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Begin forwarded message:

From: Eric Johnson <ejeleven@yahoo.com>
Subject: The laws in Burlington are already slanted against landlords, don't make it worse.
Date: September 23, 2020 at 11:44:23 AM EDT
To: "jshannon@burlingtonvt.gov" <jshannon@burlingtonvt.gov>, eric johnson <ejeleven@yahoo.com>

[WARNING]: External Message

To all those city councilors who want to see more affordable housing in Burlington, buy a building and provide it. That's the solution. Then see what it feels like when a tenant misrepresents himself to get your permission to move in, but when rent is due he becomes a different person, a malevolent one, who hates you. That's because you have become just another of the guy's long list of bill collectors. Renting out apartments is a good way to build equity but it comes with costs. For me one cost was my belief that there's good in everyone. There isn't.

Here is a sampling of the bad experiences I've had with tenants:

One male tenant stopped paying his rent then allowed his brother to move in. The brother didn't pay rent either. He parked his car in my freshly-paved parking lot and drained his oil by opening the plug and letting it spill onto the pavement.

One female tenant stopped paying rent. Foolishly I thought I could negotiate with her but all this did was give her more time to stiff me. Her pot and cigarette smoke and loud parties caused my upstairs tenant to move out. He complained that she had visitors who would come, park anywhere, in the driveway, on the grass, but leave their engines running, go inside her apartment and then quickly leave. What do you think was happening? Does the D-word come to mind? She trashed the apartment. Getting her out with loss of rent, repairs, and legal bills cost \$19,000! That was with a duplex where the profit margin left about \$5,000/year. So it took nearly four years of operating those two apartments to cover that loss.

Another female tenant was a truly a wonderful person. Burlington Housing gave her a very high rating. We grew to be good friends and even exchanged Christmas cards after

what I'm about to relate happened. She had a heroin-addicted daughter who had a pimp. (I later found out NY state sentenced him to ten years for aggravated assault and whatever the legal term is for pimping.) Daughter and pimp would sit in the parking lot, tossing their cigarettes on the ground as they waited for her mom to come home so they could hassle her for money. He was particularly menacing; he scared the snot out of my other tenants, particularly the women. One Friday afternoon I came home from work, happy for the weekend's arrival, only to discover a puddle of lumpy vomit--the daughter's--beside the front door. Oh joy! What a perfect end to the work week! I got it cleaned up and went looking for a deodorizer, only to discover a larger even lumpier puddle of vomit on the second floor landing. Thankfully mom moved without me taking legal action. I feel bad for her to this day. It was a sad situation, but what if the pimp had done something to one of my other tenants? Two women lived alone on the third floor so there was a distinct possibility of that.

Let's say Burlington legislates some form of rent control and makes it even harder to get rid of the tenants like I've described above. Who is going to want to build housing with such restrictions? No one. There will be no new housing units built. Instead new housing will migrate to where there's less hostility towards landlords. Also, if you cannot get more money for your apartments, why would you want to maintain them in tiptop shape? You won't. Tenants will have the green light to destroy your property thanks to City Hall. Property will be maintained only to achieve the basic minimum for code enforcement, as well-meaning but very misguided legislators will have removed any incentive to do otherwise.

Thank you.

Very sincerely,

Eric Johnson

PS--What I related isn't fiction, it's what happened. If anyone wants to see proof I can dig it up. ej

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