



Charlotte City Council  
Housing, Safety & Community Committee  
Meeting Summary for February 3, 2025

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## COMMITTEE AGENDA TOPICS

1. Policy Referral – Minimum Housing Code

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## COMMITTEE INFORMATION

<b>Committee Members Present:</b>	Victoria Watlington (CMGC), LaWana Mayfield (CMGC), Dimple Ajmera (CMGC), Tiawana Brown (CMGC), Reneé Johnson (CMGC)
<b>Committee Members Absent:</b>	n/a
<b>Other Council Members Present:</b>	Dante Anderson
<b>Staff Resources:</b>	Shawn Heath, City Manager's Office Rebecca Hefner, Housing & Neighborhood Services Jerry Green, Housing & Neighborhood Services Anna Schleunes, City Attorney's Office Isaac Sturgill, City Attorney's Office
<b>Meeting Duration:</b>	4:00 – 5:30 PM

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## DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

City Council member Watlington called the meeting to order and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

### Policy Referral – Minimum Housing Code

Rebecca Hefner shared that the minimum housing code topic is a continuation of the last Committee meeting. She reviewed the policy referral to consider potential policy considerations that may be needed to strengthen the city's ability to ensure safe housing for residents of lodging establishments (hotels/motels) and multi-family dwellings (apartment communities), as well as the referral timeline. Staff has been meeting with stakeholders including the Greater Charlotte Apartment Association, OneMECK, Action NC, Legal Aid of North Carolina, and The Redress Movement. While additional community engagement meetings will occur, Ms. Hefner shared early insights from the group discussions to-date. She emphasized that there are opportunities for Code Enforcement to take swifter and stronger action which may include in rem repair, and to improve and strengthen the ecosystem for partnerships that provide appropriate supports and resources for impacted residents. Adjustments are possible without additional resources because of the expanded investments in affordable housing and anti-displacement strategies that the City Council has already made.

Jerry Green shared benchmark information and best practices from other North Carolina cities and noted that other cities are similarly grappling with the challenges of owner non-compliance. Mr. Green and Ms. Hefner reviewed two case studies that resulted in large-scale displacement events (Lamplighter Inn and Tanglewood Apartments) and shared key learnings, opportunities, and constraints - these learnings will help inform staff recommendations that will be shared at a future Committee meeting.

Ms. Hefner shared that community input opportunities for the policy referral are currently ongoing, including a community meeting scheduled for Thursday, February 13, 2025, a public-input site for people to provide feedback online, and stakeholder focus group meetings to specifically include residents who have been impacted.

### Highlights of Committee discussion:

- Acknowledged that in rem repair will not be a solution for every situation.
- Collaboration with the county is important to identify early warning signs, and particularly when hotels under the jurisdiction of the Mecklenburg County Environmental Health Department fail county inspections, lose their permits, and subsequently come under the city's jurisdiction.
- Expressed interest in exploring how to make it more apparent to the public when these situations are happening.
- The city should not be relocating tenants into other poor-quality housing situations; tenants need to know that they deserve better.
- Keep an up-to-date list of available units in city-supported housing so that tenants relocating from difficult situations have the opportunity to move into a quality, well-maintained unit.

- Owners who allow their property to deteriorate or abandon it (such as the Lamplighter Inn property) should face consequences. These consequences should include being held accountable for all costs incurred by the city, such as relocation and other support services. Additionally, these owners should be prohibited from operating in the city in the future.
- We need to send a clear message to property owners that harmful, negligent actions that hurt people will not be tolerated and are unacceptable.
- Look at hotels/motels at I-85 and Sugar Creek to determine if they are at-risk properties.
- Explore ways to provide assistance to owners that are genuinely trying to do the right thing but lack financial resources to address maintenance/rehab needs.
- Publish a list of owners that are failing to properly maintain their property/have a history of significant code violations.
- Expressed interest in seeing what legal parameters exist for holding bad property owners accountable.
- Expressed interest in a list of landlords that city taxpayers have had to bail out.
- Tenants in situations like those relying on hotels or motels for permanent housing are often already vulnerable. We need a way to help these tenants overcome unique housing challenges, such as eviction records, when they face displacement.
- Align workforce development and employment services with displacement event protocols.
- Having a solid plan to proactively address problem properties, like the case study properties, is important.
- Civil penalties are meant to be a way to enforce the city's code but they become toothless - we have to figure out how to navigate around this.
- It's important to find a thoughtful balance about the solutions, to preserve affordability while at the same time ensuring housing is safe.
- Appreciation was expressed for Crisis Assistance Ministries and the work they do.

