SPECIAL
Planning & Development Committee
Minutes of December 8, 2003
Council Chambers – 7:00 p.m.
Evanston Civic Center

Alderman Present:  S. Bernstein, J. Kent, A. Newman, E. Tisdahl, M. Wynne

Staff Present:  J. Wolinski, S. Janusz, R. Molinary, J. Brownlee


Presiding Official:  Alderman Newman

DECLARATION OF QUORUM
Chairman Newman called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

ITEM FOR CONSIDERATION

Ordinance 109-O-03 – Apartment Rental Licensing
Chairman Newman gave background and brief history on how this topic came about. He informed that the City Council and the Human Services Committee have in the past six weeks held several meetings and heard testimony concerning the way certain rental housing has been operated. This area of concern is bound mostly west of Sherman Avenue, north of Emerson, south of Lincoln and east of Ridge. He noted that the Committee considers the concerns they have heard very serious and at one point there was a suggestion that is a way of dealing with some of the problem there. This solution was to consider apartment rental licensing and this consideration is being taken seriously by the City. He noticed the amount of people signed up to speak on this item this evening and assured that he would try and call on every on the list and requested that comments be limited to approximately 3-5 minutes. He decided to start with some of the neighbors who have attended those special meetings and voiced their complaints and informed the Committee of many of the situations they are referring to.

Mr. Dan Garrison, 1228 Simpson. Mr. Garrison presented several photos to the Committee for evidence into the record. These photos illustrate some of the situations on property maintenance issues that he and his neighbors are referring to. He informed that he has been an Evanston resident for 37 years and an Evanston landlord for 30 years. In his opinion, property owners who convert houses into small apartment buildings for students, have shown that they are not a self-regulating community. They have caused blight to this neighborhood where they have bought several houses to rent for unregulated, densely concentrated, short-term occupancy primarily for students. These
particular landlords have driven out many resident property owners. He noted that many of those apartment buildings he is referring to have also contributed to the problem of rowdy, nighttime behavior likewise driving out long-term residents and depleting the constituency of citizens that need to live in adult surroundings.

Mr. Garrison noted that at present staffing levels, the City can not effectively regulate the situation which a significant number of absentee landlords who are chronic offenders degrade an entire neighborhood in parts of Evanston which should be prime residential property. He said by doing so, these property owners also degrade the tax base and increase demands on police services. He informed that he has maintained a log since 1996 for those chronic offenders in the 800-900 blocks of Simpson Street, which is on his route to and from work. He noted for example, that at one address he has reported 34 trash violations, 10 snow removal violations, and 4 lawn parking violations. Even worse, the neighboring property he reported 78 trash violations, 37 lawn parking violations, 7 snow removal violations, and 121 sidewalk parking violations. Mr. Garrison summarized that there are three types of problems that he and his neighbors face in this area. First problem is the “animal house” type environment with tenant misbehavior by failing to respect the neighborhood. Many of these student tenants are not mature enough to join the adult community and are still in need of supervision. Therefore the absentee landlord is the second problem by failing to maintain occupancy and proper supervision of their tenants and property. He noted that many fraternities hold their parties’ off-campus to escape university regulations. This situation fits under both the first and second problems. Thirdly is unauthorized construction, which is a common violation. He distributed photos showing examples of this third problem.

In conclusion, Mr. Garrison strongly supports and urges the Committee to consider this apartment rental-licensing ordinance as a City Code.

Ms. Jane Evans, 813 Gaffield. Ms. Evans has lived in Evanston for 28 years. She stated that she wants her neighborhood back. She is tired of living next door to houses where the side and the backyards are being used as parking lots. She is tired of having her house vandalized. She is tired of students walking in hordes and urinating on her property. She acknowledges the fact that people choose where they want to live and that they are fully aware of living in close vicinity to the university. However, she insists that the situation has worsened with the expansion and increase of homes being converted into rooming houses by absentee landlords who go around buying property in the area just for this reason. Ms. Evans noted that many of her neighbors are working together with the City and Northwestern to come up with some solutions to this problem that are beneficial to everyone. She believes that this proposed licensing is beneficial to her as a property owner, but also for the students that need safe housing and living conditions as well. She feels licensing will give the City a tool to hire more inspectors and allow for more inspections of these properties and follow-up to the conclusion of any problem existing or complained on the property. She said that her 2 children are both in college in communities where off-campus housing is licensed and information that is passed on to parents. She noted that someone has to pay for this service and the licensing fee would cover the cost for such a beneficial service to all of Evanston because absentee landlord
and tenant problems exist throughout the City. She also noted to all present that are in opposition to this licensing, that if you are a “good landlord” this city code should be of no worry and considered as a small price to pay to ensure that all surrounding properties are kept up to code and maintained properly. Because surrounding properties do effect the value of their neighboring properties. She said there are guaranteed parking problems involved with converting what was once used as a single family home into a rooming house with multiple students bringing multiple cars and lack of parking. She said that neighbors are tired of walking by some of these properties and seeing bunk beds through living room windows. She concluded that this situation must be controlled and in need of regulation.

