

SUBSTANDARD LIVING CONDITIONS SPECIAL COMMITTEE

January 9, 2020

A meeting of the Substandard Living Conditions Special Committee was held on Thursday, January 9, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber.

Alderman Jan Schmidt, Chair, presided.

Members of Committee present: Alderman Ernest A. Jette, Vice Chair
Alderwoman Elizabeth Lu
Alderman Skip Cleaver

Members not in Attendance: Alderman Thomas Lopez

Also in Attendance: Alderman Patricia Klee

ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CLERK

MOTION BY ALDERWOMAN LU TO NOMINATE JETTE TO SERVE AS COMMITTEE CLERK FOR THE 2020-2021 TERM

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN CLEAVER TO CLOSE THE NOMINATIONS
MOTION CARRIED**

MOTION CARRIED TO ELECT ALDERMAN JETTE AS COMMITTEE CLERK FOR THE 2020-2021 TERM

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING PLUS A DISCUSSION OF THE FUTURE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

Chairman Schmidt

This is the first meeting of this session and we have some new people here so we should probably give a little conversation about what this Committee does and what it should do in the future. The very first year that it was in place, it did quite a bit; it did a lot of studying of the issues. It spoke to a lot of people, studied problem that were showing up and cleared up quite a few things as well.

The following year there were very few things to do other than perhaps keep checking on what was happening with the substandard housing. Meetings were held, there were folks that were brought on from various committees, various department, to talk about what we can do in this Committee. But so far, our Committee is just supposed to look at substandard housing and if you think that we could do more, if there's something else that should be done under that same umbrella, that's something we should talk about.

Alderman Jette

So this Committee is a Special Committee that was created by Ordinance back in 2015. The Ordinance provides or the Committee is responsible for investigating the living conditions at large residential properties where there may be substandard living conditions; determining whether these conditions violate existing housing and/or health code and recommending whether new housing and/or health code provisions should be enacted to protect Nashua residents.

So that's what the Ordinance says and as I understand it, this Committee was created in response to problems that existed at 2 or 3 specific locations and the Committee ended up recommending that a new way of assessing or penalizing violations would occur.

In the past if there was a code violation, as I understand it, the Code Enforcement people would try to work with whoever was responsible to try to remedy the situation. If that failed, then they would file a complaint with the Circuit Court and it was dealt with by the Court. The Code Enforcement people asked and the Board of Aldermen ultimately passed a new system that provided for the Code Enforcement people could first, after trying to work with the responsible party, issue a ticket or fine and there was a schedule for first violation, second violation, without having to go through the Court process. The responsible party can, this is what exists now, can appeal that to the Court but they don't have to and it is a much more efficient way of dealing with this situation.

After that was done, the Committee kind of stopped doing anything except you know for the last two years, those of us who were on the Committee under Alderman Lopez's Chairmanship, we invited some landlords to talk about different problems; invited tenants to talk about problems. We invited the City Code Enforcement people from the Code Enforcement, Health Department and others to talk about how they dealt with various situations. But we never saw the need to sponsor any legislation and we did kind of touch upon some issues that were probably beyond the scope of this Ordinance.

I don't know if we wanted to go beyond that, you know, there is a standing committee, I think it's Personnel or Human Affairs Committee, one of its charges is dealing with affordable housing, I think that's the right phrase. Excuse me?

Alderman Klee

Excuse me, I apologize for interrupting you but I don't believe that it covers that problems within the affordable housing more to create it, of that nature, if I am not mistaken.

Chairman Schmidt

It's just about the lack of housing is that what it is?

Alderman Klee

I think so, I think that's more of what we deal with and that and not if there are issues where they are trying to get Code Enforcement or anything like that. And I apologize I didn't mean to interrupt you.

Chairman Schmidt

No, no Alderman Klee it is important.

Alderman Cleaver

Affordable housing is to work with contractors to make sure that there is a percentage set aside, it has nothing to do with the ...

Alderman Klee

The living conditions.

Alderman Cleaver

Within those conditions after, is my understanding.

Alderman Jette

So it's the Human Affairs Committee that is responsible for Community Development, Block Grants, Affordable Housing, Grant Acceptance, Elderly Affairs and the like and reviewing comment activities.

Alderman Schmidt

So that's already taken care of then, that portion of what we would be interested in working on.

