

from **Frank Luongo** wingateman@yahoo.com  
reply-to Frank Luongo <wingateman@yahoo.com>  
to "michael.mcgovern@capeelizabeth.org"  
<michael.mcgovern@capeelizabeth.org>  
cc "maureen.omeara@capeelizabeth.org"  
<maureen.omeara@capeelizabeth.org>  
date Tue, Sep 20, 2011 at 9:43 AM  
subject Comments for the consideration of the Ordinance Committee  
mailed-yahoo.com  
by  
signed-yahoo.com  
by

[hide details](#) 9:43 AM (1 hour ago)

To the members of the Cape Elizabeth Ordinance Committee:

We wanted to address the Board with some of our comments pertaining to the zoning on Lawson Road.

The Lawson Road neighborhood is a relatively small, circumscribed enclave, well-defined by its geography. It is that rare type of special neighborhood that can be found scattered throughout Cape Elizabeth, where people start out as neighbors, but soon become friends. Their children grow up together and establish lifelong bonds.

The Lawson Road neighborhood has always included several homes owned by people who live out of state: from nearby New Hampshire to distant Hawaii. Some of these homes have been rented out on an annual or seasonal basis, and new, temporary residents have always been welcomed into our community and have participated fully, enjoying the family activities and celebrations from the Halloween trick-or-treating, to the Beach to Beacon award-winning neighborhood water stop effort. Lawson

Road history has been marked by seasonal festive gatherings, like our annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July beach clean-up and bonfire, which have always been open to all residents, and which have formed the backbone of our close-knit community. We are proud to say that even former residents have felt welcomed back at these events, and have tended to maintain close ties to our neighborhood even after they have moved away.

Our way of life is precious, and disappearing in today's society. We have often referred to it as a "1950's way of life," and have felt extremely privileged to rear our son in a neighborhood that is both safe, and caring, where he was welcomed into any home, and where we knew he would be watched over and would be safe.

We joined the Lawson Road community in 1993, and our son started kindergarten in 1996 and remained in the Cape Elizabeth school system until his high school graduation in 2009. On the first day of school each year during the elementary years, all of the proud parents gathered on the corner of Lawson & Shore Roads, awaiting the school bus and snapping photographs of our very large, combined brood.

**Absentee ownership of property, combined with economic exploitation of those properties by short term rentals, is intruding upon, and disrupting the way of life which we have come to treasure in this small sub-community in Cape Elizabeth. It is an insidious process, because it takes place in small steps, each of which chips away at the unity and cohesiveness of the neighborhood, introducing a continually changing but steady flow of temporary, non-committed vacationers, who have no idea of or sensitivity to the mores of our little neighborhood.** The feeling is evolving more and more into that of a transient resort community, and away from that of a solid, stable residential community of committed and caring neighbors.

What is the purpose of a municipality having the power to make zoning decisions and rules, other than to preserve and protect the quality of the neighborhoods, and the quality of life of the people living in the neighborhoods?

Lawson Road and other small family neighborhoods in Cape are prime residential areas and are not suited to hotels, rooming houses or inns. We ask you to place strict zoning limitations allowing only for longer-term rentals.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,  
Frank Luongo and Joan Aldrich  
18 Lawson Road  
Cape Elizabeth, ME.