Hello,

We am writing as a concerned member of the Asheville community regarding the increasing visibility of homelessness and the public safety and quality-of-life issues that many residents are witnessing.

We have growing concerns about open drug use, theft and robberies, public disturbances, and areas where residents no longer feel safe. We understand that homelessness is a complex issue and that many individuals need housing, mental health care, substance use treatment, and other meaningful support. At the same time, we believe the City must address the impact that crime, public drug use, and unsafe behavior are having on residents, businesses, visitors, and the broader community.

We would like to know what specific actions the City is taking to address these concerns while also connecting people experiencing homelessness with effective services and pathways toward stable housing and recovery.

We care deeply about Asheville and want to see a response that is both compassionate and accountable. We hope the City will continue to prioritize solutions that protect public safety, support local residents and businesses, and provide meaningful intervention for people who are struggling.

Thank you for your time, on-going work, and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Isabella Motta
On behalf of concerned members of the Asheville community

[Staff Response]

Hi Isabella,

Thank you for reaching out and sharing your concern. You're certainly right that homelessness is a complex issue!

Specific steps the City is taking to address the crime, public drug use, and unsafe behavior you mentioned are primarily through public safety staff, including not only APD but also the Asheville Fire Department's Resource Engagement Support Team (REST). REST is both proactive and responsive and available daily to engage with people in crisis. APD is of course also available, and both APD and AFD-REST encourage community members to call for help using 911 or the non-emergency number, 828.252.1110. 911 dispatchers are trained to identify opportunities where REST will be the best initial engagement.

Issues you named like mental health care, substance use treatment, and pathways toward stable housing and recovery are beyond the scope of municipal services in NC, so the City collaborates with partners who offer those through the Asheville-Buncombe Continuum of Care (CoC). The CoC is a community-based membership body with an elected Board that includes Mayor Manheimer and Assistant City Manager Jade Dundas. The CoC is coordinating services across nonprofits and other partners to improve care and has identified decreasing unsheltered homelessness as a priority. My team staffs the CoC, and we'd be glad to share membership or other information with you. Homelessness is a communitywide issue that needs communitywide response, and we're glad to welcome neighbors across the community into the CoC's work.

Emily Ball
Manager, Homeless Strategy Division

Subject: Public Comment on Tenant Protection Ordinance

I am writing to ask the Committee to please slow the process down and involve other interested stakeholders (including property managers, housing providers, and other related service providers) in this discussion. While of course well intentioned, the proposed revision to this ordinance could result in unintended and negative consequences.

One issue of particular concern is the lack of any language regarding an owner's ability to cure an unsafe condition. At a minimum, this should be specifically addressed before the proposed ordinance goes before Council. Ideally, conversations that include the full spectrum of housing advocates (including property managers, owners, and REALTORS) should be had before this progresses any further.

Thank you for your consideration.

Matthew Allen, J.D.

Subject: A few questions on the proposed Section 4-209 changes
Dear Members of the Housing and Community Development Committee,

My name is David Leslie, and I'm the President of Leslie & Associates, a local residential property management company that has served Asheville and the surrounding region since 1984.

I support the City's goal of protecting tenants from unsafe living conditions. After reviewing the proposed amendment to Section 4-209, though, I have some concerns about how the new language would work in practice.

As I read subsection 4-209(c), an owner would be prohibited from collecting rent whenever one of the listed conditions exists. What isn't clear is when that prohibition begins or ends, whether the owner first receives notice, or whether there is an opportunity to correct the problem.

That seems important because there is a big difference between an owner who ignores a dangerous condition and one who learns about a problem and promptly starts working to fix it.

Some of the conditions listed in the ordinance can also happen unexpectedly or potentially be caused by the tenant. A water heater can fail, a smoke detector can be removed, or belongings can block an exit. In those situations, it isn't clear to me how the proposed rent restriction would apply even if the owner or property manager responds promptly and is actively working to correct the issue.

I also have some practical questions about how this would be administered:

• Is rent abated, temporarily uncollectible, or prorated while the condition exists?

• When does the restriction actually begin: when the problem occurs, when it is reported, or when the City makes a determination? What will that process look like?