Alderman Jette

I'm not sure how responsible for affordable housing, how that's defined. But that is

Alderman Schmidt

Alderman Klee are you on that Committee.

Alderman Klee

I am on Human Affairs Committee. I know I am not part of this Committee, but just to put my two cents in. First off, the Human Affairs Affordable Housing is not about the living conditions but the making availability of it; giving grants. We do give grants for perhaps windows that need to be replaced and so on and different types of things. So that's what the Community Grants are. As far as the living conditions within the housing, that doesn't fall within the Human Affairs, to the best of my knowledge, unless I really missed something on that one. We have never dealt with it and so on. In my opinion, what I'd like to see from this Committee is, well let me give you an example. OK for instance, you know you have heard me talk about bed bugs and so on. So a residential place, not just a single homeowner, but a rental, has bed bugs, when the person calls because their landlord is not being receptive enough so they may call Code Enforcement. Code Enforcement can't do down that day; they have to contact the landlord, make an appointment within X amount of days.

There are State Statutes that say that the landlord has got to be responsible within X number of days, it's actually a little bit faster, they have a smaller window, like 7 days, versus 14 days for roaches or something of that nature. But because something like bed bugs is not considered a health hazard, you don't get our Health & Human Services people involved. You get Code Enforcement to come in and say, this is not good living conditions. They have to have X number of hours, X number of days, X number to give a heads up to the landlord. They can't come in and do an inspection, then they can come in and do an inspection but they can only necessarily inspect that one unit, they can't inspect all the units. And this might be helpful for you to possibly get, and I'm blanking his last name, I know his first name is Bill, from Code Enforcement here to possibly talk to you about what their constraints are because that is really important. He is constrained by having to give notice.

So even if a resident called and said, I have a window that I can't open up because if I open it up, it's going to come down in my hand or my child's hand or something like that, so I can't even open up the windows. That's a safety issue so they can get in their faster, but they still have to get ahold of the landlord, get an appointment and so on. So I think that's a good idea for you to kind of get what those standards are and off hand, they are rattling in my brain and I can't think of them specifically. But I think that might be helpful to do that.

There's a landlord component in every complaint. So for instance if a landlord has bed bugs, the landlord didn't put the bed bugs in there, someone came in and did it. There are statutes within the State that says the person who brought them in, and an inspector can tell them who it was that brought them in if they look at all of them, then it is their responsibility. But then the landlord does have to pay for all the other units to have them cleaned and so on so that's an expense to them. So we have to have a heart and not kind of put a hammer down on them but at the same time there are people that are living there that can't move because they have these critters and so on. And I'm using bed bugs as an example because that's one of the big issues that we have. They are all over the country, they are not in just low income housing, there are in very expensive houses. It's the cockroach of the '70s and '60's and so on. They are very disconcerting when they are biting children and so on and people are afraid. Renters are afraid to make a big stink about it because they are afraid they'll be thrown out and if they are thrown out with the label of – you have bed bugs you're never going to get into Because who is going to want to rent to them so they can get blackballed.

There's this whole big thing and scary issue of what is going on. So I think as far as this Committee is concerned, you do need to get Code Enforcement in here to explain to you what their limitations are, if there is going to be any possible legislation that might come out of this, it may be to help them as the first one did. You know you might want to talk to them and say, is there needs that you have? I explained about the issue with the landlords having the cost and the issue with the renters, well there are also other issues of if they come in and they do chemical things and I know we are trying to fix it in the State House. There is also the issue of not being told, as a renter, I'm not being told what the different chemicals are that are still residing through my whole home and I may have a child. So what are my rights and so on. So I would really like to see the Substandard Living Conditions Committee kind of look at all of those things in general. And I think the chemicals really should be given even before they come into the house, these are the chemicals that we are going to spray, you should be out for 12 hours, you should be out for 24 hours, what is this kind of thing? Everything we do is going to affect everybody.

