

**MINUTES  
CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY COMMISSION**

**Meeting was held via Zoom due to the COVID-19 Pandemic**

**Ames City Hall, 515 Clark Avenue  
Ames, IA 50010**

**Monday, February 22, 2021**

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:06pm by Eric Abrams

Members Present: Eric Abrams, Evelyn Beavers, Karin Chitty, Tom Lindsley, Warren Madden

Members Absent: Peter Englin, Sandeep Stanley, Mason Zastrow

Staff Liaison: Deb Schildroth

**Approval of Minutes:** Warren Madden moved approval of the January 25, 2021 minutes. Evelyn Beavers seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**Public Forum:** There was no one present for Public Forum.

**City Council's Direction on Addressing Tenant/Landlord Issues:**

**A. Update on the revamp and promote Rent Smart Ames website and other forms of informational material**

- **Landlord Survey Results:** The landlord survey was sent to a random sample of thirty-five (35) landlords/property management companies in Ames. Of that, thirteen (13) responded to the survey with input on the Rent Smart Ames website.

Regarding use of website, all thirteen (13) respondents said that they do not use the Rent Smart Ames website to advertise vacancies. Vacancies are advertised on their personal website, using yard signs, and via social media. Respondents said they did not use the apartment locator on the Rent Smart Website and instead use website with a higher search engine optimization such as Zillow or apartments.com.

Respondents indicated that educational material contained on the website was the most helpful; including but not limited to tenant rights and responsibilities, roommate agreements, and budgeting. Seventy-five (75) percent of respondents said this information was easy to find with twenty-

five (25) percent saying it was not. Explanation for those stating the material was not easy to find included a variety of input on how/why the website would benefit from being consolidated.

Respondents were also asked what information they would like to see added or taken off. Multiple respondents indicated that they would see benefit in there being a contact for tenants to call or email with questions and concerns. Others gave input that they would like to see the language on the site better reflect that of the tenant code and highlight information regarding emotional support animals.

Through discussion of the results of the survey, the Commission agreed that being mindful of producing purely education content and not crossing over into the realm of legal advice is important as revisions to the website are being made.

- **Student Survey Update:** There was no update available on the status of the student survey.

After much discussion, the Commission decided to brainstorm ideas on what updates/changes to make to the Rent Smart website but will refrain from making those changes until student responses are received.

At the conclusion of, the meeting the Commission will follow up with Stanley on the status of the student survey via email. If no update is provided by the end of the week, the Commission appoints Englin and Zastrow to roll out the survey so responses can be gathered, and updates can be made to the website in preparation for a joint meeting with Council.

**B. Update on the potential expansion of the Story County mediation pilot program:** The planning committee for this project is still getting the materials organized to launch the mediation program. There are no further updates from last meeting.

**Commissioner Comments:** Discussion was had on how the housing market has changed since the start of the Rent Smart website revamp project. The Commission also spoke briefly on the eviction crisis and rental assistance programs, noting these topics as ones they would like touch on again in future meetings to stay informed.

**Next Meeting: March 22, 2021 at 6:00pm**

**Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 6:40pm