



City of Gainesville
Code Enforcement Division

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To: Tom Saunders, Community Development Director

From: Jim Garrett, Code Enforcement Manager

Date: November 6, 2006

Re: Benevolent Landlords

I have spoken with staff and members of the Finance Department's staff regarding the implementation of a benevolent landlord permit discount. It is the consensus that, while such a discount may prove helpful to some, the administrative burden would be prohibitive.

One of the concerns that led to this decision is the inability of staff to determine the actual agreement that exist between a landlord and tenant. Without verification staff would be compelled to accept at face value and claim to such a discount thus leaving high probability of abuse by some landlords.

Financial need is also an aspect of concern. Staff has no mechanism that would verify the need for a benevolent discount and would therefore leave open the possibility of fraudulent representation of the facts to evade landlord permit fees. A service to confirm some aspects of a person's financial status is available through the private sector but would have an unbudgeted cost that could easily exceed the cost of the discount.

Another consideration is the equity of such a discount. The recent increase in landlord fees reflect the projected cost that rentals in single-family neighborhoods bring to a reality. There is no data to support a reduction in fees for some while requiring others to accept the full cost of enforcement. A discount could easily create a high potential for unfair distribution of enforcement cost.

In summary I would recommend not pursuing such a discount for the reasons noted above. The cost of such a program could quickly outweigh the benefit and there is high potential for abuse.