

ORDINANCE NO. 2565

ROSS TOWNSHIP

ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

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**AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ROSS, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING CHAPTER 13 OF THE ROSS TOWNSHIP CODE OF ORDINANCES, LICENSES, PERMITS, AND GENERAL BUSINESS REGULATIONS TO REGULATE MASSAGE THERAPY ESTABLISHMENTS**

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**WHEREAS**, Ross Township (the "Township") is a First Class Township in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to section 1502.44 of the Pennsylvania First Class Township Code, 53 P.S. § 56544, the Board of Commissioners has the authority to enact and amend provisions of the Code of Ordinances of Ross Township (the "Code") at any time it deems necessary for the health, safety, morals, cleanliness, beauty, convenience, comfort and general welfare of Ross Township and the inhabitants thereof; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Commissioners has deemed it to be in the best interest of the citizens of Ross Township to amend the Code to regulate massage therapy establishments in the Township; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Commissioners finds as follows:

1. That certain illegal businesses or enterprises in the Township that offer massages and have the word "massage" and/or "spa" in the name of the business offer prostitution services and may involve human trafficking and otherwise violate the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; and
2. That unsanitary and otherwise unhealthful conditions have a propensity to exist in these unregulated businesses or enterprises; and
3. That the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania regulates individuals that provide massages but does not regulate massage establishments or alternative therapy establishments; and
4. That, based on Subsections 1, 2, and 3 above, the close regulation of establishments that offer massages and alternative therapy as hereinafter defined, is necessary to protect the public health, safety and welfare of the residents, property owners, business owners and visitors to the Township.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED AND ENACTED BY THE COMMISSIONERS OF ROSS TOWNSHIP, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AND IT IS HEREBY ORDAINED AND ENACTED BY AND WITH THE SAME THAT:**

**SECTION 1: Incorporation of Clauses.**

The aforementioned Title/Summary and WHEREAS clauses are incorporated by reference, the same as if fully set forth herein at length.

**SECTION 2. Definitions.**

As used in this chapter, the following terms shall have the meaning indicated:

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this chapter, shall have the following meanings ascribed to them:

**ALTERNATIVE THERAPY**

(a) The practice of an individual who uses touch to affect the energy systems, acupoints, Qi meridians or channels of energy of the human body while engaged within the scope of practice of a profession with established standards and ethics. Such practices include acupressure, Asian bodywork therapy, polarity therapy bodywork, quigon, reiki, shiatsu and tui na;

(b) Reflexology;

(c) The practice of an individual who uses touch, words and directed movement to deepen awareness of existing patterns of movement in the body and to suggest new possibilities of movement, while engaged within the scope of practice of a profession with established standards and ethics; and/or

(d) Any massage-like activity that does not meet the definition of "Massage Therapy" set forth hereinafter.

**ALTERNATIVE THERAPY ESTABLISHMENT**

Any place in the Township Alternative Therapy is administered for the payment of a fee or other compensation or consideration but not including a hospital, nursing home, medical clinic or the office of a physician, surgeon, physical therapist, chiropractor or osteopath, currently licensed as such by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and including barbershops or practices licensed by the Department of Cosmetology, or any athletic program of accredited junior and senior high schools or colleges in which a massage is administered by a trainer within the scope of such athletic program. Also sometimes referred to as "premises."

**ALTERNATIVE THERAPY TECHNICIAN**

Any person who administers alternative therapy to another as part of a Massage business or Alternative Therapy business that is not licensed as such by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

**BREAST MASSAGE**

The specific and deliberate manipulation of breast tissue. Massage of the surrounding chest and shoulder muscles such as massage of the intercostal, pectoral, or axillary muscles is not considered Breast Massage.

**CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER**

The Code Enforcement Officer of the Township or his/her duly appointed and authorized representative.

**GENITALS**

The external reproductive organs of a person, including the penis, scrotum, and testicles in males, and the vulva in females.

**INTRAORAL MASSAGE**

The manipulation or pressure of soft tissue inside the mouth or oral cavity for therapeutic purposes.

**MASSAGE THERAPIST**

An individual licensed by the State Board of Massage Therapy to practice Massage Therapy.

