

BOROUGH OF GRATZ

COUNTY OF DAUPHIN IN THE
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

Ordinance No. 031324 ~~2023~~

AN ORDINANCE OF GRATZ BOROUGH, DAUPHIN COUNTY, COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, ESTABLISHING REGULATIONS, LICENSING, AND INSPECTIONS FOR RENTAL PROPERTY IN THE BOROUGH; REQUIRING AN OWNER OF RENTAL PROPERTY IN THE BOROUGH TO APPLY FOR A RENTAL OCCUPANCY PERMIT; RESTRICTING THE TRANSFER OF RENTAL OCCUPANCY PERMITS; PROVIDING FOR THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE ORDINANCE; RESERVING THE RIGHTS AND ENFORCEABILITY OF ALL OTHER ORDINANCES AND REGULATIONS; CONFIRMING THAT THE BOROUGH IS NOT ISSUING A WARRANTY WITH RESPECT TO RENTAL PROPERTY; AND ESTABLISHING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS.

WHEREAS, the purpose of this Regulation and the policy of the Borough of GRATZ shall be to protect and promote the public health, safety and welfare of its citizens, to establish rights and obligations of Owners relating to Residential Rental Units in the Borough and to encourage Owners to maintain and improve the quality of rental housing within the Borough. This Regulation provides for a systematic inspection program, registration and licensing of Residential Rental Units, and penalties.

AND NOW, pursuant to the power conferred on GRATZ Borough by Sections 1202 (15) and 1203 of the Borough Code, 8 Pa. C.S. §§1202(15), 1203, the Borough Council of GRATZ Borough hereby ordains the following:

Section 1. Definitions.

The following terms shall have the following meanings in this Ordinance unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

“Agent” – a natural person retained by the Owner to be responsible for one or more Rental Units within the Borough.

“Borough” – the Borough of GRATZ, DAUPHIN County, Pennsylvania.

“Codes” - any state, federal, county or local statute, regulation or ordinance adopted, enacted or in effect in and for the Borough including but not limited to, the Property Maintenance Code, the Quality of Life Ordinance, the Building Code, and the Zoning Ordinance for DAUPHIN County.

“Code Enforcement Officer” – the person or other legal entity appointed by GRATZ Borough Council as its code enforcement officer or as its assistant code enforcement officer.

“Owner” – any person or other legal entity having a legal or equitable interest in a parcel of real property; or any person or other legal entity holding title to a parcel of real property as recorded in the official records of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or DAUPHIN County; or any person or legal entity having control over a parcel of real property, including the guardian of the estate of a person, or the executor or administrator of the estate of a person. If more than one person or other legal entity owns the Rental Unit as joint tenants, tenants in common, tenants by the entirety, or tenants in co-partnership, each such person or legal entity shall be considered an Owner and shall have all of the duties and responsibility of an Owner under this Regulation.

“Natural Person” – a person that is an individual human being, as opposed to a legal person, which may be a private or public organization or entity such as but not limited to an association, partnership, limited liability company, fictitious name or corporation.

“Rental Occupancy Permit” – a document issued by the Borough Secretary to the Owner of a Rental Unit.

“Rental Unit” – each Structure or separately secured portion thereof offered by the Owner of the real property or a lease or leasehold on which such Structure stands to a person or persons who is/are not the Owner thereof for residential purposes in return for the payment of rent or some other consideration. The term does not include a tenancy which lasts for less than thirty (30) days.

“Structure” – the building located on a parcel of real property in which a tenant will reside, or in which a tenant will reside in a separately secured portion thereof.

Section 2. Application

- A. The Owner of each Rental Unit in the borough, within thirty (30) days after the effective date of this Ordinance, or, in case of a Rental Unit thereafter acquired or determined, within thirty (30) days after the acquisition or availability for rental thereof, shall apply to the Borough Secretary, on a form approved by the Borough from time to time by Resolution, for a Rental Occupancy Permit. On the Application form, in addition to all other information requested, the Owner shall list the names of all prospective tenants at the time of such Application. This Application shall be supplemented with the names of tenants if such names were not available at the time of the Application, but become available thereafter.
- B. The Owner of each Rental Unit in the Borough having obtained a Rental Occupancy Permit following application pursuant to Section 2A, shall submit a new Application with the Borough Secretary within (30) days following the expiration of the Rental Occupancy Permit.
- C. Any change in the occupancy (such as a previously rented Rental Unit becoming vacant) of the Rental Unit, or in the identity of the tenants thereof from that stated on the Application required by Section 2A or Section 2B, shall be reported by the Owner of the Rental Unit to the Borough Secretary, in writing, within ten (10) days after such change.