Ms. Patricia English, 1023 Garnett Place. Ms. English distributed photos to the Committee showing examples of bad conditions of some properties on her street. She said that she has rented to several Northwestern students and experienced no problems with them because she also lives in the building. The properties in the photos are buildings owned by absentee landlords. She is very concerned about the parking situation because if there are 11 students living in one house, there is the possibility of all those students owning cars in an area where there is already a shortage of available parking. She is concerned about property values for homeowners who have to live next to one of these problem buildings and how it effects their living conditions every day. She pointed out where some of these landlords have made illegal curb cuts in order to provide parking for their tenants. She said that the student parties are out of hand with no supervision of these properties by the property owner. She too feels the City is inadequately staffed to provide the needed assistance and inspection of these properties in order to control improper situations. Ms. English stated that she is in full support of this proposed ordinance to have apartment rental licensing. She seconded Ms. Evans comments regarding if you are a “good landlord” this ordinance should be of no threat to your rental property and should be considered a service owed to all property owners in order to maintain property values and control over inappropriate activities within residential neighborhoods. She insists that those in support of this licensing are not anti-anyone but are concerned with safe living conditions and environment for everyone, including students who need this assurance as well.

Mr. Brian Becharas said that he is a life-long resident of this community and currently lives in southeast Evanston. He stated is concern about the financial standpoint of having this licensing. He noted that many owners of rental properties are already experiencing difficulties with renting units due to the current financing rates available and the influx of condominium construction and conversions. He feels that there is already adequate codes and regulations in place that need to be enforced without adding another fee and additional cost to property owners, especially for the large number of landlords who do take pride in their properties and go to extra measure to abide by these codes. He urged the City to look at other alternatives such as more extreme procedures to fine those property owners who are committing these violations. He also suggested that stricter parking regulations and fines be executed. He concluded that there are other alternatives that can be considered without the need to pass this responsibility on to all other property
owners and responsible landlords who should not be persecuted because of a small group of landlords, whom the City is aware of, that are in violation.

Ms. Marilyn Gardner said that she has been an Evanston resident for 30 years and a landlord for 25 years. She expressed her opposition to apartment rental licensing. She noted her understanding of the existing problems with off-campus housing surrounding Northwestern. In her opinion, there is no need for this licensing because the problem is that the current codes are not being enforced. She said it is not fair of the City to tax everyone to assist in code enforcement, especially if the initiation of this ordinance is seemingly due to a major concern in a specific area. Ms. Gardner said that it seems apparent that this ordinance was constructed by people who are not rental property owners and unaware of the real issues and difficulties involved in dealing with tenants and problem situations. She pointed out several sections in the ordinance supporting her accusation and where it appears that several sections replicate codes that are already in existence and contradict the Landlord/Tenant Ordinance. She noted that eviction procedures are not an expedient process and the landlord has to carry the financial burden with loss of rental supplement during the months it takes until conclusion of this process.

Mr. Wolinski explained that the draft ordinance dated December 5, 2003 is the amended version from the draft that was given out previously. He noted that many of those amendments are with regards to Landlord/Tenant Ordinance issues.

Ms. Gardner responded that this explanation concerns her because it seems apparent that staff still has much research to do, which should include looking at other alternatives. She reiterated the alternative is to strongly enforce the codes that are currently in existence.

Ms. Barbara Dolan, 1825 Monroe Street. Ms. Dolan noted that the rent market is very hard on landlords right now. With the low interest rates people are taking advantage of this and are buying property instead. She said that they do not need another fee to pay at this time when many landlords are struggling with empty units and having to bear the cost of this. She feels that one of the problems is single-family houses being converted into rooming houses. She said the City needs to look at the rooming house allowances. In all, she opposes licensing and feels the timing is all wrong to even propose such a fee at this time.

