



City of Duluth Communications Office

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SUBJECT: City of Duluth announces new tenants' rights ordinance proposed in upcoming City Council agenda

BY: Kelli Latuska, Public Information Officer

City of Duluth announces new tenants' rights ordinance proposed in upcoming City Council agenda

[DULUTH, MN] On Tuesday, at their May 27 meeting, the Duluth City Council will read in for the first time a proposed ordinance that adds Article V to Chapter 29A of the Duluth City Code, and provides notice to tenants of resources available to them as well as their protected rights under existing state law and city ordinance. This ordinance is the first in a two-part key council action package that aims to improve tenants' rights, empower renters, and improve housing quality. The Duluth City Council, in recognition of the fact that all Duluth residents have a fundamental need and right to access to safe and dignified housing, and in recognition of the finding that tenants are often unaware of local programs and legal protections, hope to codify additional layers of notice to provide tenants with transparency and increase accountability in the tenant-landlord relationship with this ordinance.

"In our study of the area's housing and all the issues that renters face, the council has found that renters and landlords alike are not always aware of their rights and the resources that are available to them," said Council President Terese Tomanek. "This gap can lead to housing instability and inequity. This ordinance will help bridge that gap, while providing increased safety and quality of housing in our rental stock."

The second part of the package will be discussed at a study session immediately following the City Council meeting on May 27.

Chapter 29A of the Duluth City Code adopts the International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC), which establishes minimum requirements for the maintenance of existing buildings. The expressed intent of the IPMC is to ensure public health, safety and welfare through enforcement

of its requirements. In addition to the IPMC, Minnesota statutes provide remedies for tenants, including rent escrow and tenant remedies actions. And, One Roof Community Housing offers residents assistance through their Tenant Landlord Connection Program.

“Housing issues, and the health, safety, and quality of life impacts these issues can have on our residents has always been incredibly important to this council,” said President Tomanek. “We’ve been working on improving those issues with the administration, and this ordinance is a significant step in that direction. We’re empowering tenants and giving our housing inspectors the support they need to assist in enforcing code.”

“Duluth has the oldest average housing stock in the state and among the oldest in the nation,” said Duluth Fire Department Deputy Chief Jonathan Otis, who leads the City’s Life Safety division. “These two council actions will help support the important work our inspection team does every day while providing tenants with the tools to ensure their home is safe. Progressive code enforcement is the best tool for protecting tenants and our legacy infrastructure,” said Otis.

The ordinance will have its first of two required reads on May 27 before going to vote on Monday, June 9. The ordinance can be read in its entirety [here: https://duluth-mn.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7405351&GUID=70A228D2-C036-4ED6-8261-BF454D2AEBE0](https://duluth-mn.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7405351&GUID=70A228D2-C036-4ED6-8261-BF454D2AEBE0).

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