



Pinellas County

Staff Report

File #: 22-1219A, Version: 1

Subject:

Ordinance amending Chapter 42 of the Pinellas County Code adopting a Tenants Bill of Rights requiring the provision of information renters' rights under federal, state, and local law, prohibiting discrimination based on source of income, requiring notice of late fees, and requiring notice of rent increases.

Recommended Action:

Approval of the ordinance amending Chapter 42 to include a Tenants Bill of Rights which accomplishes the following:

- Requires landlords to provide tenants with a Notice of Rights under Florida Law and County code to tenants upon entering a new rental term.
- Prohibits discrimination based on source of income when renting a residential unit.
- Requires written notice of late fees.
- Requires written notice of rent increases.

A public hearing was held with the Board of County Commissioners (Board) on June 21, 2022. During the hearing the Board requested staff to provide additional information and/or clarification regarding specific ordinance provisions related to source of income and insurance requirements. In addition to addressing Board comments, the revised ordinance includes an additional provision requiring a written notice of rent increases. This added provision aligns closely with the language currently under consideration by St. Petersburg.

A mark-up version of the ordinance illustrating the specific changes made since the June 21st hearing is included as Attachment 2.

Key sections from the adopted St. Petersburg ordinance are included for reference in Attachment 4.

Strategic Plan:

Ensure Public Health, Safety and Welfare

2.1 Provide planning, coordination, prevention, and protective services to create and enhance a safe, secure and healthy community

Foster Continual Economic Growth and Vitality

4.3 Catalyze redevelopment through planning and regulatory programs

Deliver First-Class Services to the Public and Our Customers

5.2 Be responsible stewards of the public's resources

5.4 Strive to serve the needs of all Pinellas County residents and customers)

Summary:

The Tenants Bill of Rights is the result of Pinellas County's ongoing commitment to addressing the affordable housing challenge. It builds upon the programs, policies, and regulations that the County has worked on to address the issues of housing supply and affordability.

Background Information:

The proposed Tenants Bill of Rights is the latest initiative undertaken by Pinellas County to address the housing affordability challenge. It joins a list of recent efforts that address short- and long-term needs to increase the quantity and improve the quality of housing units in the county.

The proposed ordinance is designed to improve conditions for tenants in existing residential units across the county. It joins similar ordinances passed by other local governments within the Tampa Bay Region including St. Petersburg, Tampa, and Hillsborough County.

Since the June 21, 2022 Public Hearing staff has continued outreach to key stakeholders to address the Board's comments. These stakeholders include representatives of the Bay Area Apartment Association, the Pinellas County Housing Authority, the City of St. Petersburg, and other municipal partners.

Fiscal Impact:

N/A - The cost of education and enforcement of this new ordinance can be accommodated within existing departmental budgets.

Staff Member Responsible:

Carol Stricklin, Director, Housing and Community Development

Partners:

Pinellas County Code Enforcement
Pinellas County Office of Consumer Protection

Attachments:

1. Proposed Ordinance
2. Proposed Ordinance including mark-up changes following June 21, 2022 Public Hearing
3. Comparison table between St. Petersburg and Pinellas County ordinances
4. Presentation
5. Public Notice Advertisement