Mr. Fred Gleave, 2639 Gross Point Road. Mr. Gleave said that he owns a 2-flat at 1616 Crain Street and has lived in Evanston for over 30 years. He feels the Property Standards inspectors have done a good job in enforcing the code in the neighborhood of his 2-flat and he has seen much improvement over the years. He also feels that the City needs to use the existing codes and work on stronger enforcement. He is concerned with “doubling-up” on the codes because much of what is being proposed in this ordinance, already exists in the property standard codes and the landlord tenant ordinance.

Ms. Monica Blair, 1631 Monroe Street. Mr. Blair expressed her opposition to apartment rental licensing. She said that she owns a beautiful rental building and can only seem to
get renters on Section 8 in her building. Good tenants are hard to come by these days due to the low interest rates and many people buying instead of renting, as mentioned previously by several citizens. She and her husband are retired and she does not want to see any more fees and burden put on the property owner and that the City should enforce the codes that are already in existence.

**Mr. Mark Davis**, owner of 718-20 Foster Street. Mr. Davis stated that he is an absentee landlord but should not be treated or looked upon as a second-class citizen of this community. He still pays the same taxes as any other property owner in Evanston. In his opinion, landlords should not have to become police officers or do the job of building inspectors. He said that the cost of taxes here should cover those services entitled to all property owners. He questions exactly what this licensing is supposed to cover or accomplish. In his mind, he considers City inspections as a branch of police powers and if an owner were cited for violations, every means of enforcement should be utilized. He questions if this is a license for harassment? He feels everyone is not being treated equal on this front. Mr. Davis said that it is apparent that this ordinance has come about from problems with several rooming houses for students of Northwestern University. He said such problems with known buildings should be addressed on an individual basis. It is not fair for everyone to be burdened by charging a fee for licensing of rental units to the majority of property owners who are not in violation of the stated problems occurring at buildings that the City is aware of.

**Mr. Sheldon Kantoff**, property manager. He said that his management firm rents to many students. Their apartments are large and roomy and their general policy is 1 student per bedroom. His company manages buildings in the 1600-1700 blocks of Ridge and a large building at Noyes and Ridge. In total, they manage approximately 300 units in Evanston. He said in all the time that he has managed these properties and rented to students, he never experienced the severity of the problems indicated by the neighbors previously. However, his firm does keep close supervision of their properties and monitor what goes in their buildings. With students, it is their policy to include and have the parents involved with the leasing to the student. He finds this very helpful in most situations when a student is involved in a complaint or disagreement.

**Mr. Albert Bowen**, 1623 Thelin Court. Mr. Bowen said that he has lived in Evanston and managed rental buildings for over 37 years. He said it appears the whole ordinance seems to be geared toward Northwestern related problems and a specified radius near the university. Therefore, why should everyone else throughout Evanston be penalized because of a small percentage of buildings aware of by the City? He feels if the culprits are clearly known in this matter, the City should go after those causing the problem and enforce the codes and regulations that already exist. He said that he has never experienced such problems in any of his buildings because he was always visible around his properties and available for his tenants and immediately addressed any situations that occurred. He said this is imperative when you own rental property. He pointed out that it is important to realize that this fee can be a financial burden on a multi-family building owner. He said it seems the City always looks at what a landlord brings in and never considers what that landlord has to pay out such as mortgage payments on the building,
utilities and other expenses involved in management a rental unit building. He reiterated that the City needs to address the specific problem and go after the properties directly who are violating City codes.

Ms. Sophie Lisowski, 1216 Florence Avenue. Ms. Lisowski agreed with the comments made that it appears to be a target area towards Northwestern student off-campus housing. She feels this needs to be specifically addressed and should not be a citywide responsibility to clean up this targeted area. She suggested that students should be more strenuously fined who continuously violate City codes. Ms. Lisowski also expressed her concerns with the parking problems mentioned with single family dwelling units converted into multiple housing for students. She said such problems are going to naturally occur when you go from single-family to rooming house. However these are also police matters and parking violations that need to be enforced, which she feels the university should be held accountable for assistance along with the Police Department to ensure that their students abide by the same parking regulations that all citizens in Evanston are expected to abide by.

