



Department
of
Neighborhood
Services

-MEDIA ADVISORY-

Aldermen Propose Residential Rental Inspection program

New ordinance seeks preemptive inspection to certify rental units are legal and safe in high turnover neighborhoods.

For Immediate Release

Milwaukee- Three Milwaukee aldermen will propose a new Residential Rental Inspection program today. Aldermen Nik Kovac, Joe Davis, Sr., and Willie Hines, Jr. are the sponsors. This comes on the heels of last Saturday's meeting, hosted by DNS, in which more than 125 landlords were taught the legal ways to maintain their property and deal with Wisconsin's Landlord tenant law. The program took place at UW-Milwaukee which is one of the proposed areas for the new ordinance.

The UW-Milwaukee area is no stranger to problems with over crowding, sub-standard conditions and illegal units. Each year DNS "sting" operations net bad landlords willing to break the law and "over rent" their units to unsuspecting or desperate students. The two proposed areas statistically garner a higher-than-average share of code violations. The inspection program aims to break the cycle of renting property with troublesome code violations.

The program will target a limited area of Milwaukee's east side around UWM and the Lindsey Heights neighborhood. These areas were selected for the following reasons: the average age of housing stock is older than the city average, the percentage of rental buildings and units is higher than the city average, and the percentage of complaints associated with rental property is greater than the city average. These factors among others are the basis for the decision to propose the implementation of this Residential Rental Inspection program. This pilot program will have a sunset clause of five years with a prohibition of adding additional inspection districts during the pilot period. Milwaukee will not be the first with such a program. LaCrosse, Wisconsin, Minneapolis, Minnesota and Waukegan, Illinois are a few near by communities that have similar ordinances. DNS hopes to make this a successful program.

The program begins with an initial inspection of every unit. The inspector will apply the same minimum safety, health and zoning codes that all buildings of a similar type are required to maintain. If the unit passes, the certificate is good for four years. If minor problems are found, a temporary certificate can be issued until the item is corrected. If a "totality" of the violations or a serious life/safety issue is found, the corrected unit is given a one year certificate instead of four. This assures problem units will be scrutinized more than those that start with a clean record. It also puts the cost of enforcement on those requiring the most work from DNS. The \$85 cost of the initial inspection translates into 6 cents per day for those that have don't have any violations to 23 cents per day if an annual inspection is required.

(more)

A copy of the proposed ordinance is available on the city's web site at:

<http://milwaukee.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=453519&GUID=38D3FD4A-8E45-4C76-9DE8-BEE6DF074034&Options=ID|Text|&Search=residential+rental>

Penalties for failure to obtain the Residential Rental Inspection Certificate could result in fines of \$100 for the first offense and \$150 for each subsequent failure to respond to a notice sent by the department.

The proposed ordinance will have its first hearing on **Tuesday, October 27, 2009** before the Zoning, Neighborhood and Development Committee at **City Hall Room 301B at 9:00 AM.**

For further information contact:

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