

050761

Energy Efficiency Standards and Requirements

November 16th, 2009



Affordable Housing Study Commission

- In 2004 the CDC assembled an ad hoc task force to look at affordable housing issues
- Their final report made 2 recommendations involving energy efficiency

AHSC Recommendations

- GRU should increase its marketing of its energy conservation incentives and rebate programs. This would include marketing these programs to be used with local housing programs
- GRU should consider expanding its energy conservation assistance and rebate programs for low income customers

GRU Actions

- Staff followed up with a report outlining current efforts and addressing all items in the recommendations
- One item remains outstanding after initial efforts

Outstanding Recommendation

- Investigate incorporating energy efficiency requirements (R19) as part of the City of Gainesville minimum housing code
 - The CDC presented an ordinance amendment to the City Commission on January 28th, 2008

Landlord Focus Group Study

- Conducted by Giant Steps Research thru BEBR (UF Bureau of Economic and Business Research)
- Objectives;
 - Gauge awareness of GRU energy efficiency programs
 - Identify perceived barriers to improving energy efficiency of rental units
 - Determine perceived benefits to landlords for improving energy efficiency
 - Gather feedback on programs that might incent owners and property managers to improve energy efficiency

Landlord Focus Group Study

- Two Sessions;
 - Thursday, April 2, 2009 : Multi Family Landlords
 - Thursday, April 9, 2009 : Single Family Landlords (with City permit)

Landlord Focus Group Study

- **Criteria for Participation:**
 - Must be a rental property built prior to 1993
 - Participant must be an owner or decision maker (controls the purse strings)
 - Must live in the Gainesville area
 - Single Family Landlord must own two or more properties
- **Two landlord focus groups conducted**
 - 8 to 10 Participants each session
 - Large and small landlords participated
 - Represented all areas of the City
- **See Appendix A: Survey results**

Focus Group Results

- Landlords will make energy efficiency upgrades if an appliance breaks or a tenant is uncomfortable and/or complains about the energy bill.
- Most landlords do not pay the energy bill for the rental units and are unaware of what the energy bill is for each rental unit.
- Upgrading a property is seen as an investment. Owners have to believe that an improvement will help their bottom line.
- To be effective as marketing tools for the owner, the upgrades have to be visible to the prospective tenant.

Results continued

- Many landlords are unaware that GRU offers energy efficiency rebates for upgrades to rental properties.
- Rental property owners find the rebate process confusing and believe that using GRU contractors is too burdensome and expensive. They tend to do the work themselves.
- Landlords want programs marketed specifically to them. Communicate what programs are available to them.

Staff Recommendations

- Education
 - Create awareness and demand from the consumer through customer (tenant) education programs.
 - Bill Re-Design
 - Home Energy Reports
 - Drive awareness of energy efficiency from the landlord side by informing them about the energy usage of their rental property as compared to others. (Energy intensity)
 - Educate apartment maintenance workers by holding an annual workshop

Staff Recommendations

- Social Pressure
 - Educate tenants to ask about energy usage before renting
 - Create a section on the GRU website for tenants and landlords to include;
 - Program eligibility
 - Landlord Leave It On Program
 - List MDU energy intensity (premise ID)
 - *conceptual*
 - Recognize properties that have been recently upgraded for energy efficiency

Staff Recommendations

- Focus on Multi Dwelling Unit's
 - Clarify the steps necessary to get a business rebate, what the rebate is for exactly and how much it will be for each upgrade.
 - One decision maker can impact a lot of units
- Regulatory
 - Consider previously proposed minimum housing code recommendations

Thank you

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