#### **Next Meeting**

Meeting adjourned at approximately 5:30 pm.  
The next meeting will occur on March 3, 2025.

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### **MEETING MATERIALS**

All meeting materials are available online at the [Charlotte Legistar Site](#). City Council Committee meeting videos and transcripts can be viewed on the [City of Charlotte's YouTube channel](#) (February 3, 2025 meeting link: <https://youtu.be/ZDqhM5ZhpXI?t=21873>)

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# Policy Referral: Minimum Housing Code

HOUSING, SAFETY AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 3, 2025

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## Today's Discussion

- ◀ Referral Summary
- ◀ Stakeholder Engagement Early Insights
- ◀ NC Cities Benchmark & Best Practices
- ◀ Code Enforcement Case Studies
  - Lamplighter Inn
  - Tanglewood Apartments
- ◀ Public Input Opportunities
- ◀ Next Steps

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# Referral Summary

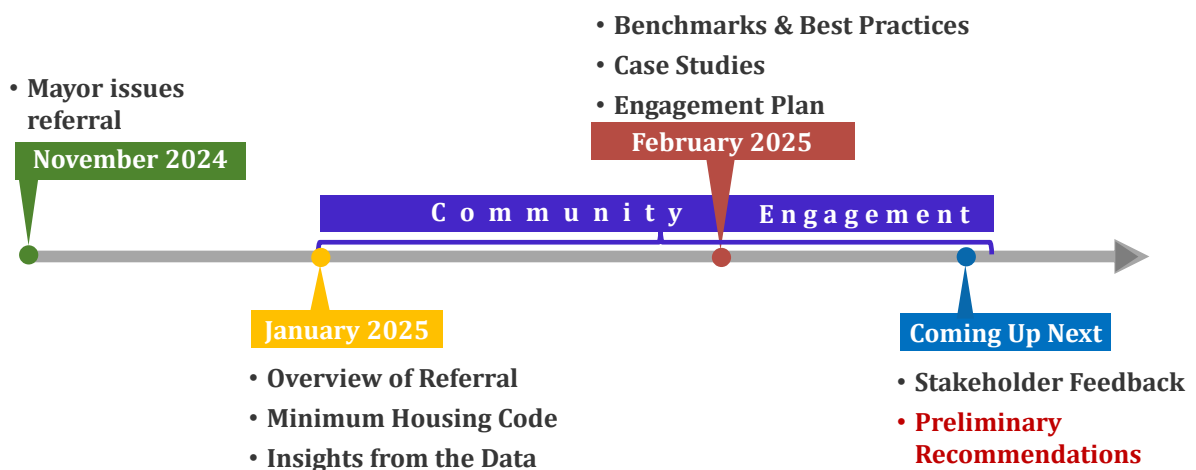
## ◀ Policy Question

- What potential policy considerations may be needed to strengthen the city's ability to ensure safe housing for residents of lodging establishments (e.g., hotel/motel) and multi-family dwellings (e.g., apartment community)?

## ◀ Committee Charge

- Review the city's Minimum Housing Code
- Review existing enforcement tools and the applicable legal framework
- Review enforcement tools used by other large North Carolina cities
- Determine if any applicable ordinance changes and/or policy recommendations are needed

# Policy Referral Timeline



## Stakeholder Early Insights

1. Challenges are with a limited number of properties/owners in the overall system – keys are willingness to partner, strength of property management, and financial capacity
2. Mechanism is needed to act more quickly to remedy imminently dangerous violations
3. Additional categorization of violations (by impact on resident) can guide decision-making and create more standard processes
4. Minimum standards of fitness are generally sufficient – evaluate requirement for operable air conditioning equipment
5. Opportunities exist to strengthen the ecosystem of partnerships and services to address issues more proactively and more holistically
6. Opportunities exist to leverage compliance-gaining research and behavioral insights in addition to enforcement tools and processes
7. City Council's expanded investment in affordable housing and anti-displacement strategies creates capacity and opportunity for stronger code enforcement action

