

From: [Julie Wilber](#)
To: [Hanzel Sarah](#)
Subject: Rental property
Date: Friday, March 26, 2021 6:39:57 PM

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Dear Sarah,

I saw the KOTA news piece about Rapid City's long term strategic housing plan. Affordable housing has definitely been an issue in Rapid City.

I am contacting you, because I completely back your plan to have a rental inspection in place to protect renters. This would also protect home owners living adjacent or in neighborhoods where rental properties are not taken care of. I live in such a neighborhood.

My husband and I bought our house on 12th Street in 1995, and we raised two daughters here. We have had many of the same neighbors for all of those years. Unfortunately, one house adjacent to our property has (always) been not only an eyesore, but downright unhealthy. The small house at 1215 Fulton Street sits directly on the alley. After hard rains, we have seen water pouring out their front door and into the alley; tenants said water runs through the house from the back door out of the front. They also do not have adequate plumbing. The kitchen sink drains into a 5 gallon bucket which they empty into our alley. The toilet is chronically unflushable, causing tenants to use the alley as a bathroom. We have had to clean up used toilet paper and human feces from around our parking/fence area, and tolerated hot summer days when the alley reeked with urine.

Several neighbors, including myself, have reached out to help past renters. Especially since they are our neighbors, we have had many conversations about the conditions of the house. Two years ago my husband and I hauled away a pick-up load of moldy, soggy paneling and flooring that tenants took out of the house. There is rarely a property manager around and the property owner lives in Michigan. He obviously does not care about the condition of this house at all. It has never been painted in the entire time we have lived here. There are broken, boarded up windows. A freezer has been sitting on the alley in front of their house for years. Years! There's usually a broken TV, a couch, a chair, other various furniture pieces sitting there as well. Quite a few tenants get so angry at the conditions, they just walk out —after trashing the house. Breaking more windows, leaving lots of trash, and many times, disappearing into the night.

I believe the property owner takes advantage of people who cannot pass a credit check, who have been in prison, and those who are desperate to find a reasonably priced home with a fenced yard for their dogs. It's ridiculous that he has gotten away with this for so long. It's also very sad that people believe they deserve to live this way due to choices they have made in the past or low income. Several neighbors have tried to advocate for tenants by encouraging them to apply for a home through Habitat for Humanity, LoveInc, and city council members. The tenants before the current ones were a family. A mom, dad, a grandpa, who lived outside in a tent, and five children in their protection. They also had many other teenagers who stayed there. The house doesn't even have separate bedrooms. It is a two room house with a bathroom. You can imagine the strain caused on everyone. Especially when there is not functional plumbing. We were told by that family that the heat did not work, and when they asked to have it fixed, the property manager told them to turn on their oven and open it. So as soon as it got cold in September,

they moved back to the reservation.

I did not intend to make this email as lengthy as it is. However, this is just a smidgen of information about that house. It's extremely frustrating for everyone to have to witness the coming and going of so many tenants due to living conditions. (I cannot even fathom what it's like to spend a night in that house.) Tenants are never told what the house is really like. I suppose that's how it is with all slumlords.

I hope you will at least drive by the property and take a look at it for yourself. I look forward to the action you are proposing in inspecting these types of properties.

Most Sincerely,
Julie Wilber

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)