

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

10-0257R

RESOLUTION OF INTENT TO REFORM THE HOUSING CODE PROGRAM
AND ITS ENFORCEMENT.

CITY PROPOSAL:

WHEREAS, city council of the city of Duluth, Minnesota, has enacted ordinances with the goal to improve the quality of life and maintain safe housing stock; and

WHEREAS, the Housing Code and its enforcement is one of the tools used to provide safe housing stock; and

WHEREAS, there have been policies, staffing issues, code issues, court process issues and enforcement processes that have hindered Housing Code enforcement to a level below what the citizens expect; and

WHEREAS, the Housing Code, Fire Code, solid waste ordinance, abandoned property ordinance, crime free multi-housing, excessive police services and social host ordinance share a common mission of improving the quality of life in the city of Duluth.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the city council hereby declares its intent to support the reform to the housing enforcement program as follows:

SECTION 1. SINGLE FAMILY DWELLINGS.

(a) In addition to the current rental license fees, a conversion fee will be charged to convert a single family home into a rental property. The fee will result in a priority inspection prior to license approval and occupancy. The conversion fee will be set by council;

(b) Rental properties will be licensed to a specific occupant load based on the number of bedrooms listed in the assessors records;

(c) The maximum number of bedrooms that can be licensed in a rental property will be limited by the amount of legal bedrooms or a square footage standard set by ordinance; whichever is less. The square footage standard sets a maximum number of bedrooms in a home based on its total square footage of living space. For example only, a minimum of 1,000 total square feet to license

up to three bedrooms, 1,500 square feet for up to four bedrooms, etc.

SECTION 2. ADDRESSING COMPLAINTS.

(a) Complaints may trigger a full rental inspection. This change would give inspectors the latitude to look at the entire building if the complaint or condition of the building justifies a full inspection.;

(b) Explore parking requirements for rental properties for all residential districts. The existing parking requirements would remain unchanged at two off street parking spaces, plus one per bedroom;

(c) Increased use of the administration citation program for non-compliant properties, complaints and uncooperative owners.

SECTION 3. OTHER ENHANCEMENTS.

(a) Update the Housing Code (Chapter 29A) as necessary to streamline enforcement and update to current standards;

(b) Expand Chapter 29A from dwellings to all structures. This will allow inspectors to address blighted commercial properties;

(c) The new life safety division of the fire department provides enforcement of the Fire Code, Housing Code and solid waste and abandoned property ordinances. The merger of code enforcement function of existing buildings into one division will provide for unified code enforcement and reduce duplication of services. We also plan on having a police presence in the life safety division.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the city council hereby declares its intent to support quality of life initiatives through the direction set by the above initiatives as well previously enacted initiatives such as crime free multi-

housing, administrative citations, excessive police services, social host ordinance and expanded solid waste ordinance enforcement.

Approved:

Approved for presentation to council:

Department Director

Chief Administrative Officer

Approved as to form:

Approved:

Attorney

Auditor

DFD JS:jle 5/3/2010

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: The purpose of this resolution is to express city council's intent to support Housing Code program reform, in concept, as outlined in sections 1 through 3. The reform will require ordinance changes and future council action. This resolution of intent is to provide transparency in the administration's plan for housing code improvements.