

Castle Park Cottage Rental Best Practices

The Board of Trustees encourages any Castle Park member(s) considering renting their cottage to become familiar with the Castle Park Bylaws Article III, Section 2. Cottage rental is a deliberate process with the goal of creating a positive and safe experience both for renters and Castle Park members. Hopefully the following guidelines will serve as food for thought to that end.

Soliciting/Advertising for Renters

Owners should pursue renters who are likely to enjoy the amenities which Castle Park has to offer. Friends of other owners, previous renters, and families with other connections to Castle Park are frequently a good match as renters.

1. List your cottage on the Cottage Rental page of the Castle Park website: Log into castlepark.org. Once logged in, click [HERE](#) to fill in the information for your cottage to be rented. Once your information is reviewed, your cottage will be listed for rent on a publicly viewable page of the website. Please maintain accurate available dates at all times.
2. If using a realtor, VRBO, AirBNB or other third party, please make personal contact with the renting party before signing a contract. Owners can and should opt out of any type of "instant booking" feature on third-party rental sites so that they can communicate with potential renters before confirming a booking and make sure their home is a good fit for the renters (and vice versa).

Cottages Available for Rent page can be accessed by clicking [HERE](#).

Identifying and Interviewing Renters

1. Conduct person-to-person interviews to determine if renters are a good fit with your rental criteria. Consider asking for references if they have rented elsewhere before.
2. Consider the following criteria:
 - a. Appropriate number of people that your cottage can reasonably sleep and handle, including parking limitations.
 - b. Ages of the individuals renting
 - c. Amenities of your cottage; ie., internet access, grills, hot tubs, access to bikes, kayaks, parking spaces, etc.
 - d. Castle Park amenities as well as restrictions to launch or park motor/power boats
 - e. Special considerations of your cottage...is everything in good working order, accessible and/or available for use by renters?
 - f. Restrictions on the type and number of pets
 - g. Are the potential renters familiar with Castle Park and/or other Castle Park members?
3. Communicate the communal nature of Castle Park and activities and events that occur during their stay.
4. Review the Castle Park Rules and Regulations with potential renters, verbally and as part of the written rental contract/agreement. Specifically review rules regarding fire permits, drinking and alcohol use, parking, pet leash laws, pool use and use of Castle Park grounds and buildings. Castle Park facilities are available for use by renters and their resident guests. No day guests may use CPA facilities.

Rental Agreement, in addition to financial terms and considerations:

1. Castle Park Rules and Regulations should become part of any rental agreement. Click [HERE](#) for current rules and regulations.
2. Be specific in the rental agreement where applicable: number of occupants, pets, boat and watercraft restrictions, cottage owners' contact information, other service providers' information. Sample contracts and waivers have NOT been reviewed by a lawyer.
 - a. [Checklist](#) for rental agreement
 - b. [Rental Agreement Sample 1](#)
 - c. [Rental Agreement Sample 2](#)

3. If the renter requires use of a golf cart and the owner does not provide their own, due to liability concerns, the owner must rent the golf cart for the cottage renter. Use [THIS WAIVER](#) for renters who will be using a golf cart while in residence at Castle Park.

Communications

Communication among various parties is a must in assuring that renters have a smooth entry into Castle Park. In order to connect your renters to other Castle Parkers, owners should share renter information with neighbors; names, family members, purpose of visit. Also provide a welcome letter for your renters upon arrival. Include things like:

- Emergency information
- Garbage pickup information
- Neighbors' names
- Activities in Castle Park
- Rules for your own house (for instance, no loud music, fires only in firepit, turn outdoor lights off after midnight, etc.)
- Rules and Regulations for Castle Park (presumably the renter has already reviewed these as part of their contract.)

Click [HERE](#) for a sample of a welcome letter.

Laketown Township Property Rental Regulations

In February and March of 2020 Laketown Township adopted new rental unit registration requirements. The attached documents will assist you through the process of registering your rental unit. If you have any questions please call the Graafschap Fire Department office at 616-396-4060 or email: office@laketowntwp.org.

[Rental Unit Ordinance Amendment](#)

[Rental Unit Registration Application](#)

[Rental Inspection](#)

[Rental Fee Schedule](#)

Additional practical information to become familiar with when renting:

INCOME TAXES As a general matter, cash or the fair market value of property you receive for the use of real estate or personal property is taxable to you as rental income. See [IRS Topic 414 - Rental Income and Expenses](#). However, under certain circumstances you are not required to report rental income if the dwelling is rented for fewer than 15 days a year. See for example IRS FAQs. For this reason some Castle Parkers have the practice of limiting their total rental days to 14. Consult your tax advisor.

INSURANCE You should consult your insurance company as to the availability of coverage, and whether, and under what conditions, your policy covers losses if you rent your property. One major insurer permits "incidental" rentals under a residential homeowners policy, and underwriters from that company have expressly confirmed that 14 days would be considered incidental.

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