

Update on Property Maintenance Code

July 30, 2018

Spent last two weeks attending various meetings with City Officials on the new Property Maintenance Code (PMC).

I first met with Councilwoman Kate Burke, Alicia Ayars, and other staff for an update on modifications of the Code and proposed timeline for implementation. Then attended a presentation before the Urban Affairs Committee and then a workshop presentation before the Planning Commission held recently on July 25th.

First let me give you the most recent timeline for implementation of the new Code.

On August 2nd at 2:00 pm in the City Hall's Council Chambers, there will be a joint meeting of the Spokane City Council and the Planning Commission.

On August 8th at 2:00 pm in the City Hall's Council Chambers, there will be another workshop, Part Two of the Code, before the Planning Commission. At both of these sessions there will be no public testimony, but a great opportunity to hear of the concerns expressed by both bodies.

On September 12th, time to be determined, there will be a Public Hearing on the PMC either in City Hall or the Downtown Public Library.

The legislation itself will come before the City Council in October with expected passage in early November. The Code would then take effect on January 1, 2019 if passed. If approximately 8,000 valid signatures, taking about 13,000 to provide that 8,000, were collected in 30 days after passage of the Code, the measure would go to a City public vote, requiring 5-% plus one vote to become law.

Four members of the Planning Commission had major concerns with the Code.

Questions were raised concerning: "What if a homeowner cannot afford to make all of the repairs and updates?"

"What about Spokane's older homes. Will this force owners to bring homes up to current codes?"

"It appears as if anyone, a neighbor, an agency (Tenants Union) can target specific homes/properties!"

"How about hoarding or trash in the yard, is it a landlord or tenant issue?"

"You have up to 16 inspectors, who assures consistency in implementation of the standards We know that different building inspectors have difference standards!"

"What is pest infestation ... two ants?!"

“The landlord and the tenant disagree on responsibility for the violation, does the City resolve the matter?”

“You said SNAP would handle the cost of repairs for the financialize challenged they don’t have the resources, staff or dollars, to do that! “

“What about the ‘right of entry’ issues?

These are just a few of the concerns expressed.

We will need landlords and homeowners to testify at the September 12th public hearing and we will need the same to testify before the City Council in October.

At our Landlord Association meeting at Timber Creek Grill Buffet on Wednesday September 19, 2018, City staff will provide a one-hour presentation, with time for questions.

Mark your calendars with the important dates, watch for important announcements via e-mail and newsletter, and other notifications that will be sent you way over the next three months.

Steve Corker

President LLA