## NC Cities: Benchmark & Best Practices

	Civil Penalties	In Rem Repair / Injunctive Relief	Standards of Fitness	Other Tools/ Practices
<b>Charlotte</b>	\$100 1st day \$100 each additional day	Yes, limited use		
<b>Raleigh</b>	\$500 1st day \$100 each additional day	No		Administrative Fees
<b>Greensboro</b>	\$200 1st day \$10 each additional day	No	International Property Maintenance Code	Reduction of civil penalties pursuant to repair costs
<b>Durham</b>	\$300 1st day \$300 per month	Yes, inoperable heat only		Compliance agreements, 15-day hearings, Administrative Fees
<b>Winston-Salem</b>	\$350 1st day \$100 each additional day	Yes, very selective		

## NC Cities: Benchmark & Best Practices

- ◀ **Charlotte has significant supports and resources in place for residents**
- ◀ **Other NC cities are also grappling with these challenges**
  - Opportunities to share best practices for internal processes (code enforcement and legal action)
  - Potential for legislative advocacy to strengthen the housing code enforcement toolbox
- ◀ **Variety of leverage points to accelerate the process**
- ◀ **Earlier authority to act can create better conditions for compliance**
- ◀ **Affordable housing “match-making” is a common practice but difficult to make work**

## Case Study: Lamplighter Inn



Community Name:	Lamplighter Inn
Address:	4425 Eddleman Road
Council District:	2
Year Built:	1973
Number of Rooms:	50
Displacement Event:	Yes / 2024

## Case Study: Lamplighter Inn

### ◀Key Learnings:

- The average motel/hotel room is not designed or built to withstand the rigors of daily life.
- Internal structure of commercial buildings is complex and doesn't necessarily fit well with an in-rem repair strategy, especially when systems integrity is compromised
- Lack of accountability for an absent property owner or criminal/fraudulent owner activity constrains effectiveness of code enforcement
  - *Code tools and other enforcement processes take time/due process*
  - *Situation deteriorated very quickly when the building was abandoned*

### ◀Opportunities and Constraints:

- Code enforcement tools, even with holistic partnerships in place, are not sufficient to address the complexity of this type of situation
- Mass displacement protocol and services are critical, but limited capacity for shelter and supportive housing limits effectiveness of these supports

## Case Study: Tanglewood Apartments



Community Name:	Tanglewood Apartments
Address:	3200 Dalecrest Drive / Wynbrook Way
Council District:	1
Year Built:	1970
Number of Units:	96
Displacement Event:	Yes / 2024

# Case Study: Tanglewood Apartments

## ◀Key Learnings:

- Deferred maintenance and large unforeseen events can create a rolling timeline of code violations and enforcement procedures
- Lack of engaged/effective on-site property management heightens conflict, limits effectiveness of compliance processes, and signals opportunity to act
- Contractual relationship between tenants and property owner is outside of city control, but earlier engagement and tenant education may help

## ◀Opportunities and Constraints:

- Situation was ripe for a holistic partnership approach
  - *Coordinated, systemic effort is key*
- Opportunities throughout the timeline to enact in-rem repair
  - *Selective basis, prioritize occupied units with violations that impact the safety and health of residents*
  - *Legal uncertainties around possession could create difficulties in practice*
  - *Could still lead to displacement but at a smaller, more manageable scale*
  - *Not all associated costs can be recouped*

# Public Input Opportunities

## How You Can Get Involved

- Attend the Community Meeting
  - Thursday, February 13, 2025 | 5:30 – 7:00 PM
  - Belmont Center, 700 Parkwood Ave
- Take the Survey
- Sign Up for Project Updates

<https://publicinput.com/cltminhousing>

### Minimum Housing Code: We Need Your Input!

The city is reviewing its **Minimum Housing Code** to ensure **safe, healthy, and habitable housing** for all residents, and we need your input!

#### Community Meeting Details

- **Date:** Thursday, February 13, 2025
- **Time:** 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.
- **Location:** Belmont Center, 700 Parkwood Ave

#### What to Expect

- Learn about Charlotte's **Minimum Housing Code** and current options available
- Discuss **improvements and enforcement tools**
- Share your experiences and **help shape future recommendations**

#### Can't Attend?

Share your feedback online by taking the survey or visiting our [Public Input page](https://publicinput.com/cltminhousing) at <https://publicinput.com/cltminhousing>.

For more information, contact [hnsinfo@charlottenc.gov](mailto:hnsinfo@charlottenc.gov).

Share Your Feedback!



