




# Community & Economic Development Committee Meeting

March 31, 2021

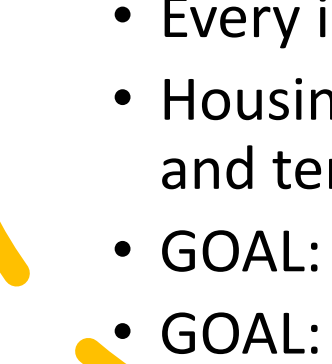


# CED Updates

1. Mentorship Program
  2. Allentown Vision 2030 – Spanish Translation
  3. Citywide Branding Update
  4. COVID Small Business Relief Program
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# Rental Inspection Program

- Establishes residential and non-residential property maintenance standards and procedures for requiring the inspection, rehabilitation, repair, abatement of nuisances or compulsory demolition of buildings, structures and housing essential to the public health, safety and welfare of Allentown residents and the community.
  - Housing inspectors enforce the Code.
    - Every inspection and code violation is unique
    - Housing inspection is SCIENCE (enforce code) and ART (work with landlords and tenants)
    - GOAL: Compliance
    - GOAL: Avoid Tenant Displacement
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# “Tagging A Property”

Eviction: The City does NOT evict tenants.

## 1. Unlawful Occupancy “Tag”

- Unpaid Fees
- Unlicensed Rental Unit

## 2. Raze Or Repair “Tag”

- Property has structural damage
- Unsafe structure
- Issued by Building Code Department

## 3. Unfit For Human Habitation “Tag”

- Life Safety Issues
- Serious Code Violations (Sewage, unsanitary conditions, infestation, etc.)
- Issued by Rental Housing Department




# Unfit For Human Habitation

- Timeframe for Unfit for Human Habitation
  - Described in 1741.15 CORRECTIVE ACTION
  - Subsection (B) premises constitutes a serious hazard
  - Subsection (C) public officer shall order such premises vacated and shall prescribe a reasonable time for compliance.

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- Art & Science
  - Goal is to avoid tenant displacement
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# Displacement Communications


- Pamphlet: What you need to know about Renting (English & Spanish)
  - North Penn Legal Self-Help Handbook for Tenants (English & Spanish)
  - Contact numbers for Catholic Charities & Lehigh Valley Conference of Churches
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# Comparisons with other areas


- Bethlehem does not have a set procedure
- Northampton has Tenant eviction money from the state
- Industry information sharing and Best Practices
  - Housing Alliance of PA
  - PA Housing Finance Agency
  - Lehigh County Congress of Governments
  - Continuing education from HUD



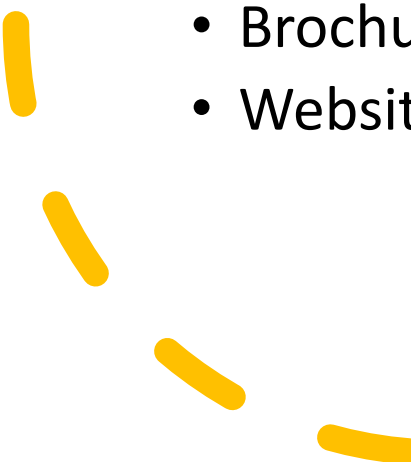
# CED Recommendations

- Updated Blighted Review Committee Ordinance
  - Landbank Ordinance
  - New Technology
  - Added additional funding for relocation to agency
  - Updating PROPERTY REHABILITATION & MAINTENANCE CODE 1741
  - Working with other organizations on finding, funding, operating & maintaining temporary/ transitional housing
  - Continuous process improvement
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# Education Efforts: How are landlords informed of the maintenance codes and rental inspection program?

- Landlord Tenant training last one November 2019
  - No training offered in 2020 (COVID)
  - 2021 training (questionable)
  - During Inspections and referral to Code 1741
  - Window Guard Program (Ahnely's Ordinance)
    - Brochure
    - Website
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# Legislative options to make landlords and tenants more accountable:





- Point system – move from a 5 year cycle to a point system to better get at the problem properties – Hopkins was suggested as an example.
  - Technology
- Relocation Expenses – legislation requiring landlord to pay for relocation expenses should the property be deemed uninhabitable.  
<https://www.oaklandca.gov/resources/code-compliance-relocation-prog>

# Draft Legislation

- The proposed legislation applies specifically to Article 1759.03, Section A. Owner's Duties; a subsection of Article 1759 "Licensing Residential Rental Units".
  - If changes are being considered, it seems appropriate that the entire Article 1759 be reviewed (A. Owner's Duties; B. Occupant Duties).
  - Withhold detailed comments until a complete draft is prepared



# Items to consider when creating future legislation:

1. How are temporary housing units identified?
  2. How is the determination made that a landlord has been negligent?
  3. Is there an appeal process?
  4. Definitions are needed for illegal conduct, natural disaster, etc.
  5. Criteria for tenant to reject temporary housing.
  6. Housing Court created by Court of Common Pleas, not COA
  7. Solicitor for Landlord/Tenant Issues: North Penn Legal Services
  8. Criteria for list of “Good Landlords and Good Tenants”
    - Fair Housing Act alignment?
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Solicitor's Comments?