

Minutes
CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY COMMISSION
Conference Room 235
City Hall, 515 Clark Avenue
Monday, August 29, 2109

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm by Chair Sandeep Stanley. Members present were Eric Abrams, Pete Englin, Martha Broadnax, Evelyn Beavers, Warren Madden, and Tom Lindsley.

Member(s) Absent: None

Staff Liaisons: Tasheik Kerr and Deb Schildroth

Approval of Minutes: Warren moved approval of July 22, 2019 meeting minutes Pete seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Forum: There was no one present for Public Forum.

Tenant/Landlord Relations: Speaker Panel

Kipp VanDyke, ISU Assistant Dean/Director of Student Assistance

Kipp described his role as primarily having interactions with landlords and students over matters such as financial (inability to pay rent) and/or personal issues (roommate and/or other relationships). Kipp gets involved with 5-6 cases during the course of the academic year. Issues that are legal in nature are referred to ISU student legal services. Kipp stated that landlords refer students to him and he's been involved in situations where landlords have worked with releasing students from lease agreements so that the student can seek treatment and/or address other personal circumstances. Kipp's experience has been that smaller property management/landlord businesses seem to be more willing to work through issues.

Joel Hochstein, ISU Assistant Director Student Conduct

Joel described his role with student conduct. His contact is not with landlords, only students. Joel and the Ames Police Department have regular communication. APD calls for service are shared with ISU and Joel identifies ISU students when he reviews the call list. Warning letters are issued through his office and he shared examples of warning letters sent to students for issues such as arrests, noise, and nuisance activity. There was also a heat map of where those types of issues occur. Joel noted that he assisted with the Welcome Blitz on August 19th in conjunction with Ames Fire and Police. The Blitz was conducted in neighborhoods nearest to campus but excluded apartment complexes. Warren asked what differences are seen between the larger apartment complexes vs a rental house. Joel said that the larger apartment

complexes have on-site private security that deal with a lot of the issues. Haven Security is a popular security company used.

Joel believes that there's been more of an effort in being proactive this year in providing education. The hope is getting the situation resolved before a citation is issued.

Kurt Kruger, Community Outreach Officer, City of Ames Police Department

Kurt described the types of calls he receives. Every call has a code. Many calls are noise complaints, but if the caller wants to remain anonymous or doesn't want a decibel/noise reading, then the police are not responding.

There currently isn't a mechanism to specifically track landlord/tenant complaints, but they are looking into a new code to possibly track this information. The main issue seems to be with trespassing and/or a tenant living somewhere illegally because they are not listed on the lease agreement. Kurt stated that the Police Department cannot enforce lease agreement terms.

Kurt confirmed that the Police Department shares information with ISU to identify whether or not a person involved with a complaint is an ISU student.

Kurt stated that he will extend another invitation to the Campus and Community Commission to attend a landlord meeting.

Sarah VanMeteren, Building Official, City of Ames Fire Department

Sarah stated that there are about 15,000 rental units in city and Inspections gets each property inspected about every 4 years unless there are issues. She shared copies of the inspection checklist used to review each property and explained the inspection process. Inspections has a Community Codes Liaison and when there is a rental housing violation, landlords are issued a citation and tenants are notified, as well. When the violation is for over-occupancy, both the landlord and tenant can be cited.

Sarah explained the tenant complaint process. The complaints handled through this process deal with the physical structure of the rental property. A landlord entering the property unannounced isn't the type of complaint that goes through this process. Sarah stated that it is helpful for the tenant to provide Inspections with a copy of written communication that documents the tenant's notification to the landlord about the issue. Citations and potential revocation of LOC are issued to the landlord if they don't comply. Inspections refers a lot of (student) tenants to student legal services for issues other than physical structure problems, i.e. lack of cleanliness due to pets going to the bathroom on floor, garbage attracting pests, etc.

Sarah clarified that there is not a property ordinance for owner occupied units with the exception of outdoor storage. Current rental ordinance allows # of

people based on # of bedrooms up to 5 adults. Sandeep suggested developing a definition of residency with regards to occupancy but at what level is this determined – state or local?

The City has 3 rental housing inspectors and this level of staffing allows the department to stay up to date with the workload. The Ames On-The-Go app can be used to report complaints and response time is approximately one day. Out of 15,000 rental units being inspected, the majority meet requirements.

Sarah reviewed the history of occupancy ordinances. City Council is considering incentives to remodel homes back into single family dwellings.

Next Steps: Pete stated that the City Council wants Campus and Community Commission to convene a meeting with landlords and tenants. Discussion ensued about determining what motivates landlords to attend, what are the real issues being addressed and how significant are they. Eric stated that framing a facilitated discussion is very important. It should be an opportunity to talk about desired outcomes and NOT evolve into a complaint session.

Pete made the motion for Sandeep to work with Kurt Kruger in drafting an email to landlords/property managers about participating in a meeting. If there is little to no response from landlords/property managers, then the Commission considers attending one of Kurt's monthly meetings. Warren seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Comments: Sandeep shared that he has organized an event to promote Ames by involving 21 student groups at the September 7th Main Street Farmer's Market.

Next Meeting: Monday, September 23, 2019 6:00pm in conference room 235 at Ames City Hall.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:59pm.