

# RENTERS COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT

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JULY 2022 – DECEMBER 2022

## MEMBERS

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### VOTING

Zackariah Farah, Chair

Lucy Peterson, Vice Chair

Robert Kelly

Dandan Chen

Jaymie Tibbits

Richa Mukerjee

Geoffrey Lowes

Hannah Cohen Smith

Nick Roumel, Attorney - Renter's Advocate

Vacancy

Vacancy

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### NONVOTING

Travis Radina, Council Liaison

Cynthia Harrison, Council Liaison

Jordan Else, Providing Landlord Perspective

Robert Droppleman, Providing Landlord Perspective

Gayle Rosen, University of Michigan Student Legal Services Appointee

Vacancy, Liaison from Housing and Human Services Advisory Commission

## COMMISSION PURPOSE

The commission's purpose is to advise the City Council and City Administrator on matters affecting renters in the city. The commission shall:

- a. Monitor and evaluate trends in rental housing in the City using available statistical data and broad-based input from the Ann Arbor community, including renters and property owners.
- b. Propose, evaluate, recommend, and respond to policies, practices, or laws that affect renters in the City, including, but not limited to: housing affordability, transportation access, land use, public health and safety, and economic development.
- c. Monitor the enforcement and effectiveness of City legislation related to renters and renter protections, and provide periodic advice on priorities and strategies for strengthening enforcement and effectiveness of City renter protections.
- d. Solicit input from stakeholders, such as landlords, renters, homeowners, realtors, and community groups, regarding proposed policies, practices, laws, recommendations, and other matters under consideration by the commission.
- e. Communicate regularly and work with other City boards and commissions and staff when considering or proposing to consider matters affecting renters that overlap with the purposes of those boards and commissions.
- f. Consult with the City Attorney's Office as early as possible regarding proposed legislation and other legal matters within the commission's purpose.
- g. Consult with the City's Rental Housing Services Unit, through the City Administrator's designated commission staff liaison, when considering or proposing to consider matters related to rental housing inspections, code enforcement, or other matters within the purview of the City's Rental Housing Services Unit.

## COMMISSION BACKGROUND

The Renters Commission was established in September, 2021.

At the time of establishment, City Council identified housing stability, affordability, and accessibility for all members of the Ann Arbor community as a key priority. City Council wished to create a commission where stakeholders can discuss issues relating to renters and advise City Council regarding policies, practices, trends, and legislation. The Renters Commission's first meeting was held on July 7, 2022.

## COMMISSION ACCOMPLISHMENTS - 2022

- Drafted and supported an ordinance to amend Chapter 105: Housing Code, Section 8:530 and to add Section 8:531. This ordinance was approved by City Council and became effective on October 16, 2022.
- Attended the Autumnal Green Fair to engage with stakeholders to collect feedback to influence their Work Plan.
- Attended a Housing and Human Services Advisory Committee meeting to learn about local housing issues and policies.
- Accepted an invitation to be a community partner in a grant opportunity facilitated by a research group at the University of Michigan School of Public Health. If awarded, the Renters Commission's role in this project will be to assist the group with facilitating community discussions, to disseminate findings, and to discuss potential policy solutions.
- Held 11 public meetings.

## ONGOING PROJECTS

- Collaboration with Rental Housing Services
- Stakeholder engagement

## HIGH-PRIORITY INITIATIVES IN 2023

- Review enforcement processes for Sections 8:530 and 8:531 of Housing Code. Make recommendations as needed.
- Planning and implementation of a proposed amendment to the City Charter regarding the Rights and Duties of Tenants booklet.
- Building relationships with stakeholders.
- Creating educational materials for Sections 8:530 and 8:531 of Housing Code.

**City of Ann Arbor Renters Commission Workplan for 2023 Calendar Year**

Initiative	Priority	Topic
<b>Rental Housing Reform and/or Legislation</b>	High	Research Waitlist/Fee Regulation and propose amendments to Chapter 105: Housing Code
	High	Audit Chapter 105 Section 8:530 (Early Leasing Ordinance (ELO)), and existing enforcement process for efficacy. Propose amendments if necessary. Support enforcement process changes if necessary
	High	Establish and support enforcement process for Chapter 105, specifically prioritizing Section 8:531 (Right to Renew)
	Medium	Propose ordinance/ordinance amendment language to require owner occupied rentals to obtain a certificate of compliance and to inform current/prospective tenants of open code violations. Establish and support enforcement process
	Medium	Update to Rights and Duties of Tenants Handbook
Initiative	Priority	Topic
<b>Commissioner Education</b>	High	Enforcement process for Chapter 105
	High	Implementation of Affordable Housing in the City of Ann Arbor
	High	Fair Housing Act Violations in Ann Arbor
	Medium	Right to Counsel Initiatives in other communities
	Medium	Ordinances aimed at slowing gentrification and displacement in other communities
	Medium	Stakeholder Engagement Meetings (Spring-Summer 2023 when outdoor meetings are possible)
	Low	Eviction in the City of Ann Arbor, eviction diversion programs elsewhere
Initiative	Priority	Topic
<b>Stakeholder Education</b>	High	Create/improve educational materials for ELO
	High	Create educational materials for Right to Renew
	Medium	Improve tenant accessibility for locating information on open Housing Code Violations
	Medium	Update to Rights and Duties of Tenants Booklet

Possible Future Projects

- Right to Counsel
- Analyze current housing availability/current landscape of landlords
- Analysis of municipal housing codes in cities like Ann Arbor
- Statewide preemption of municipal rent control law

Approved by the Renters Commission: 12/15/2022