

RENTERS COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT

CALENDAR YEARS 2023 & 2024

MEMBERSHIP (AS OF JANUARY 2025)

VOTING

Chis Boddy

Kimberly Pitts

Rosanita Ratcliff

Julia Goode

Barbara Wood

Hannah Larcinese

Dandan Chen

Michelle Liao

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

Faith Redwine-Otieno, HHSAB Liaison

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.

COMMISSION ACTIVITY - 2023

- Created a report on Waitlists and Pre-Tenancy Fees that was provided to City Council and staff. This report was used as a resource for the City of Ann Arbor Attorney's Office to draft an ordinance amendment related to waitlists and fees.
- Passed a Resolution in Support of Banning Natural Gas Connections in New Construction and Major Renovations
- Provided valuable feedback to assist with an ordinance update to require carbon monoxide detection in registered rental units.
- Attended the Green Fair to engage with stakeholders and distribute information.
- Requested that City Council pass a resolution supporting the removal of Michigan's ban on rent control.
- Hosted a [listening session at Sculpture Plaza in April 2023](#) to hear from stakeholders.
- Invited representatives from groups such as Rental Housing Services, Avalon Housing, the Human Rights Commission, Planning Services, and the Fair Housing Center of Southeast and Mid-Michigan to educate commissioners and build community relationships.
- Held 22 public meetings.

COMMISSION ACTIVITY - 2024

- Passed a Resolution in Support of Adding Section 8:532 to Chapter 105 (Housing Code) of Title VIII (Building Regulations) of the Code of the City of Ann Arbor (Pre-Tenancy Fee Ordinance)
- Received a presentation from the Fair Housing Center of Southeast and Mid-Michigan
- Provided feedback on staff-created complaint forms and guides for Chapter 105 8:530 and 8:531.
- Distributed finalized complaint forms and guides via email subscribers and Renters Commission webpage.
- Attended the Green Fair to engage with stakeholders and distribute information.
- Received a presentation from OSI regarding the proposed Green Rental Housing Ordinance.
- Received a presentation from Rental Housing Services regarding department updates, code clarifications, and instructions/ Q&A about accessing information and using STREAM.
- Held 16 public meetings.

With leadership and membership changes throughout 2024, the Renters Commission spent a considerable portion of the year learning about how recent changes to Chapter 105 were beginning to impact renters and landlords. They also prioritized discussion with and learning from Rental Housing Services staff.

INITIATIVES IN 2025

- Summer engagement/tabling events.
- Additional Commissioner education sessions from groups such as Rental Housing Services, Planning Services, Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County, and Washtenaw County.
- Advising on amendments to Chapter 105.
- Advising on the Green Rental Housing Ordinance.
- Supporting a City Charter Amendment to improve the efficacy of Rights and Duties of Tenants Booklet
- Collaboration with the Human Rights Commission.

City of Ann Arbor Renters Commission Workplan for 2023 Calendar Year

Initiative	Priority	Topic
Rental Housing Reform and/or Legislation	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 Booklet
Initiative	Priority	Topic
Commissioner Education	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
Stakeholder Education	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

City of Ann Arbor Renters Commission Workplan for 2024 Calendar Year

Initiative	Priority	Topic
Rental Housing Reform and/or Legislation	High	Audit Chapter 105 Section 8:530 and 8:531, and existing enforcement process for efficacy. Propose amendments if necessary. Support enforcement process changes if necessary
	High	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 Booklet
	Medium	Advocate for staffing for enforcement
	Medium	Address junk fee problem
Initiative	Priority	Topic
Commissioner Education	Medium	TC1 zoning proposals
	Low	Green rental housing ordinances (invite OSI)
	Medium	Implementation of Affordable Housing in the City of Ann Arbor
	High	Fair Housing Act Violations in Ann Arbor (make connection with Fair Housing Center)
	Medium	Ordinances aimed at slowing gentrification and displacement in other communities
	Medium	Stakeholder Engagement Meetings (Spring-Summer 2024 when outdoor meetings are possible)
Initiative	Priority	Topic
Stakeholder Education	Medium	Improve tenant accessibility for locating information on open Housing Code Violations
	Medium	Update to Rights and Duties of Tenants Booklet
	Low	Direct people to stream and explain how to use it

City of Ann Arbor Renters Commission Workplan for 2025 Calendar Year

Initiative	Priority	Topic
Rental Housing Reform and/or Legislation	High	Audit Chapter 105 Section 8:530 and 8:531, and existing enforcement process for efficacy. Propose amendments if necessary. Support enforcement process changes if necessary
	High	Advocate for staffing for enforcement, including a resolution to City Council
	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	Support/initiate a landlord/tenant ombudsman program
	Medium	Explore options for the City of Ann Arbor to support a tenant opportunity to purchase/right of first refusal program.
	Medium	Support/initiate a junk fee ordinance.
Initiative	Priority	Topic
Commissioner Education	High	Learn about resources available to senior renters within the city. Determine what resources to focus supporting, if there is a specific area to focus on such as accessibility, affordability, etc.
	High	Collaborate and share information with the Human Rights Commission related to Fair Housing and their other initiatives.
	High	Learn more about rental regulation at the county and city level. Determine who does what, and what process renters should follow.
	Medium	Learn more about the status of tenant union organizing and tenant union rights in the City of Ann Arbor.
	Medium	Ordinances aimed at slowing gentrification and displacement in other communities.
	Medium	Regular communication/updates on housing development including any action related to the TC1 Zoning.
	Medium	Implementation of Affordable Housing in the City of Ann Arbor
	Low	Green rental housing ordinance enforcement process.
Initiative	Priority	Topic
Stakeholder Education	Medium	Improve resources to assist renters with accessing information on STREAM with the goal of helping renters make more informed choices about where they choose to live.
	Medium	Update to Rights and Duties of Tenants Booklet – Pre-Tenancy fee update and distribution.
	Medium	Hold two in-person stakeholder engagement events. (Tabling, info session, etc.)
	Medium	Identify resources for renters related to extreme weather.