

Ordinance changes would help clean up city

By Chris Leone
Guest Columnist

Last Tuesday, Dec. 19, I spoke before the Board of Mayor and Aldermen concerning four proposed ordinance changes that I and the rest of the Community Services Committee of NeighborWorks Greater Manchester think would go a long way in cleaning up this city of ours.

As it now stands, seeing bags of trash, as well as old furniture, dirty mattresses and the like strewn about Manchester's streets, sidewalks and alleys is an all-too-common occurrence.

Landlords, property owners and tenants all suffer from looking at this filth that is created from a number of problem properties across the city that continuously violate city ordinances. This is a common sense issue that our aldermen are getting sick of dealing with day after day. We need to address the root problem rather than putting the burden on the city employees to clean up the mess every time we call to report this.

Responsible landlords, including myself, have trouble finding quality tenants to put in our buildings be-

cause of the filth around our properties from people who just don't care about their surroundings. It is ruining our neighborhoods and quite frankly, it looks trashy.

The same properties that have trash or sanitary issues are often the ones that mischief and crime originate from. The city needs to clamp down on the ordinance violations that plague our city and they need better tools with which to do so. The ordinance changes proposed by the Community Services Committee are to let offenders know that the city will not tolerate these violations and violators will be penalized heavily.

The way the ordinances are structured now, we as citizens in our neighborhoods often have to look at this filth for two weeks to more than a month before the problem is addressed. When it is addressed, the property owner receives a \$100 fine. In the year 2007, a \$100 fine is just not enough.

Many of us have heard some landlords say that they would just rather pay the fine and make the problem go away. Perhaps they would change

their tune if the fine is upped to \$250, as we propose.

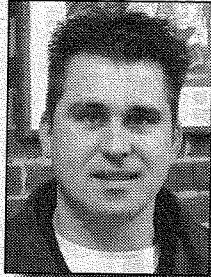
In addition to higher fines for trash and other Housing Code violations, we would like to see the city require landlords to inform their tenants about trash ordinances, place liens on properties that don't pay their fines and issue citations to offenders on a more regular basis.

Our proposed ordinance changes are designed to be applied to the properties that continue to have violations—the repeat offenders, as it were. Responsible landlords would not be affected.

The Community Services Committee believes that it is in the best interest of the city, and especially the taxpayers and residents, to have these ordinances changed and we encourage the aldermen to do so as quickly as possible.

If anyone would like to help us in this effort, or would otherwise like to become active in improving our city, please contact the Community Services Committee at 626-4663, ext. 12.

Chris Leone is a member of the Community Services Committee. He is also a resident of the West Side, where he owns a couple of multi-family rental properties.



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