• How would tenant-caused conditions be handled?

• How should property managers handle rent that has already been paid or automatically received?

I'm sure there are other issues that will come up as people who work with these situations every day have a chance to review the proposal.

For that reason, I would respectfully ask the Committee to allow some additional time for property managers, housing providers, tenants, City staff, and other interested parties to work through the language before it moves forward to City Council.

I would be happy to participate in that discussion and provide input from the property management side. I think everyone has the same basic goal here: protecting tenants from unsafe housing while making sure the ordinance works fairly and practically when a responsible owner or manager is actively addressing a problem.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

David Leslie

Hi, this is Bill Rawlings with Rawlings Real Estate Management. Um, I'm calling at the request, actually, of the Land of Sky Realtors. Um, Lots are here in Asheville, and I'm a property. I own a property management business and it's, we are requesting that we slow down the process, um, for your, uh, I know you have a bill or a, um, uh, proposal for an ordinance that's coming up, um, that's going before the housing and community development committee tomorrow morning at 10 AM. Um, and I, Would like, we'd like for that to be slowed down a little bit until the, until the verbiage and the ordinance can be reviewed, uh, and just massaged if need be, to uh, make sure that it doesn't have unintended consequences and legal challenges for property managers. Uh, I'm fully in support of, um, cracking down on slumlords and people that don't maintain. Uh, habitable uh, residences for resident, for tenants. However, you know, some of the things regarding hot water and um, smoke detectors need to be worded in a way that, you know, as long as it's repaired within a reasonable time. Oh, if a hot, hot water heaters do break and you lose hot water because of loss of, um, access like Duke energy going down as it did during Helene and things like that. And so um we we're guests um or so anywayway, there there are obviously we get things fixed and we're held to a standard with the real estate commission on how quickly we have to get things fixed which and we respond extremely quickly.

Subject: No Rent for Slumlords Ordinance
I am writing regarding the proposed ordinance addressing rental property safety and habitability.

I support the goal of ensuring safe housing for tenants. However, the proposed language has potentially significant unintended consequences, and I am concerned about how quickly it is moving toward a vote without sufficient input from the property owners and managers who will be responsible for complying with it.

The experience following Helene demonstrates why this matters. Many investment properties did not qualify for storm assistance, and insurance claims were often denied because damage was attributed to rising water. Asheville City and Buncombe County services were not operational for almost 2 months - where is the provision for this? Your slide says despite a $225M HUD grant, funding deployment remains slow, leaving tenants trapped in unsafe housing conditions. Why aren't any of these funds available to Landlords to make repairs?

These circumstances deserve consideration before new requirements or liabilities are imposed.

I respectfully ask that the Committee slow this process down and allow meaningful input from all affected stakeholders before moving forward with a final vote.

Taking the time to get the language right now will result in better policy and help avoid unintended consequences for both tenants and housing providers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours in Service,
Kimberly Evans, RMP, GRI, ABRM

Subject: No Rent for Slumlords: Ordinance Proposal from Asheville Area Tenants Union
Dear Committee Members,
I understand and support the need to protect tenants who are living in unsafe or substandard housing. Property owners should be held accountable for providing safe and habitable homes.

At the same time, I am concerned that the current proposal may have unintended consequences for small, local landlords—particularly those who own and manage single-family homes and who work hard to maintain their properties and treat their tenants fairly.

The problems this proposal is attempting to address may be more prevalent among large corporate owners and larger multifamily properties. A regulatory approach designed to address those problems could place a disproportionate burden on responsible small landlords without necessarily improving conditions for tenants.

I respectfully ask the Council and committee to slow the process down long enough to gather additional input from the local landlords who will be affected by these changes. In particular, I encourage you to reach out to the Carolina Real Estate Investors Association (CREIA) and consider surveying its members about the proposal and its potential impacts.

Tenant protections and responsible property ownership do not have to be competing goals. With broader stakeholder input, I believe the City can develop an approach that protects tenants, holds negligent property owners accountable, and does not unintentionally penalize responsible local landlords.

Please take the additional time needed to hear from these property owners before moving the proposal forward.

Thank you for your consideration.