



City of Freeport, Illinois

Freeport Police Department

320 West Exchange Street
Freeport, Illinois 61032

Phone (815) 235-8222 Facsimile (815) 235-8235

TODD BARKALOW
Chief of Police

11 August 2014

TO: Honorable James Gitz, Mayor

FR: Michael Lehmann
Rental Property Registration Police Liaison

RE: Rental Property Registration

As the Rental Property Registration Police Department Liaison I am charged with communicating with the landlords and their property managers whenever there has been police activity on their properties. I use the database that is compiled and maintained by the Community Development Department during the property registration for identifying the owners and their contact information. The purpose of this communication is to provide the information to the owners so they can better manage their rentals.

Rental Property Registration Ordinance provisions

- **The Rental Property Registration Ordinance does not require any action on the owners' or managers' part as a result of receiving the information.** What they do with the information is largely up to them.
- **The Ordinance requires that all leases be in written form.** Enforcement of this provision is through a citation for a business violation and subsequent administrative hearing.
- **The Ordinance requires the Crime Free Addendum be made a part of the lease.** While the Addendum provides additional tools for a landlord to manage a rented property, it does not place any obligation on the landlord to enforce its provisions.
- **In other words other than the obligation to register, participation in the Crime Free Program is strictly voluntary.**

Positive Feedback from Owners & Managers

- Owners & Managers appreciate knowing what is going on with their renters and property.
- I have received written communications from seven (7) of the owners and managers expressing thanks and even accolades for the program
- I have had two (2) owners and managers express their concern that receiving a letter from me was some sort of "black mark" on their "record". But, after conversations with them I believe they now understand the positive nature of the notices. And, one of those landlords expressed his approval of the program.

Of course, while the notices sent are for the owners' and managers' information, I do monitor the frequency and severity of the calls for police service to any particular property. And, when the level of calls indicates an ongoing problem I reach out to the landlord to see what they are doing to correct any problems and offer my assistance where appropriate. Again, I have generally received a high level of cooperation from the landlords. My experience so far is that when I contact a landlord with a concern over calls for police service, the landlord has already identified other problems with the same renter.

Owners & Managers Experiences

- **To date I am aware of five (5) different renters who have been evicted from registered properties by their owners and managers.** Each of these five renters presented a nuisance to the neighborhoods they lived in and to the police department for the frequency of calls for service. And, the information on calls for police service combined with the other problems they presented to their owners and managers led to their evictions.
- **I am aware of one instance where a registered sex offender was living at an unauthorized address.** After receiving a notice from the police department the landlord of that property issued a barring notice to the sex offender.
- **There have been three (3) instances where notification to property owners was the first time the owner was aware that there had been damages or thefts at the property.**
- **In one instance where a landlord asked that I visit a property to assess an ongoing trespass problem to look for solutions.** I was able to make several suggestions to solve the problem.

- **In another instance, notices to the owner of a vacant property about ongoing trespass, drug use, and gang activity resulted in the boarding up of the house and a trespass agreement with the police department.** After several arrests to enforce the trespass agreement there have been no calls for service at that property.
- **Currently, I am in contact with an out-of-town landlord regarding a property where calls for service indicate the residence is being used as a gang hang-out.** That particular individual said that he is not a professional landlord. He said that he does not have a written lease for the two (2) properties he owns. He expressed that he is willing to evict the renter but does not know how to proceed. I am following up to assist him with getting a written lease to include the Crime Free Addendum.
- **Currently, I am tracking two (2) other properties where calls for service indicate ongoing problems.** And, there are new ones every week.
- **Since inception I have sent about 370 notices to owners and managers regarding calls for police service or other police actions, through letters or email.** The first communications went out on April 21.
- The notices provide information on everything from barking dogs and loud music to shots fired and home invasions.
- However no notices are sent for calls that involve domestic violence, mental or physical health issues, sexual assaults, or criminal activity where the information could compromise an ongoing investigation.
- Also, information is limited in cases involving juvenile victims and offenders.

Additional Tools Needed

- **Owner and Manager licensing/ certification.** As noted above participation in the Crime Free Program is voluntary. Licensing can carry the requirement for :
- **Landlord Seminar participation**
- **Industry best practices standards**
- **Accountability for payment of fees and fines**

Rental Property Registration

Program Analysis:

Since Inception

Revenue

\$ 51,410.25

Expenses:

Personnel:

Part-time Employee Police	\$ 21,577.72	
Part-time Employee Community Development	19,562.84	
Benefits: City Match FICA and Unemployment	4,443.19	
Background Checks	268.00	
Drug Tests	244.00	
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Total Personnel:		46,095.75

Contractual Services:

Printing	3,220.42	
Professional Services	2,335.00	
Annual software maintenance agreement	1,595.00	
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Total Contractual Services:		7,150.42

Supplies:

Office Supplies	63.00	
Conference, Hotel and meals	815.00	
Security Certificate	99.00	
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Total Supplies		977.00

Capital Outlay:

Equipment	2,812.56	
Software	9,144.25	
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Total Capital Outlay		11,956.81

Total Expenditures		<u>66,179.98</u>
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Net Expenditures over Revenue:		<u><u>\$ (14,769.73)</u></u>
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