Ms. Paula Iacucci, 2134 Maple Avenue. Ms. Iacucci said that she owns a two flat and rents her upstairs unit to students. She is grateful that she has had very good tenants and has incurred no serious problems such as the ones mentioned by her neighboring homeowners. She does support the same belief that property owners with rental units should take responsibility of what goes on at their properties and they should keep up with the maintenance and supervision, especially when young adults/students are involved. She reminded that in the majority of cases, these students are on their own away from home for the first times in their lives and are not ready or sensitive to the responsibilities and consideration of others living directly around them. She mentioned the problems she has experienced with her neighboring building that is occupied by young adults, however she addressed her complaints with the individuals directly and the building owner. She reiterated that it is the responsibility of all property owners to take responsibility for their property and what goes on at the premises. However, she agrees with the comments made previously that students should be fined directly and those fines enforced to what ever measures it takes so that police powers are taken seriously. She suggested going as far as having the university accept some of this responsibility by upholding fines placed on students who continuously violate City codes and send out warnings that diplomas will not be given out if outstanding warrants are in their files. Ms. Iacucci also agreed with previous comments that the City needs to go after and stay on the properties that these continuous complaints and violations exist and not penalize all the other rental property owners who work in conjunction with the City to keep their properties up to code and are not experiencing tenant problem issues such as the ones evident in the targeted area noted. She reminded that most of the problems noted are with student related problems and with off-campus housing, many of these problems are common in all university communities. However, she feels you can not legislate attitude, but the City can legislate any codes within their jurisdiction and have the power to enforce those codes to what ever measures it takes especially in warranted target areas.
Mr. Joshua Brown, 800 Custer Avenue. Mr. Brown expressed his opposition to a licensing fee for all rental property owners in Evanston. He said that although he owns rental property in south Evanston, he has not experienced the problem issues addressed by the neighbors in north Evanston around the Northwestern area but definitely believes those problems exist. He noted his sympathy and support for those neighboring property owners who live in that area and their justification of the need to address these problems directly. However, he feels the answer is not to license and charge a fee to all rental property owners so that the City can fund additional inspectors and police powers to go after a targeted area of identified properties who are responsible for the escalation of concern to address specific problems and violations. He stressed that it is the responsibility of the City to identify who is responsible for tenants misbehavior and who is responsible to enforce the management and supervision of these properties known by the City inspectors, police department, continuously complained on by the known neighboring residents, and Northwestern University resources that have been included in these joint meetings that have been held. Mr. Brown stressed that it is not just a problem with student tenants and their disorderly behavior, it is the responsibility of the landlord to manage and enforce the rules of their leases and to work with the City to enforce these rules and City codes violated. He also supports the logic that some responsibility needs to be expected of the university to take part in enforcing that their students abide by all City regulations.

Mr. Brown seconded the comments made earlier by a citizen with regards that it seems apparent that this draft ordinance was created by persons who are not landlords and have no real experience as to what landlords have to actually endure in dealing with problem tenants and having to deal with extreme measures of eviction procedures. He strongly feels that the Committee dealing with landlord/tenant issues, be it Human Relations or the Housing Commission, needs to include the requirement of more rental property owner Commissioners. He said this large class of property owners in Evanston is not equally sustained on the City Boards that deal with landlord/tenant issues.

Mr. Carlis Sutton, 1821 Darrow Avenue. Mr. Sutton’s first comment was civility and how he feels double standards are obvious with regards to how the City staff and Council deal with the same issues in different areas. His property is in the 5th Ward CDBG targeted area, however the area that is of major concern surrounding the Northwestern University neighborhood is being brought to attention because of the problems that they are experiencing with certain student misbehavior conduct and continuous violations on those properties. Mr. Sutton informed the Committee of numerous complaints made of similar nature on tenants in his neighborhood, but the outcome of how these complaints were addressed by the City were not taken as seriously as the ones being addressed here tonight by Northwestern students in the neighborhood adjacent to the east of his 5th Ward neighborhood. He reiterated this as evidence in support of his accusation of double standards in the City of Evanston. He noted that his neighborhood is considered in the CDBG targeted-area for Evanston and is required by the City of Evanston to inspect the rental properties in these areas every 2 years. However, it seems that many properties in their area are inspected more frequently than every 2 years for minor violations and constantly reinspected and the owner scrutinized to come into compliance within a
specified amount of time or be reprimanded to Administrative Adjudication and fines placed against their properties. He stressed that some of these fines are of much lesser concern and seriousness than many of those mentioned in the targeted Northwestern off-campus housing area specified at the beginning of this meeting and notably the targeted area that initiated this licensing fee ordinance.

