

Joan Shannon
Burlington South District City Councilor
Cell: (802) 324-3300

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Kim Holtan" <kimholtan@usa.net>
Subject: Burlington Charter Change
Date: September 24, 2020 at 12:44:10 AM EDT
To: <jshannon@burlingtonvt.gov>

[WARNING]: External Message

Dear Ms Shannon,

I have been a landlord in Burlington for about 35 years. I am an excellent landlord, I keep my apartments in good shape and am willing to work with tenants if they have financial difficulties provided they communicate with me. I've had tenants pay me in full long after moving and I've forgiven rent owed as well. I am careful and try to only rent to tenants I think will be good neighbors. I typically have great relationships with my tenants. That being said I am writing in opposition to the proposed change to Burlington' charter. I do not think a forced infinity lease, so to speak, is a good thing for Burlington.

Over the years I have had a few bad tenants. While I was able to get them to move in the past and only had to resort to eviction once, such tenants would be impossible to evict if this passes. My leases now include no drums permitted in the apartment (the drum set in the living room was a problem though not a breach of lease at the time), no ferrets (the ferrets were being bred in the bedroom and their territory marking glands can ruin your carpet and get into the wood floor- who knew?!), and "you will do nothing that disturbs your neighbors". I've had tenants whose parents paid their rent so rent was never an issue but some rent paying tenants were terrible neighbors to my other tenants with late loud music, smoking in apartments, likely drug deals at all hours. Very hard to get tenants to complain about their neighbors and the good tenants just move. Breach of lease sounds good but is very unenforceable and even if the police come by often bad tenants just deny the charge and intimidate neighbors preventing them from identifying themselves for police reports (good luck without a police report).

This charter change puts undue pressure on landlords as well as good tenants who are forced to suffer with horrible neighbors who they do not want to file complaints against because they are frightened.

As a landlord I would never rent to section 8 housing if I had no chance of evicting a tenant once they are in the apartment. While it is not always easy to document and prove badly behaved tenants, they are alive and well in Burlington. As a good landlord I have on

numerous occasions given a potentially bad tenant with no reference the benefit of the doubt and rented to them. More often than not it has worked out for both of us. I would never do that again in the future knowing my options of getting rid of them if they're bad neighbors to my other tenants were nonexistent.

As a landlord I depend on other landlords to give me references for tenants who would like to rent from me. I will be unable to trust references in the future knowing that another landlord who cannot evict their bad tenant will likely give them a reference in order to get rid of them.

There are also rental houses that need complete renovations that I would never purchase unless I could purchase them emptied of tenants. I have been looking for such a house in Burlington until I saw this charter change. No landlord in their right mind would buy a rental house from a slum lord to fix up unless it came tenant free. I would love to buy the house full of terrible neighbors next to the house I own. When my tenants complain about that house and the police come nothing ever happens. Neighbors are scared and the loud destructive and intimidating behavior merely encourages others to move away.

People often think of small landlords as evil people. We are not. We have made investments in homes and that is a big deal. Being a landlord carries a tremendous weight, a home is a sacred thing. While I have great tenants and often rent my apartments through friends of previous tenants there are other tenants that are quite toxic. Most of us (or at least me) cannot afford to lose good tenants because of impossible to evict tenants. And the building becomes increasingly difficult to rent.

If I cannot get a tenant to leave and had restrictions on rental increases to avoid "hidden evictions" I would have to raise my rent every time I can. At this time I purposefully try to keep my tenants rent inexpensive because I believe it is very hard for young people to live in this area. I could get considerably more rent for my apartments but would prefer not to do so. If this passes I would feel forced to raise my rent just in case. What a terrible situation for good landlords this will create. Don't do this to us.

Please vote NO!

Sincerely,

Kim Lang

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