## Next Steps

### ◀ **Community Engagement**

- Additional stakeholder focus group meetings, including residents
- Community Roundtable Meeting February 13<sup>th</sup>
- Opportunity for public input on ideas and strategies

### ◀ **Preliminary Recommendations to Committee**

### ◀ **Committee Action and Council Consideration**

## Property Summary

Community Name:	Lamplighter Inn
Address:	4425 Eddleman Road
Council District:	2
Year Built:	1973
Number of Rooms:	50
City Displacement Event?	Yes / 2024



## Overview

Lamplighter Inn is a 50-room motel consisting of one building with exterior room doors and located one block from the Freedom Drive and Lucky Penny Steet intersection at I-85. According to public records, the property is currently owned by Comodo Care, LLC (Chandresh Patel), who purchased the motel in August 2020.

## Deteriorating Housing Conditions and Resulting Displacement Event

2021. Lamplighter Inn was referred to Cod Enforcement through a public-agency referral from CMPD. The referral stated that Lamplighter had been a nuisance property with "unsanitary conditions, prostitution, drug activity, no hot water, broken glass, trash and debris." As a result of the referral, the entire property was inspected resulting in 52 code cases including one for the building exterior and grounds. Ultimately, the owner was able to make all the required repairs to bring the building and the units into compliance, including successfully going through and complying with required Mecklenburg County permitting processes.

2024. The events that unfolded at Lamplighter Inn throughout 2024 were not directly related to building conditions or the activities of Code Enforcement. There were two main events that occurred that set the stage for the displacement event. First, a non-profit called Vermelle's Place, with whom motel ownership supposedly had an agreement, moved in low-income clients with numerous housing barriers and promises of supportive services; Vermelle's Place ultimately failed to deliver on their promises with allegations of possible fraud following. Second, the property owner eventually abandoned the property, disconnecting water and utilities and leaving residents in rooms with no working locks on their doors, no water and other utilities, no maintenance services (trash pickup, etc.) and no stability, which rapidly created dangerous living conditions and escalated the situation.

The background about Vermelle's Place is unclear. In a December 2023 story published by QNotes Carolinas, the non-profit was reported to "offer a wide array of services including case management, group activities, financial management, career coaching, accountability groups and more for those experiencing hardships including substance abuse or mental health disorders, as well as assisting low-income marginalized groups including LGBTQ+ residents" ("Vermelle's Place opens its doors to those facing housing insecurity"). In May 2024, housing advocates began reaching out to the city with alarming stories of the situation unfolding at Lamplighter Inn compounded by the dissolution of Vermelle's Place. The situation ultimately left a large number of vulnerable households, including families with children, stranded at the Lamplighter Inn with limited income, if any at all, to pay for their rooms.

At the time of these initial reports, there were four open minimum housing code cases, and staff alerted the city's displacement protocol partners of the potential of Lamplighter becoming a displacement event. For several months, Code Enforcement worked to inspect units, open new cases as violations were found, and communicate

to the owner about required repairs. When the property owner abandoned the property in late October, staff activated the large-scale displacement event protocol, and Crisis Assistance Ministry, as the lead organization and city contractor, was able to quickly restore power and water and get on-site to begin displacement activities with residents (see more about the displacement event timeline below). After all residents were relocated, city staff designated the building unsafe for occupancy, all utilities were disconnected, and Code Enforcement boarded up the structure. As of January, a potential buyer for the property has begun repairs. The current owner of record remains legally responsible for compliance. Code Enforcement will continue enforcement processes until compliance is reached.

### **Displacement Protocol Activities**

When a displacement event occurs, the City of Charlotte identifies the event and notifies Crisis Assistance Ministry (CAM), which assigns a project coordinator. The coordinator immediately begins collaborating with the displacement response team to assess resident needs and identify the necessary support services tailored to the challenges faced by displaced tenants. A project initiation meeting is held to outline the event's details, including the location, resident demographics, and current conditions, while setting a high-level timeline with key milestones. Roles, responsibilities, and communication protocols are also established during this meeting, ensuring clarity and alignment among team members.

The displacement response team, which includes the City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, Housing Collaborative, CAM, and other approved contractors, works together to implement a coordinated response. CAM takes the lead in developing and executing a standard operating procedure (SOP) that guides communication protocols, securely manages data sharing, and facilitates regular team meetings and updates. Acting as the primary point of contact, CAM handles internal and external communications, including media inquiries, and provides updates to community stakeholders. Bi-weekly status meetings with the City ensure progress tracking, risk identification, and resource allocation adjustments.

