

City of Columbia

701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201



Agenda Item Number: B 240-14

Department Source: Community Development - NS

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: August 4, 2014

Re: Rental Fee Increases - FY15 Budget

Documents Included With This Agenda Item

Council memo, Ordinance

Supporting documentation includes: Correspondence from Public, Comparisons with Peer Cities

Executive Summary

This ordinance increases rental fees in an effort to recover all costs associated with enforcement of the City's Rental Unit Conservation Law. The increase will also allow the hiring of an additional Code Enforcement Specialist to conduct inspections in a more timely manner.

Discussion

Rental fees are being increased for all fees associated with enforcement of the Rental Unit Conservation Law in the following manner: Application fee: \$35 to \$60 per building; Inspection fee: \$15 to \$26 per unit; Renewal without inspection: \$25 to \$43 per building; Failure to meet inspector: \$20 to \$34 per incident and Reinspection \$25 to \$43 per unit.

Neighborhood Services requested public input on these increases and communicated with rental property owners and managers as well as the Columbia Apartment Association. A comment box was placed at the third floor service center and comments were received online. A total of 81 comments were received with nearly all opposing this based on the significant percent increase, that the increase will be passed on to tenants, and lack of a need to add to our current inspection staff.

Some comments suggest increasing the inspection cycle to reduce the number of inspections conducted. Most rental units in Columbia go six years between inspections; staff does not support exploring an increase in this cycle.

The City of Columbia's fees are currently lower than that of many cities that inspect rental property. A summary of those fees compared to other cities is attached.

Staff is also requesting that the Rental Unit Conservation Law be amended to allow for past due fees to be referred to a collection agency after 60 days. In FY13, the City had more than \$3,500 in unpaid rental reinspection and fail to meet inspector fees. This change was not included in the request for public input.

Fiscal Impact

City of Columbia

701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201



Short-Term Impact: The proposed fee increases aim to recover 100% of the City's expenses toward enforcement of the Rental Unit Conservation Law including the addition of another Code Enforcement Specialist. Staff estimates that the new fee schedule will fill the gap of \$154,119 between income and expenses, including but not limited to the addition of a Code Enforcement Specialist position.

Long-Term Impact: Fees will need to be revisited in two years to determine how costs are being recovered.

Vision, Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

Vision Impact: Not Applicable

Strategic Plan Impact: Financial Health

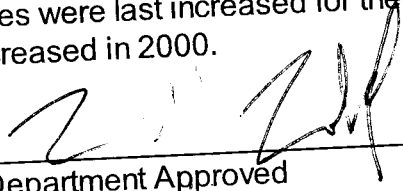
Comprehensive Plan Impact: Not Applicable

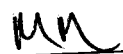
Suggested Council Action

Approval of these fee changes as part of the FY15 budget.

Legislative History

Fees were last increased for the rental program as part of the FY13 budget and prior to that were increased in 2000.


Department Approved


City Manager Approved

Introduced by _____

First Reading _____

Second Reading _____

Ordinance No. _____

Council Bill No. B 240-14

AN ORDINANCE

amending Chapter 22 of the City Code as it relates to rental unit inspection fees and charges; and fixing the time when this ordinance shall become effective.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, MISSOURI, AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Chapter 22 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Columbia, Missouri, is hereby amended as follows:

Material to be deleted in ~~strikeout~~; material to be added underlined.

Sec. 22-188. Fees and charges.

(a) In order to defray the costs incident to the administration of this article, the following fees shall be required to be paid for the inspection and shall be nonrefundable:

- (1) There shall be an application fee of ~~thirty-five dollars (\$35.00)~~ sixty dollars (\$60.00) per building for each application for a certificate of compliance.
- (2) There shall, in addition, be an inspection fee of ~~fifteen dollars (\$15.00)~~ twenty-six dollars (\$26.00) per dwelling unit or rooming unit, as the case may be, covered by each certificate of compliance.
- (3) There shall, in addition, be a reinspection fee of ~~twenty-five dollars (\$25.00)~~ forty-three dollars (\$43.00) per unit.
- (4) There shall, in addition, be a fee of ~~twenty dollars (\$20.00)~~ thirty-four dollars (\$34.00) to be assessed when owner or owner's representative fails to meet with inspector at scheduled appointment time.

(b) In addition to inspection upon application or complaint, units may be inspected at the request of the owner for which an inspection service charge of fifteen dollars (\$15.00) shall be charged. The inspector shall provide the owner with a written summary of the findings of his inspection, provided that such an inspection shall extend

only to matters regulated under the provisions of these ordinances and shall not extend to the condition of items of personal property or to fixtures, the condition of which is not addressed by city codes.