**MASSAGE THERAPY**

The application of a system of structured touch, pressure, movement, holding and treatment of the soft tissue manifestations of the human body in which the primary intent is to enhance the health and well-being of the client. The term includes the external application of water, heat, cold, lubricants or other topical preparations, lymphatic techniques, myofascial release techniques and the use of electro-mechanical devices which mimic or enhance the action of the massage techniques. The term does not include the diagnosis or treatment of impairment, illness, disease or disability; a medical procedure; a chiropractic manipulation, adjustment, physical therapy mobilization; manual therapy; therapeutic exercise; electrical stimulation; ultrasound or prescription of medicines for which a license to practice medicine, chiropractic, physical therapy, occupational therapy, podiatry or other practice of the healing arts is required, or any other area licensed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

**MASSAGE THERAPY ESTABLISHMENT**

Any place in the Township where Massage Therapy is administered for the payment of a fee or other compensation or consideration but not including a hospital, nursing home, medical clinic or the office of a physician, surgeon, physical therapist, chiropractor or osteopath, currently licensed as such by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and including barbershops or practices licensed by the Department of Cosmetology, or any athletic program of accredited junior and senior high schools or colleges in which a massage is administered by a trainer within the scope of such athletic program. Also referred to as "premises."

**PERINEUM**

The tissues between the anus and scrotum or vulva.

**PERSON**

Any individual, association, firm, partnership, limited partnership, corporation, trust or other legally recognized entity.

**PUBIC AREA**

The region of the body located below the abdomen and above the genitals, including the pubic mound and any skin or hair-bearing area immediately surrounding the genitals.

**RECOGNIZED SCHOOL**

Any school or educational institution licensed to operate as a school educational institution in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in which it is located or any school recognized or approved by the American Massage and Therapy Association, Inc., or such other bona fide educational institution that provides education on Massage Therapy and/or Alternative Therapy. Such educational institution shall have the purpose of teaching the theory, method, profession or work of an Alternative Therapy, and issues a diploma or certificate of graduation.

**REFLEXOLOGY**

The physical act of using thumbs, fingers and hand techniques to apply specific pressure on the reflex area in the feet, hands or ears of the client.

**SEXUAL OR GENITAL AREA**

The genitals, pubic area, anus, perineum vulva or breast tissue.

**THERAPY**

"Alternative Therapy" or "Massage Therapy" as defined herein.

**VULVA**

The external female genital structures, including the mons pubis, labia majora, labia minora, clitoris, and the external openings of the urethra and vagina.

In this chapter, any word used in the singular shall include the plural, any word used as a plural shall include the singular, and the masculine shall include the feminine and the neuter.

**SECTION 3 License requirements; fee.**

**A. License requirements for Massage Therapy Establishments.** Requirements for the issuance of a license as a Massage Therapy Establishment are as follows:

**(1)** All Massage Therapy Establishments must register with and be licensed by the Township. No Massage Therapy Establishment shall engage in massage business unless all Massage Therapists are licensed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The owner and/or operator of a Massage Therapy Establishment shall register its business as well as all Massage Therapists and provide copies of the licenses issued by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for all Massage Therapists

to the Township on a fully completed application provided by the Township. The application must be filed in person by the person seeking the license during regular business hours. The owner and operator of the Massage Therapy Establishment shall have an ongoing obligation to update the names of Massage Therapists. The license fee for such license shall be determined from time to time by resolution of the Board of Commissioners.

**(2)** All Massage Therapy Establishments must provide proof that all other required business licenses have been obtained and provide confirmation from the taxing entity that arrangements have been made for the payment of required business privilege tax, local service tax and/or earned income tax for its employees.

**B.** License requirements for Alternative Therapy Establishments. Requirements for the issuance of a license as an Alternative Therapy Establishment are as follows:

**(1)** Licensing of Alternative Therapy Establishments. All Alternative Therapy Establishments must register with and be licensed by the Township. No Alternative Therapy Establishment shall engage in Alternative Therapy business unless all Alternative Therapy Technicians are licensed by the Township. The owner and/or operator of an Alternative Therapy Establishment shall register its business as well as all Alternative Therapy Technicians on a fully completed application provided by the Township. The application must be filed in person by the person seeking the license during regular business hours. The owner and operator of the Alternative Therapy Establishment shall have an ongoing obligation to update the names of Alternative Therapy Technicians. The license fee for such license shall be determined from time to time by resolution of the Board of Commissioners.

