



TOWN OF MANSFIELD
Ad Hoc Committee on Rental Regulations and Enforcement
Wednesday, January 11, 2017
5:30 P.M.
Mansfield Public Library
Buchanan Center

AGENDA

1. Call to Order/Roll Call
2. Approval of Minutes
3. Opportunity for Public to Address the Committee
4. Staff Reports
 - a) Fall semester update
 - b) Town Manager's Update
5. New Business
 - a) Review Progress to Date
 - b) Committee Report to Town Council and PZC (What has the committee accomplished and what additional recommendations does the committee have for Council and PZC?)
6. Topics for Next Meeting Agenda
7. Adjournment

Minutes Ad Hoc Committee on Rental Regulations

November 9, 2016

1. **Members Present:** Chairperson T. Moran called the meeting to order at 5:45 pm, B. Ryan, M. Sargent, C. Ausburger, V. Ward, P. Aho
2. **Other Council Members Present:** P. Shapiro arrived 6:15
3. **Staff Present:** M. Ninteau, J. Mullen, L. Painter, M. Hart
4. **Approval of Minutes:** August 10, 2016 Moved Ward, Second Sargent Approved unanimous with correction. September 14, 2016 Moved Ryan, Second Ausburger approved unanimous
5. **Public Comment:** B. Shafer Echo Road thanked the committee for the content and quality of the packet. J. Gorton 1 Dog Lane urged the committee to take into account the positive qualities of fraternities and sororities into consideration during their discussions. H. Sywinski 44 Storrs Heights commented that there are several students residing within his neighborhood and that they have created a negative impact on the quality of life in that community. He is concerned that overcrowding violations are not being enforced.
6. **Staff Reports:** M. Ninteau explained that site inspections for overcrowding, blight and parking are continuing on a daily basis. He also provided a sample packet of information that is sent to new landlords. J. Mullen spoke briefly regarding enforcement of regulations that have been transferred to the Building and Housing Department. She also discussed research she is conducting regarding what other college host communities do with regard to occupancy limitations. Staff provided a sample mailing piece for the committee's review which was approved for distribution. L Painter reviewed proposed web based content and an FAQ document that would be made available to the public regarding regulations. M. Hart ask the committee to provide guidance and set goals to establish conditions that would achieve a balance between tenants and families residing in the same neighborhoods. He also presented data that indicates the number of Nuisance tickets has increased over the same period last year.
7. **Presentation:** A presentation was given by 4 staff members from the university regarding the oversight of Greek associations. An outline was distributed and each aspect was covered by the various members making the presentation. The committee and guests exchanged ideas of possible actions that could be taken to enhance the effectiveness of programs and achieve mutual goals.
8. **Future Discussion Topics:** The following topics were flagged for future discussion:
 - Goal setting
 - Election of Vice Chair
 - Staff to provide data on number of properties no longer exempt from regulations as a result of language changes
 - Presentation with Town Attorney regarding Greek issues in zoning regulations
9. **Adjournment:** By unanimous consent 8:00

Respectfully submitted.

Mike Ninteau, Director of Building & Housing Inspection



TOWN OF MANSFIELD
OFFICE OF BUILDING AND HOUSING INSPECTION

Michael E. Nintean, CBO MCP, Director
Ben Funk, Code Enforcement Officer
Brad Freeman, Assistant Building Official

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Date: January 6, 2017

To: AD HOC Committee on Rental Regulations

From: Mike Nintean, Director of Building and Housing Inspection

Re: Goals Achieved

At the request of the Town Manager I have prepared this memorandum to document steps that have been taken to date at the direction of the Town Council, Ad Hoc Committee and Town Manager. Please recall that late in the fall of 2015 a group of concerned citizens voiced concerns that neighborhoods are being converted from a predominance of owner occupied properties to rental dwelling units. An Ad Hoc Rental Regulation Review committee was formed by the Town Council to investigate various related issues and propose changes to current regulations or implementation of new systems if deemed warranted by their findings.

Research and Investigations

- An in-depth presentation of existing regulations was presented to the committee as a starting point for discussion.
- Presentations were made to the committee by UConn staff, the Resident State Troopers office and Town Attorney for informational purposes.
- Staff presented information regarding rental trends and violations of quality of life related ordinances.
- Staff and the Ad Hoc Committee investigated several possible options presented by the Mansfield Neighborhood Preservation group including but not limited to a moratorium on single family homes being converted to rental units. The Town Attorney determined the moratorium as well as several other suggestions would not be legal under current State law.

Property Owner & Tenant Education

- At the Committee's suggestion, staff prepared a notice of rental regulations for all new property owners. The Town Clerk includes a copy of this notice when returning a copy of a recorded deed to the new owner.
- A list of allowable number of occupants at all rental units was prepared by the Zoning Agent and Housing staff that is updated monthly and posted on the Town's website.
- The Town's website has been enhanced to allow easier access to information regarding regulations, FAQ, and how to bring concerns to staff attention.

Enforcement

- The Planning and Development Department prepared a written protocol to be followed for enforcement activity regarding over occupancy issues. This protocol has been amended and approved by the Town Attorney for use.
- The Town employed an additional inspector and increased the hours of a current inspector to perform early morning inspections of rental units for overcrowding and other quality of life ordinance violations. These inspectors were authorized by the Planning and Zoning Commission to enforce the occupancy limits within the Town's zoning regulations.
- A grid system was developed by the Director of Housing for inspectors to use so all properties subject to the Town's Off-Street Parking regulations would be visited on a systematic basis. This tool is also used for over-occupancy investigations and insures a fair and equitable process.
- In addition to routine inspections using the above-referenced grid, the Town also continues to investigate complaints from concerned citizens.

Changes to Existing Regulations

- The Housing Code was amended to link maximum occupancy regulations to the definition of Family contained in the Zoning Regulations. With this change, the Department of Building and Housing Inspection took over primary enforcement of occupancy violations. The Housing inspectors have conducted 1,196 inspections to date.
- Various Quality of Life ordinances were amended to use the same definition of what constitutes an owner occupied dwelling.
- The Housing Code was amended to prohibit issuance of a Housing Certificate if staff is aware of any violations of other regulations that are applicable and under the jurisdiction of a different authority, i.e. Health, Zoning, Fire Marshal, etc.
- Exterior maintenance issues of all vacant dwelling structures in town were discussed and draft language prepared for possible future enactment.

- A separate Ad Hoc committee was formed by the Town Council to review proposed changes to the fee structure that would reduce the cost of rental certificates for landlords who meet certain criteria. The logic behind the proposed change is that well managed properties require fewer resources from the Town to enforce regulations.

I hope this information is helpful. Staff is prepared to answer any questions you may have at this Wednesday's meeting.