(c) In the event that a unit for which an unexpired certificate of compliance has been issued is inspected pursuant to a complaint, the person making the complaint shall pay a fifteen dollar (\$15.00) inspection service charge if the unit is not found to be in violation of any ordinance.

(d) In the event fees due and payable under this section remain outstanding for a period of sixty (60) days, the account may be submitted to a collection agency for collection. All such collection costs, including but not limited to court costs and attorney fees, shall be paid by the debtor.

...

Sec. 22-191. Duration of certificates; renewal.

(a) A certificate of compliance issued pursuant to this article, except for a certificate of use conditioned on compliance or a provisional certificate of compliance, shall be effective for three (3) years from the expiration date of the current certificate at time of application or, if no certificate existed at time of application, from its date of issue, unless sooner revoked, or unless extended by the director under the procedures established in paragraph (b) herein, or unless title or ownership of the property or any portion of the dwelling changes. Such certificate of compliance shall be renewable triennially upon forms supplied by the director in accordance with the procedures for obtaining a certificate of compliance set forth herein. Initial certificates shall be issued for new structures in conjunction with issuance of occupancy permits; inspection for the purposes of determining compliance with the building code shall satisfy the inspection provisions of this article.

(b) The director may, on written application of the operator and payment of a ~~twenty-five dollar (\$25.00)~~ forty-three dollars (\$43.00) fee per building, extend a current certificate of compliance for a period not to exceed three (3) years without further inspection, if the apartment house, rooming house, two-family dwelling or single rental unit for which the certificate of compliance is issued had no violations for the past three (3) years.

...

SECTION 2. This ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after October 1, 2014.

PASSED this _____ day of _____, 2014.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor and Presiding Officer

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

City Counselor



SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS INCLUDED WITH THIS AGENDA ITEM ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Correspondence from Public
Comparisons with Peer Cities

Comments from the online comment form:

do not like these fee increases. Just make us pass along higher rents to people that can't afford them.

Rental Property Owner

Number of rental units owned or managed: 14

I am all for helping with the increasing costs that the City experiences for services provided to our City and citizens. I don't mind an increase in the cost of these proposed fees to help defer costs. However, each increase is in excess of a 70%. To me, it seems that these increases are a little excessive. I hope that there could be a compromise somewhere in the middle as to the increase in these costs. This expense does not come out of my pocket, but I feel it is my responsibility to help keep the cost down for my property owners. Thanks for your interest in my views.

Rental Property Manager/Agent

Rena Crane

Number of rental units owned or managed: 60

Company/Firm Name: RDC Rental Management

I paid \$50 for an inspection fee last month + \$25 for a reinspection fee for installing carbon monoxide detectors. I feel that amount is substantial w/o increasing the fees.

Rental Property Owner

This increase is unfair to the large and small investor. Tenants will also be affected. We live in Columbia, MO for goodness sake. This fee increase is out of line and should be only slightly increased. I hope you reconsider.

Rental Property Owner, Rental Property Manager/Agent

Number of rental units owned or managed: 20

I feel as a landlord that the fee increase is way too high. I know things may have to go up but that increase is too extreme.

Rental Property Owner

A near doubling of the fees seems a bit extreme, to say the least, as increases go.

Rental Property Owner

It appears that most fees will nearly double, which seems to be a drastic one time increase. I know it would be more difficult to initiate, but a phased increase would seem less drastic, maybe should have been implemented a few years ago. I am for the safety aspect of the inspections, but feel that to increase this quickly and by this much will be unfortunate. Dan Harder, Midwest Property Management.

Rental Property Manager/Agent

Dan Harder

Number of rental units owned or managed: 125

Company/Firm Name: Midwest Property Management

70+% increases are almost as bad as when the city doubled parking meter fees a few years back. I think the fees are too high to justify the reason given.

Rental Property Owner

Sounds like a great idea. We (landlords) should pay for the services we receive. I also think it's a good idea to hire at least one more inspector to (hopefully) help insure safe rentals

Rental Property Owner
Elizabeth Peters
Company/Firm Name: East Campus Historic Properties

I thought the code inspection process was rather prompt and easy for my rental without the additional specialist. I would prefer to pay less and wait a little longer for my inspection.

Rental Property Owner
Number of rental units owned or managed: 1

A 10% increase would be justified. These rate increases are extreme. I am opposed to the new rate increases as proposed.

