

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CITY OF SEAFORD RENTAL LICENSE COMMITTEE

January 9, 2017

4:00 PM

Mayor Genshaw calls the Rental License Meeting to order and welcomes the participants of the Committee.

Mayor Genshaw stated that the purpose for the Meeting is to discuss rental properties in the City of Seaford and their conditions, and how the City can implement ideas discussed during the meeting to improve the rental properties without having the Rental License fee in place.

Assistant City Manager Charles Anderson, came forward to present pictures of issues and concerns found by the City's Code Department during inspections, or complaints made by tenants and/or landlords. Issues found during these inspections or complaints include rotting floors, mold, roof leaks, non-functioning smoke detectors, excessive amounts of trash, non-functioning air and/or heat, broken windows, bug infestations, exposed electrical wires, unfinished repairs and structural issues. All of which cause further issues over time, and can affect electric bills, sanitation, and can be safety hazards.

Mr. Anderson stated that the Code department does not pro-actively go out to these properties unless they are doing an inspection, have a complaint, or are in the area and happen to see something that is in Code violation. Most complaint calls occur when termination of a tenant happens; they either report issues that should have been resolved prior to them moving in or a landlord will call due to damages a terminated tenant has created. The City has also been notified of issues from the Fire department, Police, EMT's and the Public Defender's Office who call to notify of violations or living conditions they have found while being in the homes during calls.

Josh Littleton, Building Official, in the Code department stated that most of these issues arise in single family homes or homes turned into duplex's. Most apartment complex properties are professionally managed or have maintenance personnel that maintain the properties on a more frequent basis and result in less day to day issues.

Mayor Genshaw explained that the Rental License was considered by the City in the 2007-2008 time frame, but was not desired by property owners. Unfortunately, things have not improved since then, and the City needs ways to address these issues without having a fee, and penalizing the landlords who do maintain their properties.

Many of the Committee Members mentioned that the tenants have more rights than they do as landlords, and it's frustrating for them to not only have issues getting rent paid, but also fixing the damages that some of these tenants create, and being penalized by the City for having these issues.

Members of the Committee suggested doing things like, credit checks, doing inspections while tenants are living at the property, shortening the length of the leases, and possibly finding a way to tax wages on tenants for damages or past due rent. Cultural differences play a large roll in these issues as well; language barriers make it hard to let tenants know what can or cannot be done and having a resource in place for tenants to report an issue with the property could be beneficial.

Mayor Genshaw thanked the Committee Members for their input and the Committee will meet again at a later date to discuss any further ideas they may have to resolve these issues.

Mayor Genshaw adjourned the meeting at 4:57 pm.