I know for instance when bed bugs are sprayed, you have to leave for 24 hours. What are these people doing for these 24 hours, where are they going to be living, what are they going to be doing? That is not our charge, I'm not asking, I'm just saying that is a real problem and so on. And there's all these things that go through it and all the heartache that everybody on both sides are facing. That is why I really would like to see you work with Code Enforcement. I'd like to see making a list and I know we've dealt with DHHS and they to some extent get the word out, you know, this is an issue and this is what you need to do, don't have clutter, don't have that. And I think they are trying to do as good a job as possible. But I think that you need to be a PSA, you need to find out what we can do to help landlords. I see Substandard as more of a renter's kind of issue. It is not a homeowner, you know? I mean if my neighbor had a place that was all broken down and so on and I know they have children, we would probably tell them to call Law Enforcement, rather than coming to here, do you understand what I am saying? But renters have very little voices. And at the same time, landlords can be raked over the coals, you've got to weigh both of those things. I think that should be a place for you guys to get your bearings.

Chairman Schmidt

We definitely need to have Health in because they have lots of information that we could use to make good decisions on so maybe we will have them in one day.

Alderwoman Lu

Basically the main comment that I have right now is I wonder if we, because I've done some reading, thank you, you had Donna send me the first year, I think it was Alderman Klee.

Alderman Klee

No it was Alderman Schmidt.

Alderwoman Lu

I read through that and I got an understanding of how it, the genesis of the group. And then I have gone through last year so I've got that sense of what has been going on. It seems as though there have been some mission creep and I am a little bit, well I am wondering are the penalties still being applied and has that been successful? Because Aldermen Jette, you mentioned the penalty system.

Chairman Schmidt

That's a terrific question, I think we should have Code Enforcement in and we should find out exactly how many they are seeing and what their penalties are and how often they have to repeat in certain places. That's a terrific idea.

Alderwoman Lu

We're not because we are not hearing about this kinds of complaints or are we still getting a list of how many complaints.

Chairman Schmidt

We haven't gotten anything so we will have Code come in and we will let them know what we need.

Alderwoman Lu

It just hasn't risen to the top to the elevation that it did back in 2015 when there were TV shows about it, I guess. Is that correct?

Chairman Schmidt

Apparently dividing the issues between it is substandard because the window is broken or something like that and the bed bugs were separated. I think that's the issue and I think that the bed bug issue was something that stayed in this for further study because it is just such a huge issue.

Alderman Klee

I just lost my train of that here for a second. Oh the numbers, OK. One of the issues with numbers and collecting data, you have to be really careful because right now there's a bed bug registry for hotels and people, they don't report it themselves, other people report it. When a hotel goes in and cleans up, that still stays there. So if we were to collect numbers, you have to remember that everything we collect is public information. So if someone were to go to whichever organization was collecting this, they could say, I want to see the names and addresses and so on of who have had bed bugs or this. And that could create, especially if they have gone through and they've really cleaned and they've done all the right things. This could create a problem. I'd like to see a tickler list; I spoke to, I wish he was here at the moment but I spoke to Alderman Lopez and I think we are not keeping, through our Health & Human Services and through Code Enforcement, I don't believe we are keeping any numbers on bed bugs. The reason I say it is because the last time he gave some form of a report, I said, why aren't there anything here and he said, we are not collecting that data.

I would love to see that data collected in a generic way, but if we do that, how do we know if the same units or the same address is being brought? So it has to be done, not privacy, because I want it to be able to be that, but not in the way to harm anybody because it doesn't just harm the landlord. Remember, there is a renter that is living there and if that renter moved out and this becomes public knowledge, there may be a way through Right-To-Know to find out where that renter was living and did they have bed bugs before I rent to them. So we have to be really cautious and I keep using bed bugs because that's the most extreme thing that we have and that can hurt people. I want to call it the plague of today.

Alderman Lu

My thought is just, but if we receive, if the City, Code Violations or whoever the tenants go to, they must keep some record of where they were called to and how often. I mean, that data must be available and as the Substandard Living Committee it seems to me we would want to be aware of that. I hear what you are saying about – I am just surprised that there would be such a stigma.

Alderman Klee

Oh yeah.

Chairman Schmidt

A very big stigma.

Alderman Klee

Pardon me for speaking out but I can tell you, there is a severe stigma, to the point of – I am serious – to the point of – I would knock on doors and see children with bites on them and come out and ask them, are you having a bed bug issue and them look at me and say, no; knowing that they have a bed bug issue and I can't do anything. I can't get Code Enforcement there, I can't get anything there because they are afraid. They are afraid to be thrown out on the street. These are people that are literally living from month to month, check to check, sometimes paycheck, sometimes assistance and they are afraid. They are afraid if it becomes known that they won't be able to do that and maybe they are waiting to get housing you know? And if it is known, they are not going to get that housing. And then they afraid that the landlord will say that they brought them in.