**(2)** All Alternative Therapy Establishments must provide proof that all other required business licenses have been obtained and provide confirmation from the taxing entity that arrangements have been made for the payment of required business privilege tax, local service tax and/or earned income tax for its employees.

**C.** Licensing requirements for Alternative Therapy Technicians. Requirements for the issuance of a license as an Alternative Therapy Technician are as follows:

**(1)** Fee and contents. Any person desiring to obtain a license to provide services as an Alternative Therapy Technician shall submit an application to the Township. A fee shall accompany the submission of the application to defray the costs of administration and investigation. The amount of the fee for the Alternative Therapy Technician license shall be set by resolution of the Board of Commissioners. The application must be filed in person by the person seeking the license during regular business hours. The applicant shall be required to identify the Alternative Therapy Establishment where the applicant will be employed.

**(2)** Diploma or certification of graduation. The applicant must receive training and education and receive a diploma or certification of graduation from a Recognized School. In the event that such

person was previously licensed to perform Massages in the Township, not having completed such course of study, at the expiration of such person's current license, such person shall be issued a provisional license for a six-month period for the purpose of enrolling and completing such course of study.

**(3) Investigation.** Applications for licenses for Alternative Therapy Technician shall be referred to Ross Township Department of Community Development, which shall cause an investigation to be made and report the findings to the Township Manager. Applicants shall cooperate with any investigation conducted pursuant to the provisions of this chapter and shall permit access to the proposed place of business and facilities in conjunction with such investigation. In addition, each applicant for a license for an Alternative Therapy Technician must submit the following:

**(a)** Two forms of identification issued by either the federal or state government with one containing a photograph.

**(b)** An FBI criminal background check per the directions at the FBI website (must be the sealed and unopened envelope from the FBI).

**(c)** Certified state police criminal background check for the state in which they reside (must be notarized).

**(d)** Signed release permitting Ross Township Department of Community Development to conduct local records check.

**D. Granting of license.** Within 60 days of the receipt of an application, required documents set forth above and the fee, the Township Manager shall either grant or deny the license applied for by the applicant. The license shall be granted, provided that the applicant, as the applicant's name as it appears on the application, has not been convicted of or entered a plea of guilty to any felony or has pleaded guilty to a felony or has a felony charge currently pending or has forfeited bail or has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to a violation of Section 5902 of the Crimes Code of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 18 Pa.C.S.A. § 5902, pertaining to prostitution and related offenses, or any law of any other jurisdiction involving sexual misconduct.

**SECTION 4. Massage Therapy Establishment and Alternative Therapy Establishment premises minimum requirements.**

Each Massage Therapy Establishment and Alternative Therapy Establishment premises shall comply with the following minimum requirements:

**A.** The premises shall have adequate equipment for disinfecting instruments and materials. Such instruments and materials shall be disinfected after every use.

B. All tables, bathtubs, shower stalls, steam rooms, sauna rooms, bath areas and floors shall have surfaces which may be readily disinfected. Surfaces of all tables or other apparatus used to perform Massages or Alternative Therapies shall be of a nonporous material that can be disinfected after each use.

C. All walls, ceilings, floors, showers, bathtubs, steam rooms, sauna rooms and all other physical facilities shall be in good repair and maintained in a clean and sanitary condition. Wet and dry heat rooms, steam or vapor rooms, or steam or vapor cabinets, shower compartments and toilet rooms shall be thoroughly cleaned each day the business is in operation. When carpeting is used on the floors, it shall be kept dry.

D. The premises shall be equipped with a service sink for custodial services.

E. The premises shall have a minimum of one toilet and one washbasin.

F. Treatment rooms shall be at least 50 square feet of floor area and shall maintain a light level of no less than 20 foot-candles as metered at three feet above the surface of the floor (for illustrative purposes only, such light level is equivalent to light from a single forty-watt fluorescent light bulb in the fifty-square-foot room). Such rooms shall contain a door incapable of being locked from either the exterior or the interior.

