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Land Use & Environment Committee

Tenant-Landlord Issues Public Process

Agenda Date: 11/19/2020
Agenda Item Number: 6.C
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Title

Tenant-Landlord Issues Public Process

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Discussion only. No action requested.

City Manager Recommendation:

Discuss the tenant-landlord public involvement next steps.

Report

Issue:

Discussion on next steps for public involvement related to potential tenant-landlord code changes the Committee discussed earlier in 2020.

Staff Contact:

Cary Retlin, Housing Programs Manager, Community Planning and Development, 360.570.3956

Presenter(s):

Cary Retlin, Housing Programs Manager

Background and Analysis:

Prior to the pandemic Land Use and Environment Committee considered several potential code changes adopted in other Washington Cities designed to make rental housing easier to access, maintain and depart - especially for lower income households. This Committee wanted to pursue more public engagement on this topic and directed staff to pause work in May hope of being able to host public meetings again in the fall when public meeting restrictions had lifted.

This conversation will include discussion of ideas for public involvement that are possible with current meeting restrictions, staff resources for public involvement, and get direction from the Committee on next steps for tenant-landlord issues.

Related Emergency Action on Tenant-Landlord Issues

Council approved an emergency ordinance on October 13 that added new protections for Olympia tenants who have fallen behind on rent due to COVID-19 (OMC 5.82). If a landlord files an Unlawful

Detainer action (an eviction) in Thurston County Superior Court, the ordinance is intended to provide qualifying Olympia residents additional defenses if they are unable to pay rent related to COVID-19.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

Thurston Regional Planning Council estimates that 53 percent of Olympia households are renters. Changes to Olympia Municipal Code related to this topic has already received significant interest from renters and rental housing owners and operators within the city and around Thurston County.

Options:

Give staff guidance on how to proceed with public involvement related to tenant protections.

Financial Impact:

Extended community meetings on this topic would require additional staff time and may require support from a consultant.

Attachments:

None.