Alderman Jette

Point of order. So these Committee Meetings are recorded and so there's a little computer thing here, so after the meeting is over, tomorrow morning, one of the assistants is going to take that thing and type up the minutes, OK? So we have to, we can't just speak when we want to speak. We have to ask the Chair for recognition so the Chair can say, Alderman Klee, or Alderman Lu or Alderman Cleaver or Alderman Jette.

Chairman Schmidt

It makes it easier for them.

Alderman Jette

So that the person transcribing knows who is speaking especially with a newly formed Committee, she's not familiar with the voices.

Chairman Schmidt

Thank you Alderman Jette, that's a good idea. Did you have something else to add?

Alderman Jette

Yes if Alderman Lu is finished.

Alderman Lu

I am.

Alderman Jette

We were on the Committee, Alderman Schmidt and I were on the Committee the last two years.

Chairman Schmidt

May I interrupt for just a second? The reason that we have Alderman Klee with us today is because she knows this issue intimately, it is in her Ward. It's not in my Ward, well except for one building. I don't think you have any housing like that.

Alderman Jette

There are no bed bugs in Ward 5.

Chairman Schmidt

And that's on recording, yes. I think it is a special issue that she could bring to us so thank you. So you were saying....

Alderman Jette

I was saying, Alderman Jette was saying that during the last year or two that the Committee, the Code Enforcement people did come and speak to us. Ren Beaudoin from the Health Department came and spoke to us. I guess he's an entomologist and a bed bug expert. We learned, I think we learned during those sessions, that the State Legislature took the bed bug issue away from the City, that it is now regulated by State Statute. If a person, if somebody has a bed bug problem, there's a procedure outlined in the State Statute, I'm not that familiar with it but I think it requires them to notify the landlord, the landlord has some time to deal with the issue. If the tenant is unsatisfied, they have to go to the Circuit Court and file a complaint against the landlord. So there's a hearing before the Circuit Court and the Circuit Court deals with it.

We were told, if I remember correctly, that the City Code Enforcement has nothing to do with bed bug complaints and dealing with removing bed bugs. The Legislature has taken it away and provided a procedure for the tenant and the landlord to deal with this issue between the two of them and if they can't resolve it then the Court gets involved. I don't know if my recollection is correct, but we can have Mr. Beaudoin come in again and the Code Enforcement people and kind of refresh our memories about that issue.

Alderman Cleaver

When I was assigned to this and when I saw it on the list and all that sort of thing, my inclination was well it's going to deal with heat that is turned off or power that is turned off or broken windows, the stove is not working or some other problem that people are having where living is very difficult in

these conditions. And I think that it should go therefore well beyond bed bugs, I mean I realize bed bugs are a serious problem and I am sure that the genesis of this Committee was a bed bug issue; I believe it was on Broad Street at one time a couple of years ago. But to me it should be much more comprehensive than that because we know there are problems with landlord response when people are freezing or unable to cook or have no hot water, etc. So I think that we have to broaden our horizons a little bit at least in my opinion.

Chairman Schmidt

Excellent.

Alderman Jette

So those types of issues we have Ordinances that deal with that and we have a Code Enforcement Department, we have a Health Department, Fire Department, Police Departments that are all charged with enforcing that. I think that the purpose of this Committee is not to oversee those Departments and what they are doing it is only to, if we become aware of either through our constituents complaining to us or if the Code Enforcement Department themselves feel that they don't have the tools necessary to deal with these situations, then we can see whether or not the Codes, the Ordinances need to be changed or added to or whatever.

As I understand it, that's the Ordinance that created this Committee was to determine whether there are Substandard Living Conditions in large residential properties and whether these conditions violate existing Housing and/or Health Codes and recommending whether new Housing or Health Code Provisions should be enacted to protect Nashua residents. As I see our role, it is to make sure that the Ordinances provide sufficient regulation and it is not to deal with individual complaints. We have Code Enforcement Office and the Health Department that are the first responders sort to speak. I think having them come and report to us about how things are going is an excellent idea and I think we ought to see what they say, whether everything is fine or whether there are still problems and whether they need us as the Board of Aldermen to do anything to assist them or not.