Rental Property Owner
Paul Prevo
Company/Firm Name: Market Ready LLC

I think they should cut the fees, let one of the inspectors go and do even fewer inspections. I find it insulting that they look at my properties at all and ask me to fix anything. I keep my properties in good shape and take better care of my tenants than my own home. Some of these properties that are in terrible condition ought to be condemned before they ask me to do one thing to my properties. They also ought to have an out of town inspector inspect the personal homes of the people that run the Office of Neighborhood Services and the City Council/staff that continues to stick their nose into my business. I'd love to see how one of you feel when someone charges you money to come over and tell you that you need to spend more time and money working on your home.

Rental Property Owner

Yikes!

I can support higher fees to a certain extent, especially the one for not meeting the inspector. The initial application/inspection combo seems kind of pricey in light of the community's desire to have property owners motivated to be in compliance.

Rental Property Owner
Number of rental units owned or managed: 4

While I completely understand the need to bump up the fees I think that an almost 50% hike all at once is absolutely ludicrous! Sooner or later we're going to have to move out of this city due to the ridiculous things you all spend our money on then hold your hands out for more. Not all of us are big time landlords raking in the dough and we small time landlords are probably more compliant than most big companies.

Rental Property Owner
Number of rental units owned or managed: 2

I think city should consider decreasing the fee for 4 main reasons:

- 1) Number of rental units in columbia has increased significantly in recent years due to new developments which should offset the cost.
- 2) Because of overcapacity in rental units in columbia Landlords are forced to reduce rent and property vacancy has increased.
- 3) Maintenance cost to manage rental property has gone up.
- 4) Your need to hire a code enforcement specialist is due to new constructions and city should share their increased revenue from new constructions license fee.

My comments are NO for the fee increase.

Rental Property Owner

Lalit Kumar

Covering your costs of inspection is a worthy goal. However, the cost per unit inspection fee should differ if an inspector is visiting a rooming house vs. multiple apartment units. A rooming house inspection could be incredibly expensive and should not be required to cover your expenses since an inspector merely goes from room to room within the same building. Fees per room within one unit should be no more than if an inspector were visiting a 4-bedroom apartment with LR, K, DR, etc. Thus, charging a per unit inspection fee comparable to a 4 BR unit for a rooming house with 4 BRs could be comparable. If there are 8 units it could be a per unit inspection fee comparable to 2 apartments, etc. Thank you for your consideration.

Rental Property Owner

bad idea

Rental Property Owner

Number of rental units owned or managed: 11

These proposed fee increases average 71.75% which is ridiculous. The rental compliance program is well on its way to becoming a very nice sinecure for its employees without providing commensurate benefit to the public.

Rental Property Owner

Please do not increase fees.

Rental Property Owner

Janet

Number of rental units owned or managed: 3

These increases seem pretty steep. The rental inspector must be a highly paid position.

Rental Property Owner

Normally opposed to such a big jump but you guys have always been extremely fair with me so it's ok with me. Might "phase" that increase over a couple years though. Will just be passed onto the tenant .

Rental Property Owner

John Hancock

Number of rental units owned or managed: 4

I feel the current speed of the rental inspection process is satisfactory and I don't see the need to expedite it. Hence, I oppose to the rental fee increase.

Rental Property Owner

These are way too high and will be born ultimately by the tenants, who are disproportionately poor. Like Boulder, Co, the working class will no longer be able to live in Columbia because they have to compete with students for housing. It runs counter to the announced goal of affordable housing.

Rental Property Owner

Number of rental units owned or managed: 8

I cannot see all the need for more inspectors as turn time for inspection seems reasonable. I really don't want more fees and more inspectors because often times, and this will sound wrong/bad, but often times you can see city workers citing around in trucks waiting to clock out or go home. I can't see these home inspectors being that over booked that the system/process needs another full time employee.

I would be ok if the "Failure to meet Inspector" fee went up as that one seems reasonable to me.

I don't support any of the other fees for inspection or renewal.

I really don't support the proposed Code Enforcement.

Part of my resistance is the fact that when I needed the City of Columbia's help I got nothing more than an answer of, "we can't do anything about it" from Weston Perkins for the excess storm water from the lagoon that overflows into my yard from the NEW Breaktime just North of Stadium and I-70.

If you supported property owners in the legal sense I would have more support for when you want more "code" enforcement.

I would happily expand on this for you if you want to call or email me: bwatkinsiii@yahoo.com 573-881-5436

Rental Property Owner, Rental Property Manager/Agent
Billy Watkins

No thanks

Rental Property Owner, Rental Property Manager/Agent

David Wulff

Number of rental units owned or managed: 8

I do not support this fee increase because it is too large. It will significantly impact landlords and or companies with multiple units.

Rental Property Manager/Agent

The main purpose of this rate increase is to hire another inspector? I haven't seen or heard anything from anyone in the "rental property overlords" office since the last inspection, three years ago. You need more staff? To do what?