- D. Any Owner of a Rental Unit who is not a natural person shall name an Agent, who shall be a natural person, with an address and phone number, on the Application required by Section 2A or 2B, who may be contacted by the Borough to deal with issues pertaining to the Rental Unit, and who may be subject to being cited for any violations of this Ordinance. Any such Agent shall sign the Application form and thereby acknowledge his/her legal obligations under this Ordinance.
- E. The Borough may charge an Application fee, which shall be determined from time to time by Resolution, which must be paid in order for the Application to be considered complete.
- F. Utilities- No Rental Occupancy Permit will be issued if there are any delinquent property taxes or assessments, water & sewer utilities on the Residential Rental Unit or any other Residential Rental Unit in which the same Owner has an interest.
- G. Each Owner who is not an Owner-occupant, or who does not reside in the Borough of GRATZ or within a twenty (20) mile air radius of the Borough limits, shall appoint an Agent, who shall reside in the Borough or within a twenty (20) mile air radius of the Borough limits. No Rental Occupancy Permit shall be issued to any Owner residing more than twenty (20) miles from the municipal limits of the Borough unless the Owner provides the Borough Secretary with the name, mailing address and telephone number of the Agent residing within the twenty-mile radius, authorized to accept service of process on behalf of the Owner. For the purpose of this subsection, a post office box is not acceptable for the Agent's address.
- H. If the Owner has appointed an Agent, the Agent shall be jointly responsible to fulfill all of the obligations set forth in this Ordinance. No Owner may relieve himself of the responsibility to perform the duties set forth in this Ordinance by appointing an Agent.

Section 3. Inspections and Permit.

- A. The Owner of each Rental Unit shall allow an inspection of the Rental Unit and the Structure in which it is located to occur within thirty (30) days of the date of the Owner either applied for a Rental Occupancy Permit under Section 2 of this Ordinance or should have applied under Section 2 of this Ordinance. The inspection shall be conducted by the Code Enforcement Officer or other designee of the Borough, and the purpose of the inspection shall be to insure compliance with the building and property maintenance codes of the Borough and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
- B. If the Code Enforcement Officer or other designee of the Borough determines that the Rental Unit and the Structure in which it is located are in compliance with all applicable codes, the Officer/designee shall issue a Rental Occupancy Permit to the Owner. The Rental Occupancy Permit will be valid for a period of two (2) years from the date of issuance. The Rental Occupancy Permit shall be on a form established by the Borough

- from time to time by Resolution.
- C. If the Code Enforcement Officer or other designee of the Borough determines that the Rental Unit or the Structure in which it is located is not in compliance with all applicable codes and/or this Ordinance, the Officer/designee shall issue a Certificate of Non-Compliance to the Owner. The Certificate of Non-Compliance can be on a form determined by the Officer/designee, but shall be in writing, contain the words Certificate of Non-Compliance and a reference to this Ordinance, state the condition or conditions which are in violation of an applicable code, state the code which is being violated, and give the Owner a reasonable number of days to cure the condition(s). The Code Enforcement Officer or other designee of the Borough may declare any violations to constitute an emergency condition and require immediate action to mitigate the danger if the violations are of a serious enough character to constitute a danger to the public health.
 - D. If a Certificate of Non-Compliance has been issued, the Owner shall make the Rental Unit and the Structure in which it is located available for an inspection within thirty (30) days of a request by the Code Enforcement Officer or other designee of the Borough after the expiration of the days given the Owner to cure the condition(s) on any Certificate of Non-Compliance issued pursuant to Section 3C. After the inspection mandated by this subsection, the Officer/designee shall either issue a Rental Occupancy Permit pursuant Section 3B or a Certificate of Non-Compliance pursuant to Section 3C. If the latter, the procedure of this subsection repeats itself until the violations are cured or the Owner removes the Rental Unit from consideration for lease.
 - E. Following the expiration of the Rental Occupancy Permit after two (2) years, the Owner shall follow the procedures of Section 2B of this Ordinance and allow an inspection of the Rental Unit and the Structure in which it is located to occur within thirty (30) days of a request by the Code Enforcement Officer or other designee of the Borough. The procedures of Section 3A through 3D are thereafter repeated.
 - F. A fee schedule for charges due to the Borough by the Owner for the inspections required by this Section can be adopted from time to time by Resolution. Any fee charged for an inspection shall apply not only to the inspection pursuant to Section 3A, but also to any follow-up inspection pursuant to Section 3D, and also to any inspection (s) pursuant to Section 3E.
 - G. The Code Enforcement Officer shall deny and may revoke any Rental Occupancy Permit if the Owner fails to comply with this Ordinance or fails to cure any conditions of non-compliance at such time as all tenants must vacate the Rental Unit.

Section 4. Application and Rental Occupancy Permit Required.

- A. No Owner shall lease or rent a Unit to a tenant without having filed an Application with the Borough pursuant to Section 2 of this Ordinance and having received a valid, current Rental Occupancy Permit.

