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Rental Registration Ordinance--First Reading Tomorrow

Hopkins, Rebecca <hopkinsr@charleston-sc.gov> Mon, Aug 15, 2022 at 3:56 PM

Dear Downtown presidents & community leaders,

I'm writing to let you know that a *Rental Registration* ordinance is coming up for first reading at tomorrow's City Council meeting. The agenda is packed, and this item will be part of the Community Development Committee's report (page 4, item K1(a)(ii)). The full ordinance can be found starting on page 42.

As some background, the rental registration ordinance has been in discussion for almost a decade. At the request of downtown neighborhood leaders and the Peninsula Consortium two years ago, Neighborhood Services was directed by the Planning Department Director to research what other cities do to manage livability issues associated with high percentages of non-primary residences. As you know, there are large numbers of non-primary residences downtown that are either purchased as vacation homes, short-term rentals (i.e., AirBnB, VRBO, etc.), or long-term rentals. What we have heard from residents and staff is that police and code enforcement officers are having trouble managing issues in long-term rentals because of the revolving door of tenants. There are a lot of barriers to ticketing tenants, and often landlords are difficult to reach in cases of emergency or recurring issues.

What we found in our research is that Rental Registration Programs are a common method across the state and country for communities to make sure there is communication and accountability between cities and property owners. The current proposal is intended to begin as a pilot but would expand to other downtown neighborhoods and eventually to the whole city. The ordinance carefully scopes the program to one where staff can get a handle on the program, and then expand it to other neighborhoods where it is needed. Piloting the program in one neighborhood (Eastside) was suggested because Eastside has fewer rental units than other heavily impacted neighborhoods, but a high rate of disturbance calls.

Some key points that were included based on conversations with residents:

- The ordinance would require a responsible agent to be within 30 miles of Charleston in case of emergency.
- This ordinance contains language that would require that landlords post information about trash, garbage, recycling pickup; street sweeping dates; noise, litter rules, etc.

This is a good opportunity to voice your opinion either in person at City Council, or individually to your City Councilmember. The meeting starts at 5 pm, and public comment will be toward the beginning of the agenda. Citizens may sign-up to speak in person at the Council meeting until 5:00 p.m. at City Hall.

The ordinance has gotten this far because of your continued encouragement and support. I hope that you encourage your residents to show up and voice their opinions about this important ordinance.

Thank you,

Becca Hopkins | Neighborhood Services Manager

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