

CHAPTER 98
RENTAL HOUSING COMMISSION

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CHAPTER 98
RENTAL HOUSING COMMISSION

[HISTORY: Adopted as Ordinance #95-03 by the Durham Town Council on June 5, 1995 establishing a Rental Housing Commission. All amendments included at time of adoption of Code].

Article I
GENERAL PROVISIONS

98-1. Purpose and Intent.

- A. Issues associated with rental housing in the Town of Durham have been a matter of long standing concern to the Town, its government, and its residents;
- B. The Durham Town Council seeks, as a matter of public policy, to treat this issue comprehensively and in a cooperative fashion with all interested parties;
- C. The Durham Town Council finds that establishment of a Town of Durham rental housing commission will facilitate and further that public policy objective.

98-2. Establishment.

There is hereby established the Town of Durham Rental Housing Commission.

98-3. Composition.

The Town of Durham Rental Housing Commission shall consist of nine members and be composed in the following manner:

- A. Two members shall be appointed by the Durham Town Council;
- B. Two members shall be appointed by the Durham Landlords' Association. These members shall be owners of rental property in the Town of Durham.
- C. Two members shall be appointed by the University of New Hampshire.
- D. The Durham Town Council shall appoint one member to represent the interests of tenants.
- E. A student organization on the campus of the University of New Hampshire which shall be designated jointly by the Durham Landlords' Association and the Town Council shall appoint an additional member to be representative of the interests of tenants.
- F. A member shall be selected by the Town Council who shall act as liaison between the Town of Durham Rental Commission and the Durham Town Council.

98-4. Organization.

The Commission is charged with organizing itself and with adopting bylaws and rules of organization. The Chair of the Town of Durham Rental Housing Commission will be selected by simple majority vote of the duly constituted Commission at its first meeting. The Chair shall serve until a successor is chosen pursuant to the rules established by the Town of Durham Rental Housing Commission.

98-5. Duties.

The Town of Durham Rental Housing Commission is charged generally with addressing and resolving on a continuing basis public policy issues associated with rental housing. The Commission shall facilitate enforcement of Town ordinances regarding rental housing and foster positive communication between all constituent groups represented on the Commission.

- A. Minimum Duties. In discharging their duties, the Town of Durham Rental Housing Commission shall, at a minimum, do the following:
1. The Commission shall meet at least twice a year.
 2. The Commission will request members of the Durham Landlords Association to distribute copies of summaries of all relevant ordinances and other information relevant to rental housing in Durham and will take all steps reasonably required to see that this information is distributed in a manner that is reasonably calculated to reach all tenants in each unit of property.
 3. The Commission will meet regularly and will accept complaints from any party in the Town regarding violations of laws or codes.
 4. The Commission will refer these complaints without evaluation or comment to the appropriate town enforcement agents or other appropriate enforcement entities.
 5. The Commission will create a model lease satisfying the requirements and limitations set forth in the law of New Hampshire governing landlord/tenant relations.
 6. The Commission will report to appropriate University of New Hampshire authorities, on the basis of complaints received by the Commission, regarding conduct by fraternities and sororities.
 7. The Commission will publish a report, directed to the Town Council, with copies to the University and all other interested parties identified by the Commission, on a semi-annual basis, reporting on its progress and activities.

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8. The Commission will assist in contacting and gaining the cooperation of all existing and future landlords not now members of the Durham Landlord s Association.
 9. The Commission will recommend an advisory protocol regarding the release of names of tenants to public safety officials in emergency situations.
 10. The Commission will develop an information packet which will be distributed to all current and future owners of rental property. This information packet will outline pertinent town ordinances, the goals, history and procedures of the Commission, information regarding the Durham Landlords' Association, and invite participation in the Commission and the Durham Landlords Association. The Commission will distribute the information packet to all existing rental property owners and to future rental property owners as they become known through transfer of property or conversion of use.
- B. The Town of Durham Rental Housing Commission may exercise other duties to further the general charge it has been granted provided, however, that the Town of Durham Rental Housing Commission may not exercise any legislative or enforcement authority on behalf of the Town of Durham or otherwise. The Town of Durham specifically reserves all authority it enjoys to act in connection with rental housing.