- B. No Owner shall lease or rent a Rental Unit to a tenant without allowing an inspection of the Rental Unit and the Structure in which it is located and obtaining a valid Rental Occupancy Permit issued pursuant to Section 3 of this Ordinance.
- C. In order to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the Borough, it is hereby declared that the Borough shall require hazard and general liability insurance for all property owners renting property for occupancy in the Borough.
 - a. Minimum coverage; use of insurance proceeds. All Owners shall be required to obtain a minimum of one hundred thousand (\$100,000.00) dollars in general liability insurance, and hazard and casualty insurance in an amount sufficient to either restore or remove the building in the event of a fire or other casualty. Further, the event of any fire or loss covered by such insurance, it shall be the obligation of the Owner to use such insurance proceeds to cause the restoration or demolition or other repair of the property in adherence to the Borough Code and all applicable ordinances.
 - b. Property owners to provide Borough with insurance information. Owners shall be required to place their insurance company name, policy number and policy expiration date on their Rental Property Registration form, to provide the Office with a copy of a certificate of insurance. A Rental Occupancy Permit shall not be issued to any Owner or agent unless the aforementioned information has been provided to the Office. The Office shall be informed of any change in policies for a particular rental property and Rental Unit within thirty (30) days of said change or cancellation.

Section 5. Change in Ownership

A Rental Occupancy Permit shall not be transferred. In the case of Rental Units that are sold or transferred, the new Owner shall secure a Rental Occupancy Permit for each Rental Unit consistent with Section 2. Failure to a Rental Occupancy Permit within thirty (30) days of the date of sale or transfer of ownership shall result in the revocation of the Rental Occupancy Permit. If the Owner of any Rental Unit who holds a Rental Occupancy Permit from the Borough transfers legal title of the Rental Unit to another person or legal entity prior to the expiration of the Rental Occupancy Permit, said Owner/transferor shall notify the Borough Secretary, in writing, of the transfer within five (5) business days following the transfer. Said notice shall include the name and contact information of the transferee.

Section 6. Enforcement

This Ordinance may be enforced by, and citations for violations of this Ordinance may be filed by any police officer employed by the Borough, by the Mayor, Fire Chief, or by the person or legal entity appointed by the Borough as its Code Enforcement Officer.

Section 7. Simultaneous Enforcement

Nothing in this Section shall preclude a Code Enforcement Officer or other designee of the Borough from, simultaneously with enforcing this Ordinance, issuing against the Owner a notice of violation, citation or any other document to enforce an applicable building or property maintenance code of the Borough or the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Section 8. Non-warranty

The issuance of a Rental Occupancy Permit is not a representation by the Borough that the Rental Unit and/or the Structure in which it is located is in compliance with all building or property maintenance codes of the Borough or the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. No tenant, prospective tenant or any other person should view this Ordinance, or any Rental Occupancy Permit issued pursuant to this Ordinance, as a warranty or representation by the Borough that the Rental Unit or the Structure in which it is located is free from any or all dangers, whether known, unknown, obvious or hidden. Borough is not making any warranty or representation to any person that the Rental Unit or the Structure in which it is located is safe or habitable. By this Ordinance, the Borough is not assuming any liability not otherwise imposed upon it by law.

Section 9. Penalties

- A. Any person violating any provision of this Ordinance is subject to prosecution by action brought before a Magisterial District Judge in the same manner provided for the enforcement of summary offenses under the Pennsylvania Rules of Criminal Procedure. Any person found in violation of any provision of this Ordinance shall pay a fine of not less than \$100.00 nor more than \$1,000.00, plus court costs, and/or may be imprisoned either for a violation of any provision of this Ordinance or for failure to pay a fine or costs for a term not to exceed ninety (90) days.
- B. A separate offense shall arise for each day or portion thereof in which a violation of any provision of this Ordinance exists.
- C. The Borough may enforce this Ordinance through an action in equity.

Section 10. Severability

If any section, part, sentence, clause or portion of this Ordinance is found by a court of competent jurisdiction to be illegal or unenforceable, the rest and remainder of this Ordinance shall be given full force and effect as if adopted by the Borough without the section, part, sentence, clause or portion found illegal or unenforceable.

Section 11. Repealer

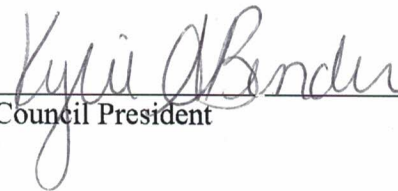
All prior Borough Ordinances or portions thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent necessary to give effect to this Ordinance.

Section 12. Effective Date

This Ordinance shall be effective immediately upon enactment or on the first day allowed by law thereafter, whichever comes first.

ENACTED and ORDAINED, this 13th day of March, ~~2023~~ ²⁰²⁴


BOROUGH OF GRATZ
DAUPHIN County, Pennsylvania

BY: 
Council President

ATTEST:



APPROVED:


Mayor