Mr. Sutton agreed with all comments made previously with regards to landlords being held accountable for their property because that is a responsibility you take on as a landlord and rental property owner. However, in his opinion, it seems that tenants have more rights in Evanston with the existing landlord/tenant ordinance and with the citations presumptuous of the Property Maintenance Code, resulting in the landlord continuously being put in a liable position. He urged the Committee to look at this situation and bear in mind before taking into consideration adding any more additional fees and cost onto the rental property owner. He agrees that it is the responsibility of the property owner to maintain and manage their rental properties, however he does support fining any tenant that continuously violates City codes and for the landlord to take the position firmly in enforcing rules and regulations stated in their leases.

Ms. Barbara Sizemore, A gentleman spoke on behalf of Ms. Sizemore who was unable to be present. He wanted to convey her opposition to this apartment rental licensing fee. He also fully agreed with all of Mr. Sutton’s comments made beforehand.

Mr. Dan Schermerhorn, Property Management owner. Mr. Schermerhorn echoed many of the comments in opposition that have been made previously. He strongly agrees that the targeted area for the initiation of this licensing fee ordinance is geared towards Northwestern University off-campus housing problem properties. In his opinion, it seems that this licensing would give the Community Development Department staff the ability to revoke someone’s license without going through the Administrative Adjudication process that is in place for all other property maintenance code violation issues. He feels that such a position by City staff to move forward with such authorization is not practical without going through proper administrative procedures. Such proceedings by the City would indubitably make way for numerous lawsuits against the City. Mr. Schermerhorn noted that the violations indicated by the neighbors in support of this licensing with regards to the “animal house” like problems conducted by students, should be addressed and have the ability to be enforced by police powers under the City of Evanston’s jurisdiction. There is no need for this additional ordinance and fee to be included along with the ordinances and codes that exist because all of the sections within this proposed ordinance are subsequently incorporated or repetitive in what already subsists. He too agrees with comments made earlier that the problem buildings have already been pinpointed and the City should go after those specified property owners in enforcing the existing codes.

Rev. Ndungu J.B. Ikenye. Rev. Ikenye expressed his opposition to this apartment rental licensing fee. He went into detailed comment regarding affordable housing issues and how the majority of smaller multi-family property owners are currently bearing the cost of the effect the current interest rate market is burdening on their supposedly income-
based units were profiting them at one time. He urged the Committee and City Council
to take into consideration the burden that the majority of these minor rental property
owners of 2-flats and 3-flats are experiencing along with owners of major rental
properties that are also experiencing vacancies and having to settle for lesser rent fees due
to the difficulty in renting units these days. He stressed that the solution to the problem
expressed with the initiation of this ordinance this evening, is not the responsibility of all
the rental property owners throughout Evanston, but confined to a definite few in a
definite targeted area as specified. He additionally urged the City to address this issue
appropriately by going after the property owners that are in violation of those complaints
expressed previously.

Mr. Ashraf Manji, 1143 Sherman Avenue. Mr. Manji expressed his opposition to this
apartment rental licensing fee and insisted that this is not a simple problem to the
solution. He noted that the problems expressed by the neighbors living in the
Northwestern University residential are valid and should be addressed on the basis and
severity of the complaints and the issues that repeatedly occur in this area. He also
agrees with previous comments that the City should address those specific properties
identified and go after the property owners of those addresses and continuously stay on
those owners and proceed with whatever measures possible to enforce City codes and
demand compliance in conclusion. He reiterated that the final termination of these
problems will not be solved any more expeditiously with this ordinance than with
undeniably enforcing the City codes that already exist. Nevertheless, Mr. Manji stressed
the need to be sure the infrastructure of any existing ordinances should be solid and it
appears the City is irresolute of the codes that already exist and the ones that they are
expected to enforce without doubt. He pointed out several examples of property
maintenance inspections of his rental properties that were constantly inconsistent and
questionable in conclusion when resulting to the position of coming before court
complaints or Administrative Adjudication. He suggested in observance of these
constant inconsistencies with the existing codes, that more teeth needs to be added to the
enforcement of existing codes and the City’s ability of police powers to more
expeditiously enforce them. He reiterated his point that there is no need to add an
additional licensing fee and another ordinance with codes that coincide with what is
already in existence.

