

# BOARD OF ALDERMEN

ITEM NO. D(3)

## AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT

MEETING DATE: October 28, 2003

**TITLE: Follow-up: Educational and Enforcement Strategies related to a Tenant Bill of Rights and Landlord Licensing**

<b>DEPARTMENT: Planning</b>	<b>PUBLIC HEARING: NO</b>
<b>ATTACHMENTS:</b> <b>A. Resolution</b> <b>B. Possible Schedule for Completion of Tasks</b> <b>C. Drafts of Housing Rights and Responsibilities Brochure and Housing Notice</b> <b>D. Outline of Licensing and Inspections Programs</b>	<b>FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:</b> <b>Patricia McGuire, Planning Administrator -- 918-7327</b> <b>Michael Canova, Chief Code Enforcement Officer – 918-7337</b> <b>Mike Brough, Town Attorney – 929-3905</b>

### PURPOSE

The Board of Aldermen reviewed a report on a Tenant's Bill of Rights and landlord licensing on September 16<sup>th</sup> and specified several additional activities. A report on this matter is provided for the Board's review. A resolution that confirms the next steps is recommended for the Board's adoption.

### INFORMATION

After receiving a report on this topic, the Board of Aldermen directed staff to

- 1) Prepare preliminary educational materials
- 2) Prepare a proposal for an inspection program
- 3) Adopt revised minimum housing code

A possible schedule for completion of these tasks is attached (*Attachment B*). It should be noted that Alderman Jacque Gist made a motion that was carried and unanimously supported at the September 30<sup>th</sup> Assembly of Governments meeting that a task force be convened to examine the problem of substandard housing in the County. Town staff will discuss the makeup and scheduling of task force activities with County Housing staff and will provide an update for the Board of Aldermen as soon as this information is available. The schedule included in Attachment B may require some adjustments based on the outcome of the work of this substandard housing task force.

Staff has prepared a brochure that summarizes Housing Rights and Responsibilities as currently specified in the Housing Code. A Housing Code notice has also been prepared and staff proposes that the Housing Code revisions scheduled to be presented in January include a requirement that a copy of this notice be posted on the rear of, or on the wall directly behind, the main entry door of every rental unit in Town. Copies of these materials are attached (*Attachment C*). It should be noted that preparation of final versions, adoption and distribution of these materials will need to follow updating the minimum Housing

code as the documents will need to be revised to reflect any changes. Final versions of the educational materials are to be produced in English and Spanish.

Staff has found that educational sessions are particularly useful when changes are proposed to an existing Town procedure or service. Following the updating of the Housing code, educational sessions will be scheduled for property managers of rental units. Town staff will develop a mailing list for these sessions from two sources. First the property owner information in the parcel database will be selected for all known multi-family developments. Second, the address matching procedure that is used to identify non-owner-occupied property (for notification purposes during permitting and rezoning procedures) will be used to identify the owners of such property. General notices would also be placed on the Town's website and in local newspapers announcing the new obligation of rental managers to provide minimum housing code information to all tenants.

The educational sessions will provide an opportunity for Town staff to review the Housing code provisions and meet the parties responsible for code compliance. It is anticipated that greater communication of the provisions of the Housing code may lead to additional demand for inspections, either by landlords or tenants. It is estimated that the existing staff of the Inspections Division could absorb approximately 50 additional Housing Code investigations a year without needing additional staff. Short of the implementation of any of the inspections programs discussed below, the impact on staff resources of a greater number of additional inspections would be monitored following the educational and Town Code/Housing code amendments noted here.

Outlines of both a licensing program and an inspections program are provided in Attachment D. It is recommended that the education/outreach activities described in the previous section take place regardless of the Board's decision to proceed with establishing either a licensing or inspections program related to housing code enforcement of residential rental property.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

Staff time to review and revise Town Code, educational materials and costs for outreach sessions if only the education/outreach program is initiated. Possible costs associated with developing licensing or certification is described in Attachment D.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Administration recommends that the Board of Aldermen adopt the attached resolution that accepts the report, reiterates the Board's desire to move forward with revisions to the Housing Code and specifies action on other elements following conclusion of the efforts of the task force on substandard housing.