



Diane N. Tradd
Assistant City Manager/DPD Director

R. Eric Slagle
Director of Development Services

David Fuller
Building Commissioner

TO: Eileen Donoghue, City Manager *EMD*
FROM: R. Eric Slagle, Director of Development Services
DATE: March 2, 2020
RE: Motion by C. Elliott - Req. City Mgr. Provide A Report Regarding Number Of Apartments Inspected In 2019 Under Housing Standards Ordinance; Chapter 276 Of Code Of Ordinances.

Motion by C. Elliott - Req. City Mgr. Provide A Report Regarding The Number Of Enforcement Actions Under City Ordinance Chapter 227, Property Maintenance, Minimum Standards.

This memorandum addresses the requests from Councilor Elliott regarding both the number of apartments inspected under the Rental Ordinance and the number of violations issued for minimum maintenance during calendar year 2019.

Rental Permits

As the Council is aware, the Division of Development Services began implementing the rental ordinance in 2013. Given the three-year cycle for the rental unit permits, we divided the City into thirds by street address, and mailed out applications to the first group of addresses in January of 2013. Development Services sent a second follow-up letters to the multi-family owners who had not responded to the initial mailing. We followed the same process for the remaining two-thirds of the City in 2014 and 2015, for the first cycle of registrations.

To date, the Office Manager and Clerks in Development Services have received and entered applications for 22,384 units throughout the City. That total includes 15,850 units which required inspections under the ordinance, and an additional 6,534 units which are in owner-occupied two-family properties which do not require an inspection pursuant to the ordinance. In 2019, those numbers were 1,971 total units, with 1,877 requiring inspections, and 94 requiring no inspection.

Regarding the thresholds for inspection, Development Services has been complying with the requirement in the ordinance for larger apartment buildings. For buildings with six or more units, we are required to inspect a sample of units equal to 10% of the units, or 3 units, whichever is greater. The Sanitary Code Enforcement Inspectors choose the units at random, and inspect different units during the subsequent inspection cycles. The landlords pay for permits for each unit in the building, and are informed that we can inspect each and every unit if they prefer.

Additionally, the City has been increasing its proactive inspections of multi-family properties (three-family or more) under the State Building Code. The State Building Code requires that such

buildings receive a Certificate of Inspection (COI) once every five years. Since reinstating the Senior Building Inspector position in 2014, Development Services has performed 975 such COI inspections for multi-unit residential properties. Please note that these permits are issued per building, not per unit, such as the Rental Unit Permits above.

Minimum Maintenance

Over the course of 2019, inspectors in Development Services issued 786 minimum maintenance violations. These violations alone resulted in over 2,400 inspections, which does not include inspections of complaints that were deemed unfounded. These violations include both internal and external minimum maintenance of structures, including complaints for overgrowth.

In addition to these violations, inspectors issued 241 violations for illegal dumping in 2019, resulting in 664 inspections. Again, this number does not include complaints that were later determined to be unfounded.

Building Inspectors also perform proactive inspections while in the field to investigate work being done without the benefit of a permit. In the vast majority of those cases, the inspector issues a stop work order, notes the violation, and requires the contractor to apply for the permit with a penalty payment of triple the permit fee. In 2019, for example, inspectors charged a triple fee 171 times, generating over \$37,000 in fine revenue.

Other Health Inspections

Our Health Inspectors also perform other critical inspections around the City. Most notably, and of first priority for public health and safety, are the food inspections, both routine and emergency, that are done by our inspectors. In 2019, staff performed approximately 1,400 food inspections in establishments around the City. Additionally, during the winter, health inspectors are tasked with calls for no heat in apartment units. Though these calls fluctuate depending on the weather, our staff averages approximately one call per day over the six months between October and March, or 180 calls per heating season.

Conclusion

The inspector staff in Development Services works extremely hard in responding to the urgent public health and safety issues across the City. We are actively working to increase our response rate for Rental Permits through targeted mailings sent to landlords across the City this month. In addition, we are working on both technology and procedural support for inspectors that will allow them to spend more time in the field and less time in the office doing data entry in an effort to be more efficient with our inspector time.

ES

03/02/2020