Chairman Schmidt

I read the Ordinance myself and I didn't think of this until you mentioned it. Does it mention what a large residential?

Alderman Jette

Alderman Jette says it does not.

Chairman Schmidt

Well you were still speaking so I figured you were OK. That's interesting. I think we need to have visit with us Code Enforcement, the Fire Department, the Health Department, Police and if anybody can think of another organization within the Government that could give us feedback on what they've seen over the last couple of years. Whether or not Code Enforcement has seen a great many of these and working with fines, perhaps they have solved much of the reluctance that they felt before came from landlords because this is a much cleaner way to deal with things.

Alderman Cleaver

Yeah I think you are right, I think the first thing we need to do if we are going to address the problem or problems, is to find out if there are problems and how serious they are and how prevalent they are throughout the City.

So the more information we can get from those actors who deal with enforcing Code now, could tell us more about what kind of issues they are dealing with so that we could adjust the recommendations for legislation accordingly.

Chairman Schmidt

Good.

Alderman Klee

I absolutely agree with everything that you are saying, having those people involved. And to Alderman Jette's comment, I think it was 2014 and I looked it up a while ago and I want to say it was HB 540 that started addressing bed bugs. I didn't recall it being taken away from the City; they changed the reporting. In other words they had to remediate within 7 days I think it was; they have to acknowledge within 72 hours or something like that. The renters are not allowed to refuse entry. That's I thought what the State Statute did, but I could be wrong. But when I remember reading it, I remember it basically where right now the landlord has to ask for permission, give 24 hours' notice to get in there, I thought with the bed bugs, you couldn't refuse entry when they want to come in and do an inspection and so on. But again, I could be wrong, I am just thinking out loud what that is. But I like the idea of all of these people coming to it, but I also want to reiterate one of the things.

As an Alderman that gets these phone calls and I am sure Alderman Lopez gets the same thing and I know for a fact that he does because as I was knocking on doors trying to get gift cards, I know for a fact I had a number of people that lived in his Ward that said, this is an issue I am having with leaking in my roof and this and heat and so on. I said to them, well get ahold of Alderman Lopez but also contact Code Enforcement and do that. I think we need to have a full policy as to what people have to do. I think as a City and even to help Aldermen such as myself that are dealing with these kinds of things.

While I think that the border that you've put up to not allow bed bugs into Ward 5, is very adamant, but trust me, bed bugs are everywhere, including residential homes. But they are much easier to get rid of out of residential homes. They literally do a wrapping of your home and they can take care of it in that way. The thing is this is an epidemic, I don't want to stick with bed bugs, but I want to stick with fair conditions of not having a leaking ceiling or not having plumbing, or where there is no hot water and so on. I don't think you should deal with the individual cases, I think that's probably more for somebody like me to get ahold of Code Enforcement. But when we start seeing a plague, I see it in Ward 3 and so on, that's when I want to bring it to a Committee such as this and say, what can we do to help Code Enforcement because they are bound by certain rules and laws and so on.

Chairman Schmidt

If they need our assistance, that would be something we could manage. We should also probably look at State Statutes so we understand what the limitations are because I do recall the same thing that you are mentioning that bed bugs were actually set aside as a totally different kind of issue from heat and water and mold or anything like that. It was set aside as a very different issue because basically it is a different kind of issue, it does travel with people instead of it being a problem with not taking care of the property itself. Maybe one of us will be willing to do the research on State Statutes and see, I don't know anybody who might be willing to do that, do I Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

I think during the last term, when the Code Enforcement people appeared before us or maybe it was the Health Department, Ren Beaudoin, they gave us the laws. I remember there being a pamphlet about bed bugs and it talks about what bed bugs look like, you know, what to do if you

find them, you know the whole process, the whole procedure of notifying. What you should do, and what the landlord needs to do and the whole process was laid out and I think there was reference to the State Law there.

Chairman Schmidt

Do you still have the card that they gave us?

Alderman Jette

Yeah I think it was included, oh no it was not in the stuff you sent us, it was in the minutes of either last year's or the year before meeting. I can find that.

Chairman Schmidt

Thank you that would be very nice if you could bring that forward.

Alderwoman Lu

I happened to read that today, it is September 12 of 2019. It is attached.

Alderman Jette

Of 2019?

Chairman Schmidt

Could you send that to our Clerk and have her take care of a printing for each one of us, to Donna? That would be really great.