The office already charges me a rental fee for my private residence which is located in the same building as my actual rental. How much more blood do you people want out this turnip? I haven't seen a pay raise in 7 years and this rate increase is absolutely insulting.

Rental Property Owner

Gus Anderson

Number of rental units owned or managed: 0

Every time the City of Columbia raises fees, rental companies have to raise rent to compensate. This hurts the owners, the tenants, and reduces the amount of affordable housing available for Columbia residents.

Rental Property Manager/Agent

Number of rental units owned or managed: 246

I am totally against the increase for all of the different fees. The City of Columbia has made it extremely hard for the Property Owners to maintain the property without being penalized or told to make costly repairs prior to renting the unit. Often times the repairs do not pose a threat or endangerment to the residents, and if the unit was owner occupied it would not even be an issue. We already pay enough in property taxes along with these rental fees for inspections and such, so to ask that we pay even more is

outrageous. I hope that this is a matter that we are able to vote on and not just put into action because the City deems it so.

Rental Property Owner

Number of rental units owned or managed: 2

I am not in favor of an increase. I have not had a problem with not enough inspectors and would like to keep what i spend to a minimum. More inspectors may equate to finding more things wrong to justify their existence. I can understand low end or student rentals needing a strict inspection program. I operate high end single family properties in nice neighborhoods. For the most part the inspections are unnecessary and just an expense to me for no reason. I want to keep my properties nice so i get good tenants. Definitely NO to higher fees. How about a system where operators with little or no deficiencies get a reduced fee or a rebate of some kind as an incentive to keep the properties up. Is the goal to bring in revenue to the city or achieve safe rental housing in Columbia?

Rental Property Owner, Rental Property Manager/Agent

Mike Tompkins

Number of rental units owned or managed: 16

I agree with proposed increase for rental inspections. My son may be renting in a year and I would like to know he is living in a safe place and that the city has staffing to make it happen. I also think that those who rent want this to happen in a timely way.

Columbia Resident with no ownership/tenancy in Rental Property

Proposed Fee Increases Current FY15 proposed

Application	\$35	\$60	72%
Per Unit Inspection Fee	\$15	\$26	73%
Renewal without Inspection	\$25	\$43	72%
Failure to Meet Inspector	\$20	\$34	70%
Reinspection (per unit)	\$25	\$43	72%

I disagree with having the renewal without inspection (43) costing the same as reinspection (43) and more than the per unit inspection fee (26) unless I am not reading the information correctly. If every unit pays \$26 PLUS \$43, then just say that and don't create a fake level of fees. Make the inspection fee \$69 and be done with it. And if that is not the intent, then name the per unit fee more clearly so it is understood by the public. Application, reinspect, failure to meet are all terms that are easily understood.

If you are trying to recover actual costs, filling out a piece of paper doesn't cost the same as having an inspector driving to an apartment and doing the inspection.

I would think that 'no shows' cost you more than other inspections because not only was the inspector time spent going there, but then it takes time and money to reschedule and go again.

I'm not sure why the application fee has to go up 72%. That seems a bit excessive. I can tell the pattern is to raise all fees by 70+%. Why not bring the various fees in line with the effort expended instead of applying a standard percentage increase? Charge more for no-shows to discourage that behavior. Charge less for renewal without inspection to reward those of us property owners who take care of our property and meet the rules the first time around. Surely the whole point of these fees is to insure compliance and not necessarily to be a money making cost center for the City.

Rental Property Owner, Rental Property Manager/Agent

Barbara Harris

Number of rental units owned or managed: 11

Company/Firm Name: Private Owner

The biggest drawback I see to the fee increases are that this will get passed down to the renters. The higher end housing, this is minimal. However, on lower income families in lower level housing, these fees add up. It is hard enough for the working poor. Especially when combined with the other increases we are seeing on the horizon in property taxes and utilities.

Why the big % of increase and is there a justification of any kind for this high of a percentage, across the board, following the recent increase we have already seen?

Rental Property Owner, Rental Property Manager/Agent

Shawna Neuner

Company/Firm Name: Columbia Home Rental

Please do not increase reinspection fee. Although the other rate increases are unpleasant to bear, they are necessary so I would not argue against it.

Rental Property Owner

Number of rental units owned or managed: 1

I feel that rental code enforcement is necessary and important. However I also see that if it becomes excessive it will become an unnecessary financial drain on the property owners which as always, will be passed onto the lessees.

In an effort to keep housing cost in our city competitive I am very hesitant to support an increase in government fees.

It is my opinion that the current inspection team already does a great job of maintaining compliance.

Thank you for your consideration!

