

September 2006

Dear Rental Property Owner:

The Rental Housing Commission (RHC) was established in 1995 as a source of communication and cooperation among the Town of Durham, the University of New Hampshire, the Durham Landlord's Association, and owners of rental property. The Commission originally consisted of nine members with representatives from the above stated entities. In 2005, one of the appointees of the Durham Town Council was named as a "Neighborhood Representative". That position is occupied by an individual who resides in a neighborhood that is or that has been impacted by a rental property in a strictly residential area.

The RHC is charged with addressing and resolving, on a continual basis, public policy issues that involve Town, UNH, and Citizens associated with rental housing, its tenants and property owners.

Meetings are public and held quarterly in the Town Council Chambers. Special meetings can be accommodated if a situation arises that needs the RHC involvement. Contact names are listed below if you wish to speak to a member of the RHC.

If you are a new owner of rental property, or thinking of buying rental property in Durham, The Durham Landlord Association (DLA) is a good resource for property owners. In recent years, the DLA has strengthened itself and created a forum for rental property owners to discuss industry standards and expectations. The DLA is a dues paying association with monthly Board meetings and quarterly general membership meetings. Contact information is listed below for meeting schedules, dues, and general information.

Contained within this booklet is the Rental Housing Commission ordinance, information pertaining to the Durham Landlord Association, local Zoning and Code Enforcement Policies and Ordinances, and a section from UNH detailing its policies and procedures as they pertain to Off-Campus Housing and University Students as residents of the Durham community.

If you have any questions about the information provided, or you would like additional information, you may contact the following organizations or departments at any time.

Rental Housing Commission:	868-5738
Durham Landlord Association:	868-3207
Code Enforcement/Zoning:	868-8064
Police Department:	868-2324
Fire Department:	868-5531
Public Works Department:	868-5578

Thank you for your desire to work cooperatively with the Rental Housing Commission toward fostering positive communication among all constituent groups for the betterment of the Durham community.

Sincerely,



Mark Henderson
Chairperson, Rental Housing Commission

Dear Rental Property Owner:

Those of us who live in family-based neighborhoods welcome students who come to live in and share our neighborhoods and neighborhood values. A property owner renting to students has the responsibility to be certain that students renting from you understand the meaning of living in a family-based neighborhood. Remember, too, that you as property owner are ultimately responsible for the behavior of your renters.

Most major problem situations develop when property owners elect to rent their entire house to students. Without the homeowner present, renters frequently do not follow the regulations that appear in this manual. For example, a frequent violation is that the three unrelated persons rule is violated, which often leads to a number of other problems.

Parking and noise levels frequently become issues and conflicts between permanent residents and student renters. It is the responsibility of the property owner - including absentee landlords - to enforce the regulations and guidelines.

Neighborhoods are places where residents choose to live to enjoy the comfort and safety of their surroundings. Personal exchange and cooperation between neighbors is a high priority. Residents in Durham family neighborhoods work together to create an environment where there is a high level of safety for children from traffic and where the environment is aesthetically pleasing by caring for lawns, driveways, structures and all immediate surroundings. Residents respect neighbors rights to a peaceful and "normal" schedule of hours and noise and activities. It is the responsibility of the property owner - including absentee landlords - to ensure that all renters help create this environment.

Residents of family-based neighborhoods, seek assurances from those who rent to students, that property owners will make every effort to inform students about neighborhood concerns and that they (property owners) accept responsibility for the actions of their tenants, if those actions impact negatively on the neighborhood.

Thus, it is expected that homeowners renting to students will be vigilant about their renters following the rules and understanding the values of neighborhood living. Students must understand that it is not a right, but a privilege to live in a neighborhood in Durham. They must understand that the neighborhood they live in is not an extension of a fraternity house or the University dormitory system. It is a very different experience. It means living as a responsible adult among families with young children and teenagers, elderly folks.

We believe that it is possible for neighborhoods to be greatly enriched by students who choose to live in them if students living in a neighborhood accept that they are part of the fabric of that neighborhood, even though it may only be for a year or two, and if landlords accept the responsibility for the behavior of student renters.