



INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

Date: April 11, 2011

To: Ron Fehr, City Manager

From: Brad Claussen, Building Official *BC*

Subject: Rental Licensing and Inspection Program Update

As requested, the following is a periodic update regarding the Residential Rental Licensing and Inspection Program. Since my last update was a month ago I will briefly recap that report, and then update you on the programs progress over the past month.

Review and Current Registrations

You may recall that at the end of February 2011, we had registered 11,470 dwelling units total. Most of those registrations occurred last fall and early this year. We continue to have a few new registrations trickle in. Mostly these are delinquent registrations, property ownership changes or are new units which have been recently constructed. Our current total number of registered units is 11,542. We continue to spend time pursuing possible rental units which have not yet been registered but are identified through means such as the County Appraisers office as being rental property.

Inspections began in January of 2011, however much of that month was utilized to train new inspection staff so the predominance of our inspections through the end of the first quarter (663) have taken place in the months of February and March.

Inspections

I am pleased to report that all three of our rental inspectors have passed national certification testing and are certified ICC Property Maintenance Inspectors. In March we inspected a total of 338 dwelling units. Of these, 107 passed inspection during the initial check. There were several of those however, that did have minor violations which were corrected on site by the owner / manager or maintenance staff and were not counted against the unit for the purpose of determining its next inspection interval. The average number of violations found during an inspection is currently about four. The following are updated totals of the most common items found:

- Electrical violations (For example inappropriate, damaged or deteriorated wiring or electrical equipment)

Total times cited - 469

- Smoke detectors missing or inoperable
Total times cited - 239
- Interior surfaces kept in a good, clean and sanitary condition (This would include mold conditions)
Total times cited - 167
- Electrical receptacles (Not in sufficient quantity leading to extension cord use or outlets wired incorrectly)
Total times cited - 133
- Fire resistance rated assemblies (Lack of fire separation between dwelling units)
Total times cited - 120

We conducted 109 recheck inspections during the month of March as well with all of those except 1 passing. We continue to run into a number of unique situations which we have been documenting. These would include items such as plumbing not connected to the sanitary drainage system (drained into a pit), bathrooms located beneath stairways and altered electrical and plumbing installations. I can provide photographs should you wish to see those.

An interesting side note is that we have referred a few addresses to RCPD in which we observed suspected drugs and / or paraphernalia present during our inspection. Early on in the program we underwent training from the RCPD investigations staff since we knew we might run into these situations.

Tenant Issues

We have been active in holding tenants responsible for violations recently. For example, 5 tenants at one address were issued tickets for damage they admitted causing to the dwelling unit and we have sent written notice to 2 tenants for hoarding or serious sanitation issues. We will continue to work with tenants as well as owners when it is determined either have violated provisions of the code.

Other Comments

Finally, it was interesting that we have recently been contacted by the City of Pittsburg, KS with several questions on our rental licensing and inspection program. Apparently, they are looking at potentially drafting such an ordinance there. When I asked the staff member who called me what was precipitating the inquiry, he mentioned that the business community along with Pittsburg State University was interested in a way to improve the housing stock. Evidently they have had people come for interviews and decline jobs due to the inability to find decent housing. I consented to participating in an upcoming conference call with them to share our experiences. I will keep you posted on that.