Rental Property Owner, Rental Property Manager/Agent

Kenny Willenburg

Number of rental units owned or managed: 184

Company/Firm Name: Mills Properties

YOU HAVE TO INCREASE COSTS AS COST OF LIVING INCREASE.

Rental Property Owner

GARY ARNOLD

Number of rental units owned or managed: 1

The fees were already high and now you want to almost double them? This is an awful idea. Actions like this make it more difficult to do business here. Your sign restrictions are overly oppressive, too.

Rental Property Manager/Agent

Teresia H.

Number of rental units owned or managed: 86

I think this really needs some adjustment to what is being inspected. I own a unit that is covered by my condo assoc to keep updated in all aspects. I feel there is no reason that this kind of unit should fall under the catch all of rental unit. I am against any increase in fees.

Rental Property Owner

Brad and Julie Wright

Number of rental units owned or managed: 1

I believe this proposed increase will just increase my rent.... Which is too much as it is! I'm going to move to Boonville or Fulton if this continues to happen.

Tenant
Brian

Every increase will be passed to the occupant. Why should a renewal without an inspection be \$43? Failing to meet an inspector is a legitimate expense; I suggest higher than \$34. How about instituting a fee / penalty for gross infractions? For the first few years these fees / penalties are assessed I suspect the fees would more than cover the cost of an additional Code Enforcement Specialist.

Rental Property Owner

Mike Hatchett

Number of rental units owned or managed: 5

Over 70% increase? Are you kidding, this is ridiculous. Our community is worried about not having enough affordable housing, yet the city of Columbia seems to be opposed to the idea. Inspections are getting tighter, requiring more and more unnecessary fixes, increasing costs to the owner, as a result rent amounts are increased to pass these costs on to the tenant. Considering enforcing every property owner to install a radon mitigation system before even knowing if they have high radon levels. Now rental inspection, re-inspection, application fees are increasing over 70%! This is absurd. Please please please don't allow this increase. You are the only advocate for increased rates and unaffordable housing within our community.

Concerned property owner,

Andy

Rental Property Owner

Although I understand the need to increase fees for rental property and do not have an issue with that, the amount that is proposed is totally out of line. There should be small incremental increases in line with other charges that occur but not to the extent that have been proposed. This should be revisited as it is too much of an increase at one time.

Rental Property Owner, Rental Property Manager/Agent

Trisha

Number of rental units owned or managed: 0

Company/Firm Name: Lee

A fee increase is totally understandable, but a 70% fee increase when you are already having trouble with landlords complying is a bad idea! Raise your fees, fine, but let's make it a reasonable increase. After all your service does nothing for me, it's more for tenant's enjoyment, but I foot the bill.

Rental Property Owner

Crazy steep increases!!

Per unit inspection fees to \$26 equals a per hour rate of about \$156/hour when it takes 10-minutes or less to inspect the typical 2-bed/1-bath apartment.

Renewal w/o inspection to increase 72%! For processing paperwork on a unit (entire building) that has had NO complaints or violations - is this the best way to reinforce good work and compliance?! NO Why so cheap for failure to meet inspector? This seems like the place to make your money as it is disrespectful to the inspector and the process. NOT hammer the units/building that have a history of compliance with the renewal w/o inspection.

How are the fees calculated and justified. Please don't tell me "this is what Boulder, CO or Ames, IA or some other "similar college-town" does so we should do it too"! Facts, solid rational and positive reinforcement please!

Columbia Resident with no ownership/tenancy in Rental Property
Company/Firm Name:

If you would direct your inspectors to concentrate on health and safety issues and stay out of the weeds, looking at purely cosmetic issues, you would not need another inspector.

Rental Property Owner

My preference would be for the City of Columbia to eliminate inspection and rental property oversight all together as there is absolutely no need for it. If a tenant does not like the condition of their property they are free to move, that's called free enterprise. It is not at all necessary for the government to get in the middle of the tenant/owner relationship. This is yet another example where the city of Columbia has stepped over personal property rights in order to collect more tax revenue. The city of Columbia is extremely hypocritical when it says it wants more affordable housing but then raises fees that are simply passed on to the poorest members of our community. If you can not manage the programs you have with the tax revenue (that increases every year) and the huge increase in rental properties being built for students then I would suggest you investigate what is happening to all that extra income and perhaps replace the city employees who are mismanaging it. It makes no sense for there to be a need to raise these fees. This is not a money issue it is a management issue. DO NOT RAISE THESE FEES. (not that my input will matter at all...the city will do what ever it wants anyway and it only ever wants to raise taxes)

Rental Property Owner, Rental Property Manager/Agent
Nathan

Number of rental units owned or managed: 7

These increases are not helping to make housing affordable in Columbia.

