

OFFICIALS

William R. Griggs
CITY CLERK

Todd M. Browning
CITY TREASURER

Thomas R. Woodruff
CITY ASSESSOR



MAYOR
Joseph R. Peterson

COUNCIL
Sheri Sutherby Fricke
Daniel E. Galeski
Ted Miciura, Jr.
Leonard T. Sabuda
Donald C. Schultz
Lawrence S. Stec

MARK A. KOWALEWSKI, P.E.
CITY ENGINEER

October 2, 2013

Senate Local Government and Elections Committee Members:

RE: Senate Bill #313

Dear Members:

The City of Wyandotte was incorporated in 1867. Wyandotte is rich in history and is known for its distinctive architecture. After World War II with the return of veterans to Wyandotte, many houses were converted to two and three family homes. Of course, this was before zoning ordinances were permitted by legislation in the 1960's. By the 1980's, Wyandotte had a severe problem with rentals falling into disrepair in our community. We adopted our Rental Ordinance in 1987.

The original Rental Ordinance required inspections every three (3) years. This was modified to five (5) years, then to ten (10) years, then back to the current five (5) years. In Wyandotte, ten (10) years was too long as our Department had to utilize the property Maintenance Codes to seek compliance of rentals that were not maintained. This is difficult to obtain compliance and typically involves the court system. I am sure time frames are different depending on the typical tenant in a particular community. For instance, a time frame of five (5) years may be too long for a community that has a college in their town and has a large turnover of rental properties.

Thus, I oppose legislation that mandates the length of time between inspections.

The City of Wyandotte, currently charges \$180 for inspection of a single family home and \$270 for inspection of a two family home. We utilize three (3) inspectors (Electrical, Plumbing/HVAC/Fire and Building). They are paid \$36.00 each or \$108.00 as a team for an initial inspection and return inspection at a later time to assure that repairs are completed. The balance of the fee of \$72.00 is utilized to administer the rental program.

I routinely conduct Operational Assessments of the Engineering and Building Department. This includes Permit Inspections, Upon Sale/Rental Inspection Program, Grant Programs, Special Assessments, Building Authority, Act 51 (roads), Solid Waste, Sewers, and TIFA/DDA. Each employee posts their time towards their work activities in the function they are working.

Senate Local Government and
Elections Committee Members

October 2, 2013
Page 2

RE: Senate Bill #313

Therefore, fees or revenue are adjusted based on the expenses incurred in that activity. For instance, when building construction slows down, cities may have to lay-off inspectors because expenses would exceed revenue as permit inspection revenue is reduced. Wyandotte has not raised fees for rental inspections since 2005. Setting a fee not to exceed \$40 is ridiculous. The inspectors alone in Wyandotte are paid \$108.00.

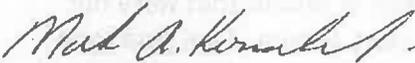
Thus, I oppose Legislation that mandates a maximum rental fee.

In conclusion, Wyandotte has had a Rental Inspection Program for twenty-six (26) years. We have experience with the time period between inspections as three (3) years, five (5) years and 10 years and found that five (5) years is best in our Community. Although, Wyandotte has settled on five (5) years between inspections in our community, regulating this time period is not recommended. Also, a Rental Inspection Program is no different than the magnitude of programs a City offers and regulating fees is not necessary.

I have worked for the City of Wyandotte since 1984 and as the City Engineer for Wyandotte since 1987. I have seen how the adoption of a Rental Ordinance in Wyandotte has improved the quality of life for all residents and created a vibrant community by providing safe, affordable housing. I am sorry I could not attend your hearing, but based on my experience since the adoption of Wyandotte's Rental Inspection Program Senate Bill #313 is not recommended.

Thank you for your consideration in the matter.

Very truly yours,



Mark A. Kowalewski
City Engineer

MAK:kr