Alderwoman Lu

I have a couple of other things I just wanted to – so I realize that some of these things impact people who, it does seem like part of our – an important thing for us to consider whether some tenants are too intimidated to follow the State Statute. It just seems like something that we should address. I wonder whether having some information that a landlord is required to provide upon contracting with a tenant that gives the tenant some information about how they – their rights or contact ways that they can address or help they can seek, services that will help them if they feel like intimidated, some other way they can go about getting help with something like bed bugs.

I mean a lot of people in low income, substandard housing may be there because they don't have any other options and if anyone, there are probably a lot of people that would feel intimidated about complaining to their landlords. And I wonder if that's part of our work here is to come up or just to look at whether that's an issue. And if it is, to maybe provide something to help lessen that.

Chairman Schmidt

It's not 211, what is the emergency number? It is 211. 211 is often used to contact anything; they have all the data that you could possibly need. But you are right, people don't know about it. And if they don't know about it they must just be too reluctant to do anything. My worry is intimidation. We know that during the first iteration of the hearings that they had, there were a lot of people that said they were afraid because they had been badly treated in the past when they reported something. And I don't know a solution to that, maybe that's something else we should talk about?

Alderwoman Lu

Is there anything in this code here that addresses what we currently have in the City?

Chairman Schmidt

In this City, it should be in there, yes. One of the issues that we deal with in New Hampshire is that our law comes down from the State though. They give us permission to do certain laws. So a lot of our laws are based on what the State has in Code, so that's something else.

Alderman Klee

I did find the brochure, it's on our web site.

Chairman Schmidt

211?

Alderman Klee

No.

Chairman Schmidt

Oh the bed bug sheet?

Alderman Klee

Yes.

Chairman Schmidt

Yes, thank you.

Alderman Klee

It does reference HB 482 from 2013 and the 540 from 2014 that I was looking at was in reference to gaining access. The landlord/tenant being able to gain access and the landlord having X number of days and so on. And this does talk about whether or not they can be evicted for bed bugs and obviously the answer is, no you cannot. That one does talk about the 7 days, the mediation, and having to get an inspector there within 72 hours and so on. And that is one of the things that Renny did talk to me about when I called him over these issues that I was having. He was educating me on that too. But again, obviously wearing two hats, in the State and the City, I would hate to see that the City has no say on this. I really would like to investigate that because it would be reprehensible if the State said we are going to take care of all of it and these people have to go to Court because a lot of these people don't have those funds to go to Court to get their landlord to do things right and so on.

The City does do inspections and the City can come and do inspections. But again, this is not a bed bug Committee; this is a Substandard which means, as Alderman Cleaver brought up, it is about the heat and it is about windows falling and possibly being able to hurt not being able to be opened and so on. It is about the safety hazard and it is about whether or not smoke detectors are there or sprinkler systems, depending upon the size of the building and so on.

And I understand that bed bugs are just a smaller one, but that is a big issue in my, as are because there are a lot of older homes, the heating system and windows and different things like that. So a lot of what you are going to do will affect my Ward, so I'll be here a lot guys, sorry.

Chairman Schmidt

Well with the experience that you've got with your Ward it is awfully important for us to have that.

Alderman Jette

In looking at the material that you sent us, the minutes of this Committee's meetings when it first began, some of the things that I noticed during those first sessions, it was brought out that our Code Enforcement is complaint driven. So we don't have the staff to go out and do periodic inspections. We don't have the staff and I'm not sure that the law permits us to do that. But during those meetings, those initial meetings, Director Marchant talked about how other jurisdictions, she mentioned Manchester, New Hampshire, Minneapolis, Minnesota, Burlington, Vermont, have a licensing program. The other thing that was brought out is that hotels and motels are not licensed by the City or even the State that they are completely well not completely but as far as their rooms and stuff, they are not regulated. She said that other jurisdictions do have, like Manchester, has a licensing program for rental property owners.

Right now we have no procedure where we do an annual inspection of rental units. We have no authority whatsoever if I understand them correctly over hotels and motels. So I don't know if this is, you know, I don't think we ought to create problems where there aren't any or develop regulations or laws to regulate things that don't need regulating. But I think it is something worth looking into whether or not it would be something that we should do to provide for some type of authority for the Code Enforcement people to do inspections without having to have first received a complaint.