G. The main entrance to the premises must remain unlocked and opened to the public during regular business hours. All Massage Therapy Establishments and Alternative Therapy Establishments shall be subject to unannounced inspections by the Township.

H. The premises must comply with applicable ordinances of the Township, including but not limited to the building, fire prevention and zoning ordinances of the Township.

**SECTION 5. Massage Therapy Establishment and Alternative Therapy Establishment operation minimum requirements.**

Every Massage Therapy Establishment and every Massage Therapist and every Alternative Therapy Establishment and Alternative Therapy Technician shall comply with the following minimum requirements:

A. Prohibited conduct. Only employees of the respective establishments may offer and provide therapy to clients. Independent contractors are specifically prohibited.

B. Therapies may commence operation no earlier than 7:00 a.m. The hours of operation shall extend no later than 10:00 p.m.

C. All licenses issued by the Township or Commonwealth of Pennsylvania shall be on display and available for inspection. Price rates charged for any and all therapies shall be prominently posted

in the reception area in a location available for view, and no charges may be made other than in accordance with such posted rates.

**D.** No person under the age of 18 years of age shall be permitted to enter or remain on the premises or receive any Massage Therapy or Alternative Therapy unless accompanied at all times by a parent or legal guardian.

**E.** There shall be an adequate supply of clean towels, linens and coverings. Towels, linens and coverings shall not be used by or on more than one patron unless they have first been laundered and disinfected. Disposable towels, linens and coverings shall not be used by or on more than one patron. Soiled towels, linens and coverings shall be deposited in approved receptacles; disposable items shall not be deposited in the same receptacle as nondisposable items.

**F.** Instruments used in administering therapies shall not be used on more than one patron unless they have first been disinfected. Table pads and reusable table coverings shall be disinfected after each use.

**G.** The owner, licensee or duly authorized manager shall be on duty at all times during the hours an establishment is open for business.

**H.** Other than while the premises is open for business; eating or drinking shall not be permitted on the premises. The sale and/or the serving of alcoholic beverages shall be strictly prohibited at all times unless duly licensed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

**I.** Animals, except for guide and service animals for the handicapped, shall not be permitted within the premises.

**J.** All employees must be at all times fully clothed in clean and opaque clothing that fully covers the body from the shoulders to the thighs and is no shorter than six inches above the knee.

**K.** No patron or persons, other than employees of the establishment, shall remain on the premises more than one hour after closing. The premises shall not be used as a dwelling unit and may not have a stove in the premises.

**L.** Massage Therapists and Alternative Therapy Technicians shall wash their hands immediately prior to and subsequent of the administration of any therapies and shall observe hygiene practices as set forth in the Pennsylvania Massage Therapy Law, Act 118 of 2008, and accompanying regulations in Chapter 20 of the Pennsylvania Code.

**M.** It shall be unlawful for any person providing therapies to place his or her hands upon, touch, fondle or otherwise have any physical contact with, including massaging, a Sexual or Genital Area of any other person or to offer to so touch any person in a Sexual or Genital Area. It shall be unlawful for any person providing therapies to expose his or her Sexual or Genital Area to any other person. This subsection shall not apply where there exists a legitimate clinical or

therapeutic purpose for physical contact with gluteal muscle, Breast Massage or Intraoral Massage and performed with verbal and written informed consent and appropriate draping.

**N. Breast Massage.**

(1) Prior to performing Breast Massage, a Massage Therapist must:

(a) Acquire prior signed or initialed written and verbal informed consent from the client or patient. If the client or patient is under eighteen years of age, prior written consent must be obtained from a parent or legal guardian of the client or patient. The written consent for Breast Massage may be included within an overall general consent to massage document, if clearly delineated and either specifically initialed or signed. The written consent must:

- (i) Be documented and maintained with the client or patient records;
- (ii) Include a statement that the client or patient may discontinue the treatment at any time for any reason; and
- (iii) Include a statement that the client or patient has the option to have a witness present, and that the witness must be provided by the client or patient.

(b) Use appropriate draping techniques.

(2) In addition to the requirements identified in subsection (1) of this section, a Massage Therapist must maintain evidence of the completion of at least sixteen hours of specialized in-person education and training in Breast Massage beyond the minimum competencies. Education and training in Breast Massage includes, but is not limited to, breast anatomy and physiology, pathology, indications, contraindications, cautions, therapeutic treatment techniques, draping, appropriate therapist-client or therapist-patient boundaries, expected outcomes, and client or patient safety related to Breast Massage.

