



**NEW CASTLE COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES &
DEPARTMENT OF LAND USE**

HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

February 8, 2023 @ 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

- Call to Order
Meeting called to order at 6:09 PM
Members in attendance: Meghann Karasic (on-site), Tiffany Earle, Rachel Stucher, Renee Spruiel, Christian Willauer
NCC Employees: Stephanie Rizzo, Joe Day, Laura Hay, and Rich Hall

- Approval of Minutes
 - November 9, 2022
Christian moved, Tiffany seconded – approved unanimously

 - December 14, 2022
Christian moved, Tiffany seconded – approved unanimously

 - January 11, 2023
Christian moved, Renee seconded – approved unanimously

- Chairperson's Report
County Executive Meyer did complete the interviews – 3 vacancies and 5 interviews – hope to be approved by March

- HAB Business
 - Ta'Chauyn Harden Administrator for Baltimore County Rental Registration gave an overview of their program
 - Six units or less must obtain rental licenses; over six units are not required (i.e. apartment complexes, townhome communities, etc.)
 - Regular registration is for single family homes, duplexes, etc.
 - Cost \$60 with application
 - Get inspection from registered home inspector
 - Lead inspection if built before 1978
 - Carbon monoxide form completed by owner and tenant
 - Exemption allowed for units rented to families, etc. but affidavit required – no fee or inspection required
 - Airbnbs are required to do a full registration and inspection
 - Unregistered rental properties receive Correction notice – 30 days to respond, then issue a citation if no response. Citation will bring them

before the administrative law judge. If a no-show, there is a \$1,000 fine and a lien on property.

- Every three years required to register
 - If tenant is the same, the lead and carbon monoxide form is not required
 - Use inspection date as renewal date
 - Renewal dates are sent 90 days before expiration
- Program has been in place since 2008; no rental increases were noticed
- Must have a rental license to do eviction
- Code enforcement handles any property violations and works with rental registration
- Said rental inspections run from \$125-\$250 (different than home inspection); can also accept the Section 8 housing inspections; must be licensed home inspector
- Homeowner has the inspection list; comes in rental registration packet
- License gets revoked – what happens to the tenant? Prior to revocation, judge will advise the landlord must find placement for tenant. Tenant cannot just be evicted – notice would be given, unless life/safety issue – landlord must provide placement somewhere else. Involve other departments, like social services, etc. work together.
- To file nuisance complaint, the property must be a registered rental. License will be revoked and landlord would have to reapply.
- Believes it is beneficial; provides safe rental housing for tenants.
- There are current revisions relating to apartment complexes, but nothing has been approved yet.
- Estimated 10% of the units are unregistered; receives complaints every day about unregistered rentals
- Liability concerns by the home inspectors
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- CityHealth and Enterprise Community Partners

- Presentation on strong rental inspection policy*

- Akeem Anderson, CityHealth, described their program. If cities adopt certain policies can receive a “grade” from CityHealth. These policies help provide access to healthy choices and the opportunity to live healthy, full lives. Three of these policies are related to housing: Affordable Housing Trust, Healthy Rental Housing, Legal Support for Renters.
 - Healthy Rental Housing Policies:
 - Mandates periodic inspections of rental properties
 - Proactive Rental Inspections Policies
 - Shifts reporting burden from residents
 - Improves quality housing stock
 - Uncovers pest, mold, ventilation, chemicals (including lead, and unsafe conditions
 - Requires biennial (once every 2 years) rental registration of buildings with 3 or more units
 - Requires exterior and interior inspections at least every 5 years
 - Landlords to pay registration/inspection fees

- Requires an evaluation or reporting requirement
 - Erika Foster, Enterprise Community Partners, discussed critical considerations on rental inspections.
 - Being overly punitive can be harmful to small landlords; can also cause fees to impact renters potentially absorbing those costs
 - Offer low cost, or payment plan alternatives
 - Be proactive and build on current rental registration process; look at new software and staffing capacity
 - Determine who are the stakeholders, community members that would have interest in Policy Development Process and work with them up front
 - Oversight and accountability to be considered early on in the process to make it easier to analyze data and any changes needed to the program
 - Establish scope of what will be inspected, exempt based on type of housing
 - Finalize funding sources – registration fees, licenses, General Fund. Consider funds to benefit property owners, creating resources.
 - Provide training for officers, evaluate staffing needs, offer loan repair programs for landlords
 - Examples of success in Boston: Reporting data has proven to increase accountability; Collection of data electronically through an app – all data is in one place and can be provided more efficiently; results can be provided at time of inspection.
 - Examples of success in Seattle: Checklist of basic safety requirements developed with stakeholders; All information and resources available on website – shows registered unit and inspection information; requires private inspectors register with city and receive city sponsored training.
 - Bithia Ratnasamy, Enterprise Advisors
 - More frequent inspections is key, but does cost money to run program. Recommends determine costs
 - Sees more of a full roll-out on rental programs
 - Whether to hire private inspectors or in-house inspectors really depends on budget and needs; either are acceptable as long as there is training and accountability
- Meeting adjourned at 7:19 PM