Rental Property Owner, Rental Property Manager/Agent

Number of rental units owned or managed:

We own a rental duplex. We'd like to see the justification for such a steep increase in fees. Please send another email with this information.

Rental Property Owner

Tom and Pat Nullmeyer

Number of rental units owned or managed: 3

These increases will make rentals less affordable for people that are having a hard enough time finding affordable housing as it is. The increases are unjustified.

Rental Property Owner

This is a very large increase for one year. I managed a 260 unit student apartment complex for 7 years and I recall a couple of city inspections within that time frame. These inspections were not worth the money paid due to the fact that only 10-15 units were looked at and the inspector was gone in less than two hours but would charge us to come back for small things like clogged drains by residents in which we have little control over. With the amount of additional rental units in Columbia and the amount of time it takes to do an average inspection, it seems as though the city has realized this is an area they feel they can extort landlords and it looks as though they are doing just that. I think this increase is exaggerated and you should re-look at actual cost and be more lenient with landlords and not try and line your pockets. I understand that this is an attractive way for the city to take money from large outside businesses but please remember there are several smaller landlords that provide exceptional

affordable housing within the city limits that will now have to raise their rents to make up for your 71% increase. Please also remember that this town is one of very few towns in MO that actually have this program and most landlords will tell you that every town should have a similar program but it needs to be run much more efficiently. I would say that amount of units really needs to play a role here. Cost of application on one unit vs. 260 units in one complex really should play a role. One unit should stay at 35.00 to make application while larger complexes should bear the larger burden. That is the only fair way to do it. Cost associated with only inspecting one small unit are nowhere near that of inspecting a larger complex and this should be taken into consideration when increasing. It shows a real disconnect from the client and the community when you raise this amount so drastically across the board.

Rental Property Owner

matt c.

Number of rental units owned or managed: 1

Company/Firm Name: C.I.M.CO

the fees are already plenty .with all the extra smoke detectors etc.costs plenty to inspect.with reinspections and extra expenses .maybe increase to proposed amount with no extra reinspect fees?
wayne king.

Rental Property Owner

Number of rental units owned or managed: 5

I strongly disagree with raising fees by an average of 73%. Your stated goal to pay for existing rental inspection department expenses thru fee revenue generation is inappropriate & ripe for abuse. Rational of hiring another inspector to speed up the process is a smoke screen to expand the power base.

My vote (if I had one) is no.

Rental Property Owner

Peter Bartok

Number of rental units owned or managed: 100

Company/Firm Name: Peter Bartok Property

First I don't think you are really interested in negative comments and will push through what you want.We have a very liberal counsel right now and they have a tax and spend attitude.

I believe the last increase you claimed that it would cover 70 % of the cost of inspections. That wasn't that long ago so how does almost doubling the present rate fit in that scheme?

I am against this increase and think that you need to cut costs in this economy instead of increasing fee's.

Why don't you increase the time between inspections to 5--6 years? That would cut costs.

Why don't you let a inspection stand whether a property sells or changes hands?

Rental Property Owner

Ron Logan

Company/Firm Name: R & L Enterprises

I feel that the rental increase seems to be extremely excessive. We are talking about almost doubling the current fees just to make up for being able to hire 1 additional specialist! That does not make sense in my book and I am totally against the idea. It seems to me that someone is just trying to dip further into everyone's pockets and I nor any other fellow landlords should stand for this. I understand inflation but what you guys are proposing is hyperinflation to a sense! What will it be 5 years from now? Another 100% increase on top of these already proposed fees? Im all for reasonable increases in fees to follow inflation but this seems to be excessive.

Columbia is also the only city I have even heard of that has Rental Compliance rules/fees. So ultimately Columbia should consider itself lucky for receiving what they already get and not be so greedy.

Rental Property Owner, Rental Property Manager/Agent

Number of rental units owned or managed: 24

Company/Firm Name:

Hell, yes, raise them.

Columbia Resident with no ownership/tenancy in Rental Property

These increases are as much or more than 50% across the board.

I am opposed to the FY15 rental fee increases.

Thank you.

Rental Property Owner, Rental Property Manager/Agent

Are there more rental units in Columbia today than there were a few years ago? After the housing crisis, it's likely there are more rentals. In such case though, don't unfairly raise the rate. Instead, let the increased number of rental units support the increased needs of the department. I don't believe there is enough work to pay another inspector for full time. I believe a part time inspector is reasonable to cover the work load and he/she could be paid with new revenue from the wider rental base. Thanks for your time.

Rental Property Owner

All of these increases are 70% or more. I am not opposed to fee increases, but this seems a bit extreme. Would be great if landlords could increase rates by 70% and still anticipate occupancy. Please, let's be reasonable.

