



## Housing & Community Development Committee

Tuesday, May 16, 2023 @ 7:00 PM

Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, Evanston, IL 60201 Room 2404

**COMMITTEE MEMBER  
PRESENT:**

Hugo Rodriguez, Committee Member, Joanne Zolomij, Committee Member, Bobby Burns, Councilmember, Devon Reid, Councilmember, Eleanor Revelle, Councilmember, and Juan Geracaris, Councilmember

**COMMITTEE MEMBER  
ABSENT:**

Loren Berlin, Committee Member and Kathy Feingold

**STAFF PRESENT:**

**1. CALL TO ORDER/DECLARATION OF A QUORUM**

Chair Revelle called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

A. Approval of meeting minutes from April 18, 2023.

Motion to approve the meeting minutes from April 18, 2023.

Moved by Councilmember Reid

Seconded by Zolomij

**Ayes:** Rodriguez, Zolomij, Councilmember Burns, Councilmember Reid, Councilmember Revelle, and Councilmember Geracaris

**Approved 6-0 on a recorded vote**

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Deb Bailey - Deconversion Ordinance

Affordable housing is an important goal for us to have as a community. However, as an Evanston homeowner whose house was originally a single family house and was converted into a two-flat in the late 1920's/early 1930's, I think an exception should be made for situations like mine. If and when I choose to sell my house, the population of potential buyers would be limited if they couldn't convert the house back into a single-family again. I knew when I bought my house 30 years ago, I could turn it back into a single family house if I so choose. And there are a number of houses in my neighborhood that were original single-family houses, went through a period of being turned into two-family houses, and are now

back to being single-family houses. I understand and support a ban on having buildings that were originally built as duplexes (or triplexes!) converted into single family homes. But there should be an exemption for houses that were originally single family homes and were converted into two-family homes.

Jen Peterson - Residential Landlord Tenant Ordinance

I'm glad to see our city tackling rental disparity issues and hope that we will lead the way in making sure that we have housing available to all of our residents. This year, as rents have skyrocketed, I have seen buildings torn down in favor of luxury rentals and I personally know families who have had to move because landlords increased rents significantly. These are families who have lived here for years and now are "priced out" of our community - their community. We talk a good game around wanting to be a diverse, fair, and equitable community but when it comes to housing (and a few other things), we are far from it. When people who work in our community, cannot afford to continue to live here because there are not strong enough rules around rent increases, evictions, deposits, and other fees, then we are doing it wrong.

Claire Bacon - Residential Landlord Tenant Ordinance

As the Housing and Community Development Committee considers updates to Evanston's Residential Landlord Tenant Ordinance (RLTO), I want to encourage the committee to consider the opportunity we have to make a more just, healthy, and equitable rental landscape in our city. In my experience working in Evanston, I have definitely seen the need to put in place strong tenant protections. The lack of affordable housing options in combination with the inherent power imbalance that goes along with landlord/tenant relationships puts renters at greater risk of housing instability. Putting in place stronger tenant protections into our current RLTO is one simple way to even the playing field a little bit more for tenants and is vital to providing some additional stability for our households. Because of this, I strongly support the proposed updates to Evanston's RLTO.

Arielle Imber - Residential Landlord Tenant Ordinance

Evanston prides itself on being a vibrant and diverse city, but strong communities require stability. Nearly half of Evanston residents are renters, but rents have gone up 17% in just the past year, forcing many renters to relocate. To be clear, rising rents and evictions are not impacting everyone equally. Evanston's Black population has decreased by 27% since 2000, and evictions disproportionately affect Black residents. By increasing the notice period for rent increases and lease non-renewals, requiring landlords to disclose the average utility cost, and giving landlords the option to use an FHO compliant screening tool, Evanston has an opportunity to make low-cost, high-impact changes to the Residential Landlord Tenant Ordinance. There are additional reforms that would bring the Evanston RLTO in line with City of Chicago and Cook County ordinances, most importantly by implementing stricter rules around security deposits and move-in fees. Finally, the right to organize and form tenant unions is a vital step towards eliminating the power imbalance between landlords and tenants.

Laurence Smith - Residential Landlord Tenant Ordinance

Mr. Smith explained his experience of receiving a non-renewal notice only 30 days before the end of his lease after residing in his unit for 17 years. He stated there should be a three

strikes rule to non-renewals and evictions, and that non-renewals should not be used as a retaliation method. He believes there should be a just cause for eviction proceedings.

James McKee - Residential Landlord Tenant Ordinance

Mr. McKee introduced himself as a landlord of 39 units. He asked the HCDC to keep history in mind to avoid unintended consequences of the RLTO and to prevent overreach in detriment to Evanston landlords.

K.P. Smith - Residential Landlord Tenant Ordinance

Ms. Smith introduced herself as a landlord of an owner-occupied 2-flat. She stated the RLTO updates are welcomed and encouraged and believes landlords and tenants need stability and predictability. However, in regards to just cause to evict/non-renew, Ms. Smith stated there needs to be a way in which landlords can reclaim their properties should they decide to stop renting for personal, if not financial, reasons.

Tina Paden - Residential Landlord Tenant Ordinance

Ms. Paden explained her family's history of providing naturally occurring affordable housing to tenants receiving housing supports. She stated she is against the updates to the RLTO, and urged the Committee to think about the types of landlords the updates are affecting. She went on to say that the updates will have the greatest impact on small and medium landlords. Finally, Ms. Paden expressed concerns that if the Committee approves the changes to the RLTO affordable housing would disappear in the City.

#### **4. NEW BUSINESS/OLD BUSINESS**

- A. Presentation of Residential Landlord Tenant Ordinance Updates for Consideration
- B. Ordinance 49-O-23, Amending City Code Section 4-18-3 Concerning the Demolition Tax

The Equity and Empowerment Commission recommends consideration by the Housing and Community Development Committee of Ordinance 49-O-23, amending City Code Section 4-18-3, the Demolition Tax Code, to increase the amount of the Demolition Tax and to recommend its approval to City Council.

Moved by Councilmember Reid

Seconded by Councilmember Geracaris

**Ayes:** Rodriguez, Zolomij, Councilmember Burns, Councilmember Reid,  
Councilmember Revelle, and Councilmember Geracaris

**Approved 6-0 on a recorded vote**

- C. Staff Update: Small/Medium Landlord Assistance Program

Item was tabled for the June 20, 2023 meeting.

#### **5. ADJOURNMENT**