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Sent: Tuesday, November 18, 2025 7:37 PM
To: Ann Arbor Renter's Commission <RentersCommission@a2gov.org>
Subject: Leasing Ordinance Violations

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Dear Members of the Renters Commission,

I'm reaching out at the suggestion of Councilmember Radina to share some observations from this year's leasing season and to highlight several challenges we're experiencing as a property management company working hard to follow the City's leasing ordinances.

Over the last few years, the City and the Renters Commission have done a tremendous amount of work to strengthen tenant protections, and I fully support the intent of these changes. However, on the ground, we are seeing a significant increase in behavior that appears to directly contradict the ordinance, and it is creating an uneven landscape for both tenants and compliant landlords.

Across multiple Umich parent Facebook groups, there is widespread misinformation being circulated. Prospective tenants continue to routinely tell us that other landlords have allowed the following:

- Signing actual leases far earlier than permitted, with only a deposit collected
- Touring units simply because the current tenants "aren't renewing"
- Requesting payments or advance commitments outside of what the ordinance allows

All of these actions, as written, violate the ordinance. Yet prospective tenants often view these violations as conveniences or advantages, meaning they have no incentive to file complaints, even when the landlord's behavior is clearly non-compliant.

As a result, those of us who are following the ordinance are increasingly at a disadvantage. Prospects question why we "won't" do what other landlords are doing, even when the reason is that we are adhering to the law. This dynamic not only undermines compliant housing providers but also weakens the very protections the ordinance is designed to create.

I spoke with the City this morning and was reminded that violations can be reported, but without an incentive for students to do so, that mechanism alone seems unlikely to produce meaningful enforcement. For this reason, I believe there could be real value in exploring more proactive options, such as secret-shopper style checks or other documentation efforts coordinated through student partners or the Renters Commission.

I want to emphasize that my goal is not to "police" competitors but to help ensure the ordinance is applied fairly and consistently. Without some form of enforcement or verification, those who ignore the rules will continue to benefit, while compliant landlords will continue to face pressure from tenants who are being told something different elsewhere.

I'm happy to discuss any of this further if helpful, and I truly appreciate the work the Commission continues to do to support both renters and ethical housing providers in Ann Arbor. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,

Katie Vohwinkle

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