

QUESTION #5: *Do you support a Rental Inspection Ordinance of all R-1 and R-2 rental properties in the City? Why/why not?*

DONALD HEDRICK: Rental inspection ordinances would of necessity come with inspection fees which in this tax and spend climate is the real revenue enhancing reason for the inspections in the first place. The system works now on a complaint driven trigger which then brings in enforcement fees. Maybe by doing a blanket inspection on all such targeted accommodations it is figured that more total fees can be extracted from the many than the offenders. We have too much government intrusion in our lives now and being a property owner should not have to open you up to every new taxing plan that can be dreamed up to overreach as it is. If a rental owner is not providing a fair place to live for tenants, then it would be the right of the tenants to bring up their own complaints. We have enough laws and orders now and we don't need a government thinking up more intrusions.

JAN MARX: Yes I support a rental inspection program for all rental units in the City. Such a program protects tenants, insures habitability, preserves the housing stock and sends a message to investors/landlords that they have a duty to be responsible community members.

JEFFERY SPECHT: I am very much for this. The landlords should be held very much accountable, since they are the ones making the money.

DANIEL CANO: Yes. There's two issues this ordinance addresses; substandard housing rental and families and students doubling up to save money. Both situations can negatively impact neighborhoods and the renter's safety. Students and families doubling up against lease provisions can save money at a time when jobs and affordable housing are scarce. Compounding this problem is that un-repaired ware-and-tear can go un-reported for fear of losing housing. Yet not addressing this issue prevents the problem from being addressed, which is: the need for more housing and the responsibility of landlords to their investments are maintained.

CARLYN CHRISTIANSON: I definitely support a Rental Inspection Ordinance. I think it is a crucial enforcement tool to address the very serious problem of illegal overcrowding and substandard rental housing that San Luis Obispo has ignored for many years. Partly because of pressure from landlords, but also because of lack of resources, the city has not implemented this approach previously, but I believe it is an essential component of Neighborhood Wellness efforts. It will also help highlight, in a small way, the true nature of San Luis Obispo's student and worker housing shortage and will hopefully lead to more student housing on the Cal Poly campus as well as other innovative approaches to housing for workers, seniors, and families.

MICHAEL CLARK: We need a Rental Housing Inspection Ordinance for R-1 and R-2 rental properties. It is long overdue. When an individual converts an owner-occupied home into a rental property, they have converted a house into a business. In San Luis Obispo, all businesses require a city-issued license before we allow them to operate and serve the public - be that a restaurant/bar, grocery store, motel, or rental house.

Each type of business must meet differing health and safety standards depending on the nature of the business. The public naturally presumes that businesses operating within a city meet basic city standards, that food service businesses meet basic sanitation standards, that motels/hotels meet fire and safety standards and that other businesses meet at least the minimum requirements for that business.

Renters should expect no less. They should assume that no rental is substandard and that all meet at least minimum standards of habitability. They should not be in the position of having to detect that a rental house is properly wired and heated, is adequately plumbed for water and sewer, does not contain illegal or unsafe modifications that create structural hazards. This is especially important in a city with so many young first-time renters, and I strongly support the ordinance.

GORDON MULLIN: Depending upon costs, frequency, proper noticing, etc., yes.

DAN RIVOIRE: I support inspection efforts that work to improve safety for tenants and ensure code compliance. Nevertheless, we need to be extremely careful in developing an ordinance that does not create unnecessary complexities or negatively affect the rental market.