One of the problems with that is we don't have the staff. So these other jurisdictions have partly answered that by requiring a license and to get the license you have to have an inspection and to keep the license you have to have an annual inspection and they charge a fee for the license to cover the cost of the inspection. So the revenue derived from these licenses finances the cost of the inspectors. Whether or not that's something Nashua should do or not, I am not saying, I don't know. It is something that we could look into.

Also, when the Committee was first formed, Mayor Donchess was on the Committee before he was elected Mayor. He talked about looking into whether it would make sense to have an Ordinance that would require a daily cleaning of bathrooms and regular inspections of rental units, especially at rooming houses, you know. You sent it to us, so I am sure you read those initial hearings or initial meetings where people complained. They live in a building where there are many rooms but not many bathrooms, so they are sharing bathrooms with other people and the conditions that they were complaining about. I don't know if that is still a problem or not and whether or not you know, something that Mayor Donchess at the time thought was worth looking into is something we should look into now.

Chairman Schmidt

When speaking with the Health Department they mentioned that they would like licensing, they would very much like it. But they were dissuaded from following up on that; I think we should see what we can do about that. I think licensing would be a good solution to places that tend to have a problem.

The other issue that you brought is the rooming houses; we don't have the right to go into rooming houses, we can only do rentals; rooms we can't. That is one of the biggest problems that we've got, we need permission to go into anything of course and that's the other issue. But licensing would help solve that. So we should look into how, would you be willing to get in touch with the folks in Manchester to see how they handle their licensing or apartments, of rental units?

Alderman Jette

Yes of course.

Chairman Schmidt

Thank you, I'd appreciate that Alderman Jette.

Alderman Klee

I know I am such a pain in the neck I apologize. But my question if you don't mind to Alderman Jette? Alderman Jette, when you were looking through the notes and they talked about the inspections and we only do them based on complaints. I am asking the question because I was given the impression that we did annual inspections on all rentals and they would do a periodic when a complaint came in, but they didn't just do a pop in, in other words, but they would do an annual inspection.

The reason I say that and I am not questioning you, I haven't read those minutes, but I was given the impression because when I called about this particular place and they were coming and doing, he said to me, we are just about ready to be doing the annual inspection anyway so we can just push that forward. So I kind of get the impression that we do do annual inspections. But you are saying that the minutes said that we don't do them, we just do them based on complaint.

Chairman Schmidt

These minutes are from 2014, the very first meeting.

Alderman Klee

Oh OK, the very first meeting, I apologize, so maybe things have changed since then, perhaps things have changed since then.

Chairman Schmidt

I can forward those three documents to you so that you can take a look.

Alderman Klee

Chairman, I forwarded you the two links; one from the HP 482 from 2014 and the brochure that, please share with the Committee. I just thought I'd send it to you and let you forward it on to them. And that does explain the particular bill and so on. Truthfully I didn't read it, I just wanted to send it out to you as well as the brochure which does talk as Alderman Jette said about the different sizes of the critters and the creepy crawlies.

Alderman Cleaver

Yes thank you Madam Chairman. If we are going to look into licensing for rental properties it would seem to me that we also ought to look into licensing for hotels and motels, etc.

I heard earlier there is no provision or standards set up for them, they just go into business, put out a shingle and that's it. As far as I know they are totally unregulated and therefore are totally unsupervised or inspected if you will. Considering that, the whole genesis as I said earlier of this was from one of those businesses as I understand it. There may be a problem well beyond that that we don't know of and there is no way to uncover it.

Chairman Schmidt

Well that's one thing that we can really work towards, finding the current problems so that we can look for current solutions. So what I would like to do then is to set up the next few meetings to be with Code Enforcement, the Fire Department, the Health Department, Police, is there anyone else that you think should be part of this? If you can let me know, we will set it up so we can learn and maybe solve some of those problems. Does anyone else have anything else? Well if we are done, we've got our Clerk. We've done our discussion.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

REMARKS BY ALDERMEN

Chairman Schmidt

Remarks by Alderman, this is a time at the meeting where anything in particular that you have to say about something coming up, something you've learned, something you are waiting for, an honorarium for someone.

POSSIBLE NON-PUBLIC SESSION - None

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN CLEAVER TO ADJOURN
MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting was declared closed at 7:54 p.m.

Alderman Ernest A. Jette
Committee Clerk