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CITY OF MUSCATINE PRESS RELEASE

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CITY HOSTS LANDLORDS FOR MEETING ON RENTAL HOUSING

Area landlords listen, discuss rental housing issues with Community Development

MUSCATINE, Iowa – The Community Development Department of the City of Muscatine hosted a presentation on the Rental Housing Registration Program for over 40 landlords from the Muscatine area Monday at the Musser Public Library and HNI Community Center.

Jodi Royal-Goodwin, Director of Community Development, Michelle Metzger, Community Services Officer II/Code Enforcement who leads the rental inspection team, Randy Rosa, Community Services Officer, and Christa Bailey, Office Coordinator, spoke about the history of the program, how the program works, and discussed some of the most common issues found during inspections.

Stable housing is critical for families and for the community Royal-Goodwin told the attendees.

“This meeting is intended to answer a lot of the questions about the rental housing program and the inspection process,” Royal-Goodwin said. “It is important that we keep the lines of communication open between the City and landlords to ensure we have quality housing available.”

Iowa Code requires cities of 15,000 or more to have an enacted and enforceable housing code related to the safety and condition of rental units. Muscatine has had such a code for decades and that code has been evolving in recent years. The last major revision of the Housing Code was approved by the Muscatine City Council in December 2017 and became effective January 1, 2018.

The code outlines the process for a landlord to legally rent a property starting with the submission of the Rental Facility License and Rental Unit Registration application and the payment of the Rental Unit Registration fee. Once the fees are paid a Community Services Officer performs an initial inspection of the unit(s) with the landlord afforded two opportunities to correct violations of before the unit(s) may be posted for no occupancy.

“Our goal with inspections is to support the maintenance of units in a manner that provides a reasonable level of safety, public health, and general welfare,” Royal-Goodwin said. “The foundation of this is a focus on structural integrity and assuring all components of the property conform to manufacture’s specifications.”

There are three types of inspections for rental housing unit(s) that are scheduled through the City of Muscatine Community Development office including triennial, self-inspection, and special/complaint inspections. Triennial and special/complaint inspections are completed by the Community Services Officer while the self-inspection is completed by the landlord as part of the annual renewal of the Rental Housing License.

Among the concerns expressed by landlords were interactions with Community Service Officers that were contentious at times, the training of the inspectors, the procedure for contesting filed items, and failing an item without a specific code citation.

“We were able to discuss these issues and others and believe the landlords and the City have a better understanding of the process and the abilities of our staff,” Royal-Goodwin said.

The Presentation to Landlords can be found [HERE](#). Those who have questions are asked to call the Community Development Office at 563-262-4141.