

**Rental Inspection Ad Hoc Committee**  
**227 E. Lincoln Avenue, Reed City, Michigan**  
**May 27, 2025 @ 11am**

Chair Matthew VanPeeren called the meeting to order at 11:02am then led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Matthew VanPeeren, Edward Williams, Jodi Graber, Chris Lockhart, Jeff Stein, Candace Wolgamott, Rich Saladin and Kathy Fiebig.

Absent: Perry Borntreger

Approval of Agenda

Motion by Fiebig to approve the agenda as presented.

Support by Lockhart.

Motion passed with all in favor.

Approval of Minutes: May 12, 2025

Motion by Lockhart to approve the minutes as presented.

Support by Stein.

Motion passed with all in favor.

Old Business

A. Discussion and Action on inspection checklist provided by Housing Commission

Topics discussed:

The Housing Commission is not required to provide fire extinguishers for each unit but has them in each hallway at the senior residences.

VanPeeren, as a landlord, does not do routine inspections but responds to any complaints. Williams, as a tenant, stated the landlord comes by often but does not actually check the apartment. Last fall his landlord installed additional smoke detectors and a carbon monoxide detector.

The Housing Commission staff performs INSPIRE inspections on all units and have gone through extensive training in order to do so. This inspection is standard for all units, including Section 8 housing. Graber was asked to elaborate and said the inspections include checking all electrical outlets, the stove and oven, exhaust fans and filters, ensuring the fridge and freezer are operational, that there are no water leaks, that windows open and lock and screens are in place, and all toilets flush properly. They look for mold or mildew. They also check the exterior sheds for flammable items. VanPeeren asked if the tenants have any accountability regarding repairs. Graber explained that if a work order should have been submitted and wasn't, the tenant can be charged for the cost of repairs. If it was a general oversight, they aren't charged.

VanPeeren was asked if his lease covers repairs and he stated that it requires the tenant to report any problems but does not hold them responsible for cost of repairs.

VanPeeren noted that a rental inspection ordinance would set different standards for landlords vs. homeowners. Many homeowners within the city have houses in poor repair that can only be addressed through the blight ordinance which focuses more on exterior issues. Saladin noted that there's a need for education for both landlords and homeowners on safety issues. He also noted that tenants may not know what to do if issues arise and the landlord refuses to address them. Wolgamott, who rented a Reed City property with serious safety issues, concurred. Her landlady refused to address any of the complaints, and Wolgamott was unable to find assistance elsewhere.

Saladin believes that a rental registry should be put in place and landlords should be required to keep it up to date (current tenants and their contact information). He would like to see a process in place for tenants to report issues.

Graber suggested giving all landlords and tenants a pre-inspection list of what will be inspected.

Stein noted that in Evert, the building inspector seems to have a lot of discretion and Fiebig noted that the Evert ordinance references the International Maintenance Code, which is very broad. The Big Rapids ordinance is more streamlined.

VanPeeren noted that there are a number of homeowners in the city that are not maintaining their properties yet they will be exempt from inspections..

Discussion followed on whether an ordinance is needed. Lockhart noted that there are avenues in place to address some of these issues, whether owned or rented. However, the issues must be visible from the exterior and the city can't enter a home without either a complaint or an invitation. He suggested that the city first establish which homes are rentals, then let tenants know what safety issues should be in place, and what to do if they aren't.

Graber noted that there are local agencies that can assist with safety issues.

VanPeeren questioned if the Police Department is prepared for an influx of complaints, and Lockhart noted that it's part of the job and reiterated that there should be a focus on education for all involved.

Fiebig noted that there are basement rentals without any egress windows and Saladin believed that some of those might be grandfathered in, even if an ordinance is put in place.

#### B. Discussion and action of developing a beginning process

At this point, there was no clear consensus that an ordinance is needed. Education of landlords and tenants seems to be a logical starting point.

### New Business

#### A. Develop information to present to council

1. Create a registry of all rentals within the city, to include the number of tenants in each building and provide contact information for all. This should also note which party is responsible for paying for utilities.
2. Create a rental packet for tenants that focuses on safety issues, with a fine if landlords do not provide this packet to their tenants.
3. Provide a list of resources available to tenants.

4. Establish fines for those landlords that do not register their properties as rentals.

Wolgammott noted that when she rented in Cadillac, the Fire Department inspected the property within 30 days of her moving in, and did so annually thereafter. Saladin noted that Fire Department members can inspect for fire safety issues, but are not certified for in depth inspections. Stein does not feel the Reed City department has the resources to do inspections.

Further discussion again focused on the need for education before creating an ordinance. Graber noted the Section 8 properties are inspected before being accepted into the program and are then inspected annually, so should be exempted if an ordinance is created.

It was noted again that tenants need to know their rights, and where to go if safety issues are not addressed by their landlord.

Graber will provide the committee with copies of a publication titled "A Practical Guide For Tenants and Landlords."

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:02pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Fiebig  
Recording Secretary