MEETING MINUTES
RENTAL UNIT LICENSING COMMITTEE
Thursday, March 22, 2012
7:00pm
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, Room 2402

Members Present: Albert Bowen, Richard Buchanan, Jane Evans, Barbara Janes, Lisa Pildes, James R. Schermerhorn, Alderman Judy Fiske, Alderman Donald Wilson, Jared Cogan (NU Student Representative)

Members Absent: Paul Arntson, Dana Carroll, Steven Monacelli, Pat Phillips, Niabi Schmaltz, Alderman Jane Grover

Staff Present: Steve Griffin, Shanee Weston, Jeff Murphy

Presiding Member: Mayor Elizabeth Tisdahl

DECLARATION OF QUORUM
With a quorum present, Mayor Elizabeth Tisdahl called the meeting to order at 7:04pm.

INTRODUCTION
Mayor Tisdahl began the first committee meeting with an introduction requesting members to introduce themselves to the group. She followed introductions with the reading of the charge for the committee for the record, which is the following: to ensure that the focus of the proposed program is based on life safety and basic housing standards for the occupants of the property; to ensure that the licensing program will be implemented with the goal of compliance and not punishment, if inspections reveal life safety or basic housing standard violations of rental dwelling units; to ensure the incorporation of best practices discovered by review of other municipalities and similar national communities; and to ensure that the proposed ordinance balances the needs of all concerned parties. Mayor Tisdahl asked the committee to note that the charge does not relate to the three (3) unrelated law.

STAFF REPORTS
Mr. Griffin reviewed and discussed with the committee the existing registration rental buildings ordinance and compared it to the new proposed ordinance for licensing rental dwelling units.

Ms. Evans commented that the ordinance should indicate that landlords must notify the tenant of violations, adding this amendment would bring forth buy-in.

Alderman Wilson requested staff to work on a graduated fee scale for the license fee. He suggested that maybe the inspectors should inspect some of the units, and then the City “may” or has the option to inspect all units. This would reduce the burdens expressed, but keep the goal. He further recommended that staff take out the word
Alderman Wilson questioned “how do you tie in nuisance premise?” Ms. Weston explained Crime-Free Programs adopted by many municipalities and how it has been tied in with the licensing process and ordinance. Mr. Griffin provided Schaumburg as an example, and stated that staff will bring back further research on Crime-Free Programs of other municipalities. Mr. Griffin will also provide the committee with a copy of the City’s nuisance ordinance.

Alderman Wilson informed the committee that he is currently working with others on the current amended ordinance relating to the three (3) unrelated ordinance, for Zoning, and welcomes suggestions. He emphasized to the committee that “we have to be careful to separate the three unrelated issue, this is about safety of units or property maintenance.”

There was a consensus by the committee that the reference to “6 months” for revocation regarding the over occupancy ordinance in section 5-8-8(E) and how it should be removed from the ordinance.

Alderman Fiske recommended that the requirement of floor plan submissions be enforced. She also recommended that if there is a four (4) bedroom unit, then 4 people should be allowed to reside in unit.

Mr. Griffin informed the committee that Property Maintenance Inspectors will focus on cases with open violations and that inspections will occur for the first year on these non-compliance properties.

Mr. Griffin assured the committee that staff will provide an analysis on bed bugs for the next meeting.

Staff informed the committee that if a property is dangerous the City will inspect according to section 5-8-5(B) of the City Code. Mr. Griffin stressed that “this is about safety”. Overcrowding is still looked at, Mr. Griffin added, and “we will always recommend to go, inspect, and to make sure the darn thing is safe”. Ms. Janes asked for staff to provide the process of determining a dangerous property. She stated “we may need to look at permits and to look at what is being determined in the field.”

NEW BUSINESS
Committee agreed that the next meeting date will be April 19, 2012.

ADJOURNMENT
The meeting adjourned at 8:52pm, on March 22, 2012.
Respectfully Submitted,
Shanee Weston
Management Analyst, Community & Economic Development