Mr. Manji pointed out that the same over-occupancy issues that are cited in this proposed
ordinance are already in existence and remain an uncontrollable problem beyond any
landlords’ domain when initially screening their tenant’s applications. He stressed that
this is an ongoing problem that landlord’s face continuously but are constantly penalized
by the existing landlord/tenant ordnance and City codes whenever there is a situation
involving a bad tenant circumstance. He recalled a previous comment made by a citizen
regarding the landlord taking on the responsibility of taking on police power matters into
their hands when it should be expected by the property owner to anticipate the City’s
assistance with matters that have gone beyond the landlords control. Mr. Manji clarified
that his is not condemning the fact that it is still the property owners responsibility to
maintain and supervise what goes on at their rental properties, however all responsibility
can not be continuously singled out on the landlords behalf. He pointed out that the
Landlord/Tenant Ordinance is very bias and in favor of the tenants rights and he lays blame on the effects of this in support of his accusations of inequality on behalf of the landlords in this ordinance.

Mr. Manji feels that the Human Relations Commission is very pro-tenant and it is obvious in the requisition of Commissioners requested for this board. He pointed out that it seems equally apparent with the Housing Commission who require at least 3 tenants on their board with no requisition for rental property owners of the same number. He reiterated that both of these Commissions that should represent equally tenants and rental property owners. It is evidently not equal and apparently very anti-property owner representative. He urged the Committee to look into this matter and seriously consider how it is effecting the rental and affordable housing issue for the City of Evanston. He concluded that if this type of ordinance control continues in Evanston, it will assuredly have a negative effective on what affordable rental housing will remain available in Evanston. Just as importantly, major Commissions that should be taking all these issues into consideration are not properly addressing the fairness and equality issues.

Mr. John Roche, 1014 Garnett Place. Mr. Roche expressed his opposition to this ordinance and seconded the previous comments made in opposition also. He does not support any additional fees or taxes incurred by the City of Evanston, especially when it involved Northwestern University. He feels the university needs to step up and take a more responsible role for their students in lieu of the taxes that they do not pay the City versus the property owners who do.

Ms. Elizabeth Diderson. Ms. Diderson said that she has very mixed emotions about City staff drafting ordinances with such control over all rental property owners. She feels that one of the City’s appropriate boards or commissions should be involved in drafting ordinances that concern any housing issues. She also agrees with previous comments in that the City should go directly after the owners of these problem buildings and handle these cases on an individual basis. This should not be the responsibility of all the other rental property owners to subsidize the City for enforcement of a few problem buildings. She feels the City should work with the current ordinances and City codes because the are appropriate but just need to be enforced. This ordinance is a repeat of what already exists.

Mr. Robert Taylor, owns buildings in 1000 block of Garnett Place. Mr. Taylor said that he is along standing citizen of this community. He graduated from Northwestern University. He is currently co-president of the EPOA. He feels the timing for this ordinance is totally wrong. The opposition for this licensing totally outweighs the handful few that are for this. He noted that the system for this is already in place, it just needs to be applied. He noted as someone previously pointed out, that landlords in Evanston are struggling to rent apartments as it is; there is no need for this additional licensing fee and ordinance at this time. He pointed out that there are sections cited in this ordinance where the City judges who you rent to and what they feel is appropriate, he feels this is problem. He said this ordinance raises many liability issues which assuredly will be tested against the City. Mr. Taylor stated that he sympathizes with the complaints
and concerns of the neighbors in favor of this licensing and does feel it is well intended, however it is misguided. He strongly urges that Council drop this matter at this point and go no further in considering it. He reiterated that the majority opposed clearly outweighs those in favor.

Ms. Betty Ester, 1806 Grey Avenue. Ms. Ester said that after reviewing this draft ordinance, she could clearly point out several sections that continuously repeat and replicate current ordinances. She went through the ordinance and pointed out several sections that she was referring to and even where it refers to inspections that are in target areas of Evanston. She said the City does not need a 2-tier ordinance. Many of these citations are already laid out in the current Landlord/Tenant Ordinance or other city codes that deal with issues of over-occupancy, nuisances, etc.

