

September 23, 2020

Dear City Council/ Charter Change Commission;

My name is Tom Papp and I am a Burlington landlord.

Regarding the proposed charter changes with regard to tenants/landlords rights, I have several concerns and suggestions....

- 1) **Setting a cap on rent increases benefits no one.** Many landlords (myself included) do not increase the rent each year if it is not justified by a combination of expense increases and market forces. Tenants benefit by having the same rent for several years and landlords benefit by having multi-year occupancies. If a rental increase cap was put in place (5% for example), this would dis-incent landlords from upgrading their properties. It would also force landlords to increase rents EVERY year just to keep up with COLA.
- 2) **Regarding evictions..** Landlords need to be able to evict due to lease expirations precisely so they CAN plan and execute major upgrades to the dwellings that cannot be done when the unit is occupied. When they first sign a lease contract, tenants have ample time to plan for the ending and possible non-renewal of the lease. Landlords already have to provide advance notice of both rent increases and non-renewals. If landlords can't require a tenant to reside in the unit and pay rent indefinitely, why should tenants expect landlords to be able to offer a unit indefinitely? Leases have end-dates for precisely this reason.
There is also neighbors' right to peaceable enjoyment of their property. If a tenant continually causes problems in the neighborhood: (chronic noise violations, criminal activity for example), those should be sufficient grounds for breach of contract and subsequent eviction.
- 3) **Regarding properties not being maintained.** I beg to differ on this characterization. First, Code Enforcement has done an excellent job of helping both tenants and landlords work together on this. Second, I personally do more maintenance now on the unit I am renting out than when I lived there. Why? Because I care about my tenants, my property and my neighborhood.

In summary, I suggest leaving things as they are. Both landlords and tenants have sufficient remedies at their disposal when a disagreement occurs, including the Rental Handbook. Any change to the Burlington Rental Codes must strike a balance between landlord and tenant so each party's rights are protected.

Respectfully,

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