



HOUSING AND CREDIT COUNSELING, INC.

Tenant/Landlord • Homebuyer • Consumer Credit
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February 13, 2009

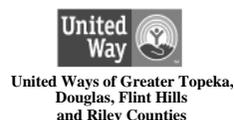
Dear Commissioners:

For over 35 years Housing and Credit Counseling Inc. (HCCI) has been the only agency providing free statewide rental housing counseling, based on the Kansas Residential Landlord Tenant Act (KRLTA). For over 20 years HCCI has had an office in Lawrence, in part because the volume of rental housing counseling requests received from Lawrence is the second highest of any municipality in the state. HCCI supports the proposed rental registration program because the largest percentage of initial counsels concern repair or maintenance of rental units (28% of all counsels in the last 18 months). The new ordinance would also require full and specific local management contact for an absentee landlord, per KRLTA statute 58-2551 requiring detailed name, address and phone contact for whoever is managing the property. Full disclosure of local management acting on the landlord's behalf would allow Code Enforcement to effectively pursue serious noncompliance complaints.

Finally, the proposed program could also be beneficial to the city's infrastructure as neglected properties contribute to community slum and blight, placing a burden on city services and finances when properties are vacant, in disrepair or in need of demolition. Neglected eyesores also give the tourist or visitor a tainted impression of Lawrence and could affect city efforts to attract new business, or to maintain an optimum KU student enrollment.

Sincerely,

Robert Baker
Housing and Credit Counseling Inc
Lawrence KS



Brian Jimenez

From: Bob Blank [bblank@sunflower.com]
Sent: Monday, January 05, 2009 4:38 PM
To: Brian Jimenez
Subject: Apartment inspections

Brian Jimenez,
Lawrence Code Enforcement Mgr.

Dear Mr. Jiminez,

I believe ALL rental units should be inspected regularly, possibly on a graduated timetable according to their age, especially houses that have been converted (or used) for rentals.

- 1) 50 yrs (or older) : Yearly
- 2) 30 - 50 yrs: Every 2 yrs.
- 3) 12 - 30 yrs: Every 3 yrs.
- 4) 0 - 12 - yrs: Every 4 yrs.

Finally, code infractions should be enforced as a requirement to rent.

Also, inspections should be fully financed by landlords - not the city.

Bob Blank
2133 Owens Lane,
Lawrence, KS 66046

Brian Jimenez

From: Jere Neibarger [jjay@sunflower.com]
Sent: Monday, January 05, 2009 10:53 AM
To: Brian Jimenez
Subject: Rental inspection

I think rental inspection is long over due. I'm not sure about the 50 years or older properties. I think it should be a lot less. Maybe 25 years??
And I hope that the inspections are tough. I used to do a lot of work on rental properties and a lot of them aren't fit for a dog to live in, definitely not fit for humans. I'd never let one of my kids live in one of them.
Make the inspections thorough and the penalties severe.

Jere Neibarger
jjay@sunflower.com

Brian Jimenez

From: Peter Shenouda [pchenouda@hotmail.com]
Sent: Monday, January 12, 2009 3:17 PM
To: Brian Jimenez
Subject: Proposed Expansion of Rental Inspection

Hi Brian,

Happy New Year. I hope all is going well. From what I have been reading is that the city is looking to expand inspection of rental property. I want to know why mobile homes are not being considered. Mobile homes are in worst condition than most rental property that I have seen. If the city is going to inspect all rental properties than I think mobile homes should be included. Your thoughts?

Thanks.

Peter Shenouda
785-550-4148

Brian Jimenez

From: Tom Harper [Tom@Tom-Harper.com]
Sent: Tuesday, January 13, 2009 8:16 PM
To: Brian Jimenez
Subject: rental expansion letter

Brian- what do you think of this?

I was going to present this at tomorrow's neighborhood meeting?

Suggestions are welcome.
Tom

Dear Brian Jimenez:

Centennial Neighborhood Association would like to offer our support and encouragement for the City of Lawrence to implement the expanded Rental Registration Program. This "next step" was planned many years ago when a previous City Commission voted to implement the current successful rental registration program in single family zoned districts.

Mr. Jimenez communicates the facts very clearly. The program works and it needs to be expanded to include multi-family zoned areas of Lawrence.

It is clear the program has been instrumental in helping our citizens who rent live in safe environments. It has also helped maintain the livability of neighborhoods such as ours with a mix of owner occupant and rental homes.

Please take this next step in implementing the program in multi-family zoned districts.

We owe it to our citizens to ensure they are living in safe homes.

