

**VOLUNTARY RENTAL INSPECTION CITIZEN
COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Wednesday, October 17, 2018, 3:00pm
City Hall, Fourth Floor Conference Room

2018 OCT 29 AM 9:13

CITY CLERK

Members Present: Pat Benedict
Darren Burnett
Michael Comella
Don F. Daffron
Pat Dillion
Jason Eslinger
Ron Findley
Becci Goodwin
Chris Green
Michael Grimm
Roni Mauer
Gary Westcott, Jr.
Ed Witham

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Clint Thompson, Director of Planning & Community Development
Juston Carr, Property Maintenance Manager
Carol Flury, Recording Secretary

Roll Call – Thirteen (13) members were in attendance; quorum present.

Grimm called the meeting to order and thanked the committee for donating their time to help get this program underway. Mayor also thanked the group for their service.

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

Grimm called for nominations for Chairman. Burnett nominated Chris Green; second by Mauer. Benedict nominated Jason Eslinger; second by Becci Goodwin. Eslinger and Green gave a brief introduction of themselves and background. Vote by majority show of hands elected Jason Eslinger as Chairman.

Eslinger called for nominations of Vice Chairman. Witham nominated Pat Dillion; second by Grimm. Dillion declined. Eslinger nominated Pat Benedict; second by Westcott. Vote by majority show of hands elected Pat Benedict as Vice Chairman.

COUNCIL'S CLARIFICATION AND INTENT OF CREATING THE PROGRAM

Mayor stated he liked the presentation of Brian Jimenez from Lawrence, KS' property maintenance manager. He had a twenty-seven point inspection checklist as a part of his presentation. The Administrative Violation Review Board was at that meeting.

Mayor said, personally, he thinks that would be the place to start. Flury will email information from the Lawrence Rental Inspection program to the committee.

Brenda Blessing stated that there are some people around town that are nervous about what is going to happen, but we need to find solutions to help people. She encouraged everyone to keep an open mind and realize it is not an “us against them” kind of thing; it is all of us together.

It was asked if the rental inspection codes would be outside of the current building codes. Grimm explained that they would all come out of the IPMC code book in which everyone will get a copy of one.

Madison Davis also thanked everyone for serving. He would like for everyone to keep an open mind for solutions that we can find to solve the problems.

Marty Novak echoes what the Mayor said about starting with the Lawrence program as a good place to start.

Dillon asked if we had a copy of what the housing authority uses, Benedict gave him a copy. Flury will email that to the committee. There was discussion of how strict HUD’s inspections were compared to what we are talking about and how often our inspections would be which is something the committee will decide. Green’s concern is that when we do these inspections, it will cause some landlords to shut down their rentals and the people that live in them will be homeless and unable to afford to rent another property. Grimm reminded the committee that these are all things that other cities have face and that we are not re-inventing the wheel.

Eslinger stated that the housing guidelines would be a good place to start and they already have that inspection program in place; maybe we can mimic that as well.

Eslinger asked the committee how often they would like to meet. Grimm stated that he thought they need to meet weekly to meet the deadline which is the end of December. Eslinger proposed every Wednesday at 3pm; committee all agreed. Flury will be secretary.

Witham brought up that he makes sure his rentals are clean and everything works when he rents one of his properties. His biggest concern is that his rental was in code when he rented it but down the road when it is inspected, it might not be up to code due to actions of his renters. Eslinger thinks that is something that we will have to factor in to the plan and how often the inspection.

The committee listened to concerns from the public. Eslinger reminded the public that this is a voluntary program and some landlords will not volunteer because their houses aren’t up to code or there are issues.

Voluntary versus mandatory rental inspections and how and why this committee was formed were discussed. Grimm stated that the purpose from the beginning was to make a safe, clean place for renters to live in St. Joseph.

Grimm shared about the Lawrence, KS rental inspection program and that their property maintenance manager came and gave a presentation of their program to the Administrative Violation Review Board. This Board thought that we could use their program as a guideline and just go through and adapt it to St. Joseph. Most of their codes are from the IPMC which Council adopted for our city.

The need for additional inspectors was discussed. Bruce Woody addressed the funding. Funding would depend on how often the committee decided for inspections to be performed.

Comments from the public were heard.

ADJOURNMENT

Eslinger called the meeting adjourned; second by Benedict.