Ms. Cheryl Bridgeman-Maloney, lives on Brummel Street. Ms. Maloney stated that she is with the minority and supports this apartment rental licensing. She noted that the document is not perfect but it is a draft and can be worked with modifications. She understands the problems that exist with students living in off-campus housing in the Northwestern neighborhood. However she lives in south Evanston where there are many other severe life-threatening problems that her neighbors live with day-to-day such as gangbangers, gun shots, drug dealing on the street, etc. She said that many of these individuals involved in such activities also live in the neighborhood. If this licensing fee will cover the cost of allowing the City to hire more inspectors for more frequent inspections and enforcement of the codes, then all property owners for the safety and living enjoyment for all Evanston residents should support it.

Ms. Charlene Bos, 1034 Florence Avenue. Ms. Bos expressed her opposition and seconds the comments made regarding the decline in the rent market due to the low interest rates today. She has even dropped the price of her rental unit $135.00 from last year just to rent the unit that was empty for months. Many landlords are giving away free months of rent to entice renters because it is so hard to find good tenants these days. She agrees that the timing is all wrong to propose another fee or tax on property owners. She also agrees with previous comments that there are laws already in place that just need to be enforced.

Mr. Camil Halim, property owner. Mr. Halim said that he owns buildings in south Evanston and near the Northwestern campus too. He noted his good relations that he has maintained over the years with City of Evanston inspection staff and how they have helped him with many problems in the past at some of his buildings. In his opinion, Northwestern need to step in and take some responsibility for their students and to assist the City in forcing property owners of off-campus housing to keep their buildings up to code for the safety of their students and to properly manage their buildings to avoid nuisance situations.

Mr. Gary Joyce. Mr. Joyce said that he owns several properties in Evanston in areas that are also susceptible to gangbangers, gunshots and drug dealing activity. He feels this is very unfortunate, however these are all police matters where arrests should be involved,
not the landlord’s responsibility to police their tenants. He said that the majority of landlords try and screen their tenants as carefully as possible, however no one has any way of knowing who might move in after you have rented to someone or if they will be involved in any nuisance lifestyles. He said there should be a certain amount of respect for personal privacy. He does not find it acceptable for landlords or City inspectors to go into someone’s home and count toothbrushes as proof of how many are occupying a dwelling unit. He does not find it acceptable to ask someone what relationship they have with the other tenants or for a tenant to prove that the other tenants are family. These are clearly invasion of privacy, which he feels this ordinance is asking landlords to do. Mr. Joyce said that from his observation, it appears that various City departments do not communicate well with each other. He said that if the departments did work together then enforcement of all City codes would probably be much more manageable and compliance achieved in a more timely fashion as well.

Ms. Mary DeYoung, owner of 2-flat in Main/Sherman area. Ms. DeYoung said that it would have been appropriate to have students from Northwestern in attendance at this meeting to receive their input, hear out those complaints and concerns, and participate in this discussion. She is also opposed to this ordinance and feels it will not solve anything more than what the existing codes will. Enforce what is already in place and not penalize everyone because the City is having a problem enforcing a few property owners to come into compliance or manage their buildings better.

Ms. Betty Burns Paden. Ms. Paden said that five generations of her family have lived in Evanston, which goes back almost 165 years. She feels this ordinance is just another attempt of the City raising money and questions if the funds will really be used for. She feels the inspection process is not across the board and is in effect to monitor targeted areas such as having inspections in the CDBG target areas every two years and every four years in all other area. However, when there is a complaint or problem in the other areas, these matters are handled immediately or become of great concern to the City. Whereas complaints go unanswered or allowed to linger on over an extended period of time. On the other hand, property owners in the targeted area are harassed by City inspectors for minor details and taken to court for items such as chipping paint, etc. She reiterated that the inspection process is not equal for all neighborhoods. In her opinion, the City has already made up their mind in the planning of this ordinance and will find a way to incorporate it regardless of the obvious majority opposition because the problem is in the Northwestern campus area.

Mr. Colin James. Mr. James said that he has lived in Evanston for over 30 years. He also is opposed to any apartment rental licensing and questions the City’s real purpose of this ordinance.
ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Newman ended citizen comments with the last person on the list speaking. He said that this matter will be on the December 15th agenda. The meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]

Jacqueline E. Brownlee