

ALOC NEWS

www.cumberlandlandlords.com

June 11, 2007

Associated Landlords of the Cumberland Area
ALOC Phone (301) 759-0530 P.O. Box 1867

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Cumberland Housing Code Changes

The proposed changes to the Cumberland Housing Code that we have worked on for the last couple of years were finally introduced at a Mayor and City Council meeting in late May.

From the newspaper reports and conversations that I have had with the Mayor and City Council I do not believe that their will be any impediments to its speedy passage. According to City Administrator, Jeff Repp, it will likely be passed sometime in July with it taking effect on January 1, 2008.

One of the big changes will be the elimination of inspections by City personnel at each turnover. Instead a self inspection form that will require signing by the Landlord and Tenant will be used and kept on file by the Landlord in case any problems or questions arise in the future. This will work in a similar manner to the paperwork required by the MDE such as the document receipt for Lead Booklets.

As part of the change the City will be offering free training at various times throughout the year. It is planned to be optional for landlords, however it will probably be required for landlords who have numerous violations or revocations of their rental licenses. This will not be a comprehensive course on all aspects of being a Landlord and will instead just concentrate on the City Code, basic lead paint guidelines and basic Maryland Landlord Tenant law.

Once the revised code is accepted we will update the membership on the exact changes via newsletter as well as at our next meeting which will be September 10th.

New Members Needed

Every year ALOC as well as other Landlord Associations across the state find themselves with fewer members as real estate changes hands and older members sell out and retire. The general result is a gradual decrease in membership which makes it difficult to cover the cost of running an association like ALOC. We need your help to keep our membership number at a reasonable level and there are a couple of things you can do. When meeting or talking with other landlords please recommend that they join ALOC and if you sell any rental units please take the time to tell your buyer about our association. We have a 24 hour number that can be used to pass along the names and addresses of prospective members so that we can mail an application package to them, please use it!

If you wish you can give any prospective Landlord my direct contact information I will be glad to talk with them. My contact numbers are as follows:

Jeff Hutter home 301-777-0379

work 301-777-2693 ext. 187

email jeff.hutter@twrcommunications.com

Water Dept. at the May Meeting

We had a nice little group at our May meeting and Bob Rider from the Cumberland Water Dept. brought us up to date on the sweeping changes about to occur with the Water Dept. Bob was unable to provide us with any firm schedules for the changes.

As we have mentioned in the past Cumberland will be connecting its water meters wirelessly so that meter readers will not be necessary and billing will probably change to monthly. While there are no plans to relieve the property owner of the ultimate responsibility for the water bills having a monthly bill will be easier to handle for most tenants versus a quarterly bill.

There is also the possibility that property owners will be able to monitor the water usage on each of their meter through the Internet, but Bob was uncertain as to when this would be available.

Crews from both the Water Dept. and the contractor providing the new meters recently started the installation process and it should be finished by 2008. Obviously this is a big job and will not be without its complexities and problems.

Landlord Training

I have spoken with a number of our members and there appears to be some interest in ALOC sponsoring Landlord Training in 2007. We ran some course in 2006 through ALOC and at Allegany College of Maryland which were well attended.

The cost of the ALOC courses which ran on two separate Saturdays was \$ 15.00 for the basic course which was the first Saturday or \$ 25.00 for both days. These sessions lasted approximately 4 -5 hours each day and I think the one complaint we had last year was that one of the Saturdays was over the Memorial Day weekend and there could have been more time for questions. We can plan for this in 2007 training sessions.

Courses could be scheduled in August or September. Later months in the year get more difficult because of scheduling conflicts.

It also possible for me to conduct training on a more personal one to one level and you can contact me for details.

If the membership is interested in pursuing training in 2007 please give me a call, email or leave a message with our 24 hour number.

Property Owners Association of Maryland, Inc. (POAM) and etc.

The POAMD recently met in Baltimore; however I was unable to attend. The purpose of the meeting was to go over the recent legislative session in Annapolis. I suspect we will be meeting again later in the summer or early fall as we need to plan for more insanity from the Lead Paint Gang!!

Our State President Alfred Singer recently forwarded me information about the Rhode Island lead paint lawsuits and you may find the details interesting. For many years we Landlords have cried foul being held responsible for the lead poisoning problems when the real culprits are the paint manufacturers. Even worse is the fact that the government knew about the hazards of lead paint for years and waited until 1978 to outlaw its use. Europe and most of the world stopped using lead paint many, many years ago and as such has not experienced the level of poisoning that we have seen in the US.

Rhode Island is moving forward with its theory of public nuisance and other states are joining in the fray! California and Missouri gave it a try but have suffered temporary setbacks. Wisconsin on the other hand is next to test the waters as their legal battle moves forward as is Ohio and New Jersey.

A number of novel legal strategies are the common threads involved with all of these lawsuits. Obviously the first is the argument that the use of lead in paint constitutes a public nuisance and secondly that all of the lead paint manufacturers should be penalized based on their market share. Essentially the paint manufacturer with the biggest market share would have the largest penalties without consideration for any actual lead poisoning case attributed to them or lack of such claims. This would be similar to the tobacco lawsuits some years back. Many states have been reluctant to pass legislation that allows for market share liability as it eliminates fault of any kind. As a defendant you are denied the ability to prove what did not happen. It takes away any and all defenses if you can't argue that it wasn't your lead paint on the wall in the plaintiff's house.

Regardless most of us believe that Landlords alone should not have to bear this burden! We will keep you posted

Leases and other Documents

ALOC has available leases, rental applications and tenant checklists for sale, at cost, to members. The cost for each item is as follows:

Large print regular or HUD Lease @ \$ 1.70 - Rental Application @ \$ 0.50 - Move in Checklist @ \$ 0.50

Lead Paint Brochures, both EPA & Maryland and document receipt@ \$3.50 for the set - Document Receipt for MDE & EPA brochures (disclosure) @ \$ 0.25

These forms are kept at Jeff Hutter's office, TWR Comm. at 549 N. Centre Street. Any paid member can stop by and pick up whatever they need. If you need more than 5 of each item please call at least 24 hours in advance so that we can make sure we have plenty on hand. Call 777-2692 ext 115 Monday through Friday and you can talk to Pam, Kathy, Stephanie or Gary.

TWR has limited Saturday hours from 9am-1pm most Saturdays (closed some Holiday weekends)

Please note: We do not keep MDE or City Housing registration forms on hand.

Thought for the month

True friends are those who really know you
but love you anyway!

Edna Buchanan

Carey Walker

Lead Inspections for Rental Housing
Visual Inspections and Dust Wipes
201 Massachusetts Ave.
Cumberland, MD 21502
301-722-8328

3-07

Meeting Schedule

September 10, 2007 J. Je

November 12, 2007

February 11, 2008

May 12, 2008

Meetings are held at the
South Cumberland Library
on Race and Seymour St.
at 6:30 PM

ALOC Officers

Jeffrey Hutter President
301-777-0379 (home)

Carey Walker V. President

Jeffrey Hutter Treasurer

Board of Directors

Clarence Anderson
Steve Jenkins
Bob Saville

TWR Communications 301-777-2692 9-30-07

TWR supplies quality high speed Internet Access, both dialup and Wireless in the Tri-state area. TWR provides other computer services including training, computer repairs, networking and website hosting. If you have need of storage space check out our self-storage facilities on Necessity St.

TWR is an agent for Cellular One, operates a wide area network with wide area paging and mobile 2-way radio. Check us out at twr@hereintown.net

National Tenant Network

Brian D. Haymaker
President

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