Sincerely,

Centennial Neighborhood Association Steering Committee

Tom Harper CRS GRI ABR e-PRO Realtor
Stephens Real Estate, Lawrence Kansas

1/14/2009

Brian Jimenez

From: Julia Mitchell [juliahenrym@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, January 13, 2009 5:33 PM
To: mdever@sunflower.com; robchestnut@sunflower.com; mikeamyx515@hotmail.com; suehack@sunflower.com; boog@lawrence.ix.ks.com; Brian Jimenez
Subject: Expanding inspection of rental property

Dear Mayor Dever, City Commissioners, and Mr. Jimenez,

Please expand the inspection of rental property to include all rental property older than 50 years old. The properties most at risk for safety hazards are older homes divided into apartments.

I have lived in many rental properties in Lawrence, including a single family home with rented rooms at 11th and Tennessee, an older home divided into apartments at 17th and Kentucky, a 4-plex at 25th and Belle Haven, Cedarwood Apartments, and a single family home at 16th and Vermont. The only home I truly felt unsafe in was 1724 Kentucky.

18 years ago I lived at 1724 Kentucky. I was so excited to have my first apartment without roommates. On move-in day, the toilet fell to the side and water poured out. I called the landlord, and he put some new plywood around the toilet. The bathtub would rock back and forth (I just assumed that the middle aged security guard I shared the bathroom with would fall through first because he weighed more than I did).

The apartment had one wall furnace between the bedroom and living room. When winter arrived, I called the landlord about lighting the pilot light and was told to light it myself. So having no experience with a pilot light, I turned on the gas and waved a match around. I was able to light the pilot light, but it would not stay lit. The pilot light needed to be re-lit at least once every night. The furnace did not appear to have a blower, so the antique oven was the only heat in the kitchen.

During Christmas break my neighbor came banging on my door to tell me that the house was on fire. I grabbed my purse and cat (yes, illegal cat). No smoke alarms were going off. Standing outside with strangers watching my house burn was surreal. The firemen cut a hole in the side of the house and were throwing my neighbor's furniture into the yard. The couple upstairs lost everything. Nothing in my downstairs apartment was damaged. The hole in the side of the house was there all winter (so much for any heat the old furnace may have given off).

18 years later, Christmas break 2008, I was diving down Kentucky Street and noticed that the house appeared to be vacant and the doors were wide open. A public nuisance at it's best, I went inside. There was the same wall furnace that did not work 18 years ago, still full of furnace dust bunnies. The same antique gas stove was in the kitchen. When I stepped into the bathroom, I could feel the floor give. Nothing had changed. This apartment was unsafe 18 years ago, and those same safety issues are still an issue today (although it did appear that someone was attempting to renovate the house).

You might ask why I did not contact the city about the safety issues with this apartment 18 years ago. It did not occur to me at that time. Everyone I knew lived in apartments like mine, apartments in old houses with very few updates. December 2008, I called Julie Wyatt to report the "public nuisance" and safety hazards (the doors now appear to be shut).

Safety inspections of these older apartments/houses are so important because many of these properties have not been kept up over the years (or even decades), and many renters (mostly students and low income families) may not realize the safety hazards these apartments may have and their rights as renters to notify the city of unsafe conditions.

Thank you,

Julie Mitchell
1231 Brook Street
Lawrence, KS 66044

Brian Jimenez
Dept. of Neighborhood Resources
P.O. Box 708
Lawrence, KS. 66044

Jan.21, 2009

Sir;

Thank You for meeting with me last week about the proposed expansion of the City of Lawrence rental registration program.

As the owner and landlord of rentals that are at least 50 years old, I must object to being unfairly singled out. We are all aware that older properties are "high maintenance", which includes periodic upgrades, repairs, and fix-up. If a landlord neglects his or her property, then obviously problems do arise. This is true of all properties, not just the older ones. Please refer to the article in the Jan. 9, 2009 Lawrence Journal World, where the Clinton Place Apts. were purchased and renovated by the Lawrence-Douglas County Housing Authority. A property, such as this, would not be included in the proposed expansion of the inspection program, as it is less than 50 years old.

Mr. Jimenez, as we both agreed, safety is of the utmost importance to all concerned. There are currently city ordinances (laws?) on the books which allow tenants to contact your office if they are aware of a potential problem. Your office has procedures that landlords must follow to correct such problems. Perhaps these ordinances need to be upgraded with "more teeth" to get landlords' (both local and absentee) attention. Safety of tenants must NOT be compromised.

If the program is to be expanded, I urge you to include all rental properties in Lawrence, not just the ones over 50 years old. Let's be fair to everyone, as tenant safety is everyone's concern.

Thank You, Rich Freeman
880 n. 1072 rd.
Lawrence, KS.



RECEIVED

JAN 22 2009

NEIGHBORHOOD RESOURCES