, or sign up to participate in a clinical study as a healthy volunteer through the Alzheimer's Association's [Trial Match](#). Joining the cause can help families facing the disease know that they are not alone in their fight.

### About the Alzheimer's Association

The Alzheimer's Association is the world's leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support and research. Our mission is to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's. For more information, call our 24/7 Helpline at 800.272.3900 or visit [alz.org](http://alz.org).



**Axel Malachi Bock** was welcomed into this world June 14, 2017. He weighed 7 lbs. 5 oz. and was 20 inches long. His proud parents are Aaron and Bekah Bock of Portage, MI. He's like a live doll to his sisters Vyera and Milina, and they couldn't be happier. Aaron was from Petoskey and Bekah is a Fruitport graduate. His grandparents are Ron and Mariann Cooper of Fruitport, and Russ and Jane Bock of Petoskey. Mary Blondin is his great-grandma of Sparta, MI.