Rental Property Owner

Lynn Hostetler

Number of rental units owned or managed: 32

Company/Firm Name: Hostetler Properties

I think the proposed rental fee increase will eventually be passed on to tenants like me. So I don't like it.
Tenant

I notice there have been a lot of new development of apartments, condos, townhouses, and duplexes in Columbia in recent years. I suppose most of these new developments would require rental inspections. If so, the rental fee collected from these increased rental inspection demand should be able to cover another code enforcement specialist, I don't see why the rental fee needs to be increased.

Columbia Resident with no ownership/tenancy in Rental Property

The near doubling of fees seems a bit extreme. It also seems likely that this will be immediately passed on the tenants, which is unfortunate.

Tenant

Would like to see the justification for such a large increase.

Are there going to be new benefits/resources available to the landlords/owners of the rental properties in conjunction with this increase?

Is there anything in this proposal cementing the need for a rental inspection only the one time, and however many subsequent inspections to correct items noticed on the original inspection to gain the certificate? With the increase I certainly do not want to pay this on a more regular basis

Rental Property Owner

Ben Muzzey

Number of rental units owned or managed: 6

Company/Firm Name: Muzzey Property Leasing, LLC

As a person that owns rental property, I find these proposed fee increases, totally out of line. I stand firmly with other owners, and request that you remove this request from consideration.

Rental Property Owner

Number of rental units owned or managed: 2

The rental inspection program should definitely cover its cost

Rental Property Owner

I believe the increase to much. I am not saying they should not be increased but not by that percent.

Rental Property Owner

Again the City puts income increases on the backs of property owners instead of trying to get the budget items in line with income. A 70% increase is pretty greedy.

Rental Property Owner

Seems to be a large percentage increase in fees. Rental properties generate much money for the City and I don't see the advantage of a program that is self sustaining other than adding financial burden to the property owner and subsequent increase in rent to the tenant.

Rental Property Owner

Paul B. Terry

Number of rental units owned or managed: 1

I was under the impression that when per unit fees were doubled last year from \$7 to \$15 that this would cover most of the costs. It is surprising that such a large increase in one year is requested. This is completely contradictory to the city goal of more affordable housing. It seems that every few months there is a new recommendation to raise the cost of all housing including low income. (radon mitigation, east campus parking permits, increased building fees, new property taxes, higher rental inspection fees, etc.) this is a matter that needs to be sent to all renters for their input.

Rental Property Owner

Stanley Diaz

Number of rental units owned or managed: 50

Company/Firm Name: Columbia Apartment Association

Cut back the regulations and then there is less need for another inspector and less to inspect, therefore no increase is needed. Enough is enough!

Rental Property Owner

W. Vincent Winn

Number of rental units owned or managed: 11

The increased fees will raise rent costs for low income people and students. It is a bad idea.

Rental Property Owner, Rental Property Manager/Agent
Number of rental units owned or managed: 26

Dear City Mayor, Council, and staff,

The rental inspection fee increases are a bad idea for several reasons. It increases the financial burden on a class of people who can least afford it. Don't be deluded into the naive thinking that these costs won't be passed on to the renter.

The renter will pay through rent increases as property owners and managers are forced to raise rents to meet higher expenses.

There is already an alarming increase in rents in Columbia due to increasing expenses to manage and operate rental property here. Many renters are on limited incomes and already struggling to survive economically.

The entire City is concerned with safety and these expenses should be paid for by everyone. The police and fire departments for example don't just re-coup their cost from the people who have fires or who use the police services. Why burden renters? Safety is a concern for everyone and we should all pay for it, not just the renters who are often those who can least afford it.

Thanks for listening,

Mark Stevenson

Rental Property Owner, Rental Property Manager/Agent, Tenant

Mark Stevenson

Number of rental units owned or managed:

Company/Firm Name: Real Estate Management, Inc

an increase in fees will increase rents, it is difficult to maintain property at a affordable price without an increase in fees, taxes, and insurances. Those in power should take a look at the cost on the less fortunate, or should I say those who must rent.

Rental Property Owner

As your workload increases, so do the remittance fees received for service. With the thousands of new units as a result of the building boom in Columbia, money should be available to hire staff to service the needs of these inspections. No government growth should exceed 70% and yet the fee increases are as follows:

Application	71.4%
Per Unit Inspection Fee	71.3%
Renewal without Inspection	72.0%
Failure to Meet Inspector	70.0%
Reinspection (per unit)	72.0%

Inspections are supposed to enforce minimum standards to protect the health and well-being of tenants. These proposed fees attack the tenant, support irrational, ever-growing and excessive requirements, and prevent affordable housing in Columbia. In other words, the cure has become worse than the disease. Recalculate your costs and eliminate waste and abuse. Your fee increases at 70+% are excessive.