(3) In addition to the requirements in subsections (1) and (2) of this section, prior to performing a massage of the breast that includes the nipples and areolae, a Massage Therapist must obtain documentation as follows:

(a) A written prescription or referral from a licensed medical health care provider for this specific treatment; or

(b) Prior signed or initialed written and verbal informed consent from the client or patient or from the parent or legal guardian if the client or patient is under eighteen years of age for massage of breast that includes the nipples and areolae. This written consent may be included within the consent for Breast Massage document.

**O.** For the purposes of ascertaining violations of this chapter and conducting routine inspections, federal, state and county officials, the Township Code Enforcement Officer(s), health inspectors,

building inspectors, or police officers of the Ross Township Police Department shall have the right of entry into the premises of any Massage Therapy Establishment or Alternative Therapy Establishment during the hours such respective establishment is open for business or occupied during such hours permitted pursuant to this chapter.

**Section 6. Sale or transfer of license.**

No license issued under the provisions of this chapter shall be transferable or assignable.

**Section 7. Revocation of license.**

Every license issued under the provisions of this chapter is subject to revocation for violation of any of the provisions of this chapter. Said license may be revoked by the Township Manager after notice of the basis for such revocation. The license holder shall have the right to appeal from such proposed revocation to the Board of Commissioners and request a hearing. Notice of revocation shall be given in writing and shall be served at least 10 days prior to the effective date of the revocation by either first class mail, certified mail, by personal service on the license holder or by posting the notice upon the entrance to the establishment. The notice shall advise the license holder of the right to appeal the proposed revocation. A hearing shall be held before the Township Board of Commissioners, and the license holder shall have the right to be represented at such hearing and to produce evidence.

**Section 8. Expiration Of license.**

All licenses issued pursuant to the provisions of this chapter shall expire one year after the date of issuance. No later than one month previous to the expiration, licensees shall make application for renewal of said license.

**Section 9. Violations and penalties.**

In addition to the refusal or revocation of a license as provided under this chapter, any violation of this chapter shall be enforced by action brought before a District Justice in the same manner provided for the enforcement of summary offenses under the Pennsylvania Rules of Criminal Procedure. Any person, firm or corporation who shall violate any provision of this chapter shall, upon conviction thereof, be sentenced to pay a fine of not more than \$1,000 and/or to imprisonment for a term not to exceed 10 days. Each day that a violation of this chapter continues, or each section of this chapter which shall be found to have been violated, shall constitute a separate offense. For purposes of this chapter, the doing of any act or thing prohibited by any provision of this chapter, or the failure to do any act or thing as to which any provision of this chapter creates an affirmative duty, shall constitute a violation of this chapter punishable as herein stated. It shall be an affirmative defense that the violation alleged occurred without the knowledge of or outside the control of such owner of the property.

**Section 10. Time for compliance.**

Massage Therapy Establishments, Alternative Therapy Establishments and Alternative Therapy Technicians operating in the Township of Ross as of the time of the effective date of this chapter shall have 60 days from said effective date in which to comply with the provisions of this chapter.

**Section 11. Repealer.**

All ordinances or parts of ordinances which are inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed.

**Section 12. Severability.**

If any sentence, clause, section or part of this chapter is for any reason found to be unconstitutional, illegal or invalid, such unconstitutionality, illegality or invalidity shall not affect or impair any of the remaining provisions, sentences, clauses, sections or parts of this chapter. It is hereby declared as the intent of the Board of Commissioners of Ross Township that this chapter would have been adopted had such unconstitutional, illegal or invalid sentence, clause, section or part thereof not been included therein.

**Section 13. When effective.**

This chapter shall become effective five days after enactment.

**ORDAINED AND ENACTED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF ROSS TOWNSHIP THIS  
20th DAY OF APRIL, 2026.**

**ATTEST:**

  
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Jessica Crawshaw  
Township Manager

**TOWNSHIP OF ROSS**

By:   
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Daniel DeMarco, President  
Board of Commissioners