CAM conducts resident interviews and assessments to determine individual needs and develop tailored relocation plans. Outreach efforts are prioritized to build trust with tenants, including distributing project-specific flyers, coordinating community fairs, and hosting meetings to gather feedback. If additional services are needed, such as housing navigation or case management, CAM subcontracts with partner organizations, subject to City approval of the scope and payment terms. Throughout the project, CAM consistently tracks data, updates information based on resident interactions, and produces weekly status reports. At the conclusion of the event, CAM delivers a comprehensive closure report summarizing outcomes and lessons learned, ensuring transparency and accountability in supporting displaced residents.

### **Displacement Event Outcomes**

Emergency relocation efforts included securing 51 hotel rooms across seven locations in Charlotte. These hotels were selected based on proximity to residents' jobs or access to public transportation. CAM paid for these accommodations for the maximum duration allowed by each establishment, provided packing assistance, and helped residents move. Throughout their stays, caseworkers maintained regular contact with residents, assisting them in exploring housing options and addressing barriers through case management and conferencing.

By January 8, most households had transitioned out of the temporary hotels. Some moved into permanent housing with the assistance of CAM and its partners, while others continue to use hotels as temporary housing

while working toward securing permanent housing. Many former residents of Lamplighter have significant barriers to permanent housing options and received referrals to coordinated entry and emergency shelter.

The city's cost for the displacement event as of mid-January was over \$161,000, including the cost of utilities at the Lamplighter Inn location approximately 6 weeks.

### **Key Highlights and Learnings**

Key highlights of code enforcement efforts and learnings include:

- The average motel/hotel room is not designed or built to withstand the rigors of daily life. When hotels are used on an extended-stay basis, the rooms sustain more wear and tear and require more regular maintenance.
- After a property is denied permitting from Mecklenburg County Environmental Health, the property may be more at-risk for deteriorating conditions.
- The internal structure of commercial buildings is complex and doesn't necessarily fit well with an in-rem repair strategy, especially when systems integrity is compromised.
- Lack of accountability for an absent property owner or criminal/fraudulent owner activity constrains effectiveness of code enforcement
  - *Code tools and other enforcement processes take time/due process*
  - *Situation deteriorated very quickly when the building was abandoned*
- Code enforcement tools, even with holistic partnerships in place, are not sufficient to address the complexity of this type of situation.
- Mass displacement protocol and services are critical, but limited capacity for shelter and supportive housing limits effectiveness of these supports.

### **Timeline**

The table below outlines key dates and actions taken. Note that enforcement activities on each case have been continuous throughout this period, are ongoing, and will persist until all violations are resolved.

June 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Property failed Mecklenburg County Environmental Health inspection</li> <li>• Public-agency referral from CMPD</li> <li>• The entire property is inspected resulting in 52 code cases (rooms plus one for the entire building exterior/grounds). Ultimately, the owner was able to make all the required repairs to bring it back into compliance including going through the permitting process with Mecklenburg County Code Enforcement and gaining compliance on all permits issued for the project.</li> </ul>
Dec 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media report (QNotes) about the opening of Vermelle's Place at Lamplighter Inn.</li> </ul>
April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first new case on the property since the 2021 compliance is reported.</li> </ul>
May 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four Minimum Housing Code cases are open and actively being enforced.</li> <li>• Email received from housing advocate suggesting water had been disconnected (not confirmed).</li> <li>• Staff alerts Displacement Protocol Partners that Lamplighter may become a displacement event.</li> </ul>
July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email from housing advocate requesting inspection and conveying alarm at escalating crisis. Staff visits site and does not find evidence of anything that would warrant a field observation case initiation of every unit. Staff continue with enforcement process of open cases.</li> </ul>