Return to a model of minimum standards and affordable housing. Our economy has not produced the jobs and the incomes for tenants to afford the ultimate rent increases that follow with excessive regulation. A perfect home that is unaffordable is of no use to a tenant and a burden on the owner. Vacancies should not be the result.

Rental Property Owner, Rental Property Manager/Agent

Kurt Albert

Too high. Rents are already high for our tenants, now this will add to the expense we will have to pass along in some form...along with all the proposed hikes in property taxes at the city and county level. It adds up to a burden on private owners trying to keep up a good business and working to improve their properties.

Rental Property Owner

Teresa Voeller

Number of rental units owned or managed: 39

Company/Firm Name: Voeller Properties

It would be a good outcome if the city would be staffed sufficiently to move beyond complaint driven to proactive inspection. The rates you are proposing are reasonable and appear to make a positive incremental change. I do not believe the hardship complaints made by some landlords. It appears to be a lucrative endeavor given how rents are rising. Thank you.

Columbia Resident with no ownership/tenancy in Rental Property

Additional Comments from the third floor comment box:

Hard to keep up with City rules and price, ever changing. To inspect you need to own a rental to understand.

Rental property owner or manager

Increasing the fees 60-70% after a two year old increase in our current economic condition. Thanks!

Paul Hinshaw

Comments received via email:

What measurements are being used to show that the program is actually working and adds value?

My own experience with newer rental properties is that it does not add value.

One example is the required mechanical inspections on new construction (which passed the cities inspections already). I have paid for mechanical inspections in the winter only to find the air conditioners not working in the summer

Otherwise this is just government at its best, lets double the fees and hire more people

Greetings all, When the current fee increases were proposed and passed I requested that the City give a little something back and I was ignored or at least my suggestion was not implemented even in part. // I would like to make about the same suggestion again. How about extending the certificate time period from 3 years to 5 years? I believe this is a very reasonable request since the City has a wandering band of on-street observers looking for rental violations, the renting community is better advised on how to complain about presumed violations resulting in an unannounced inspection by the city, the community at large is informed on who to contact about possible rental violations, and finally I believe landlords have significantly improved the condition of property throughout the City. By extending the certificate time period, the workload on the City staff would be reduced decreasing the requirement for additional staffing thus saving the City money. I realize that this is a pass thru cost for Landlords, but we desire to keep rents as affordable as possible. Our water and Sewer charges have almost doubled in recent years. Refuse charges have increased. There is a proposed property tax increase coming on the ballot soon. There is a proposed sales tax increase statewide coming soon. All these increases add up to significant cost increases. I might add that the University keeps increasing the cost of a College degree. Columbia will be in a sad place if a competing entity keeps costs down and the students turn elsewhere. I encourage all to think about keeping costs down and making Columbia the place people want to come to. We'll all be much better off in the long run. Thank you for considering my comments. Bob Craig

Replies include:

That's a great idea - somewhat of a trade off - moving from 3 to 5 years for the inspection/certificate period.

I would strongly support this idea.

Thanks!

Mike McGuire

Hi All.....we'd gladly donate some funds and resources to this cause for the landlords association.....I really enjoyed and appreciated Bob's email summary of his thoughts which I have to agree made a lot of sense.....and, yes, the university should be concerned about alternatives popping up.....I'm a MU grad too by the way.....let Gab here know how we can help you guys as we're very committed to local issues for investors.....thanks and my best.

Mike Wrenn, CEO
National Real Estate Insurance Group
Affinity Group Management

Columbia's Rental Fees Compared to Peer Cities

Process	Columbia Proposed FY15	West Lafayette, IN	Iowa City, IA	Rochester, MN	Bloomington, IN	Lawrence, KS
Applications	\$60 per building	\$150 per building	\$157 per building	\$90 per building	\$60 per building	\$14-17 per unit
Renewals (without inspection)	\$43					
Fail to meet	\$34/ instance	\$100	\$50		\$50	\$25
Inspections	\$26/unit	\$2/unit	\$17/unit, \$8/bedroom	\$30/unit	\$25/unit	\$50/unit
Re-inspections	\$43/unit	\$150/unit	First reinspection is included in the fee; after that citations are issued starting at \$250		First inspection is included in the fee; after that reinspections are \$70	\$50/unit
Certificate duration	3 years + 3 yr. renewal	2 years	2 years	2 years	Varies: 3-5 years	1 year for license renewal; inspections required every 3 or 6 years