Aug 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ten Code cases are open and actively being enforced. Code is able to connect with owner by phone to discuss plan of action. Owner reports multiple tenants behind in their rent for multiple months and also refusing to pay rent, and overall other financial issues that impact their ability to make repairs and maintain the property.</li> <li>On Aug 23 Crisis alerts city that there is another report of water being out. Staff confirms that there is an active plumbing issue (not a disconnect) and that the owner is actively working to correct it. Crisis reports that there are 45 rooms occupied, including families with disabilities and youth.</li> </ul>
Sep 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11 Code cases are active, out of the 50 habitable units. The majority of cases are only a few violations including dangerous violations where smoke and CO alarms have been purposefully disabled by tenants.</li> <li>Tenant complaints are increasing. In response Code conducts a rapid inspection of all habitable units. The owner provides voluntary access to all rooms and spaces on the property.</li> <li>12 new housing cases were initiated: The most common violations were missing smoke and CO alarms which appeared the tenants had been removing as many had empty wall mounts. Several of the rooms had plumbing and electrical issues. Several rooms did not have operable heating units and electronic door locks. A couple units had evidence of roof leaks on the second floor. The others had minor violations from general wear and tear on the property. A total of 21 cases are now open.</li> </ul>
Oct 3 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CLT Water disconnects service due to non-payment. Owner was able to make payment and water services were restored the same day.</li> </ul>
Oct 22 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff begin receiving numerous complaints from tenants advising that the “new owner” had been going door to door and posting notices that all the units had to be vacated for repairs no later than October 31, 2024.</li> <li>On the same day, staff speak with Mr. Harry Patel/JDH Developers who advises that he now has a lease-to-purchase agreement with the owner, and shared his intent to start making repairs, evict the tenants that were not paying rent but allow those that were to stay and occupy their respective units. The owner of record remains legally responsible for compliance and staff communicate this to the owner.</li> </ul>
Late Oct – Nov 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff begins receiving calls about disconnected water.</li> <li>On Nov 7, the owner had both power and gas services disconnected, and he advises staff that he is not able to restore services for financial reasons. The owner has effectively abandoned the property.</li> <li>City designates Lamplighter a mass displacement event and triggers displacement protocol with Crisis Assistance Ministry. CAM restores water and power to the building with new accounts under their name.</li> <li>Trash begins accumulating and conditions worsen.</li> </ul>
Dec 10 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City staff (HNS, CMPD, CFD) clears remaining occupants and structure is boarded and secured. All utilities are disconnected after board-up process.</li> </ul>
Dec 30 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff visit site (HNS/CMPD) and address several boards that have been removed with new management company affiliated with adjoining property.</li> </ul>
Jan 3 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff meet with Harry Patel/JDH (person with lease-to-own agreement) and discuss his plan of action which includes removing the Lamplighter sign visible from I-85 to help eliminate passers-by seeking a motel, blocking an entrance, and repairing rooms with a 60~ day goal to complete.</li> <li>JDH has restored water, power and gas, installed on-site security, and plans to proceed with a purchase.</li> <li>Compliance responsibility remains with the owner-of-record.</li> </ul>

**Code Enforcement Case Summary**

<u>Year</u>	<u># Housing Cases</u>	<u># Housing Compliances</u>	<u>Civil Penalties as of 12/31*</u>	<u>Cases Dismissed or No Violations</u>
2020	0	0	0	
2021	52	0	0	
2022	0	0	0	
2023	0	52	0	
2024	29	2	0	6

<u># Nuisance Cases</u>	<u># Nuisance Compliances**</u>
2	2
4	2
1	1
1	1
4	1

\*Civil Penalties being issued to current owner on 6 of 21 cases.

\*\*Property contracted for clean-up 2 times in 2021 and 2 times in 2024. Costs for nuisance abatement are liened against the property.

**Attachments:**

- Location map and illustrative photos showing variety of violations/conditions
- Copy of displacement flyer distributed to residents







## Lamplighter Inn

Following owner abandonment, all normal hotel services ended - trash/debris began to accumulate and conditions quickly deteriorated.



Example of room conditions



Hallway conditions following owner abandonment.



## Lamplighter Inn



Following owner abandonment, all normal hotel services ended - and trash/debris began to accumulate and conditions quickly deteriorated.



Following owner abandonment, all normal hotel services ended - and trash/debris began to accumulate and conditions quickly deteriorated.



## Lamplighter Inn



Code Enforcement Staff secure building.



Code Enforcement Staff secure building.



### **Property Summary**

Community Name:	Tanglewood Apartments
Address:	3200 Dalecrest Drive / Wynbrook Way
Council District:	1
Year Built:	1970
Number of Units:	96
City Displacement Event?	Yes / 2024



### **Overview**

Tanglewood Apartments is a 96-unit apartment community consisting of 12 buildings with 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom units in the Derita community, near the intersection of Graham Street and I-85. Built in 1970, the property has a current tax value of \$8.7M, including \$6.5M building value and \$2.1M land value. The most recent property sale occurred in August 2024 in the amount of \$8.25M. Before the 2024 sale, the most recent transfer of ownership occurred in 2006.



### **From Housing Code Violations to a Displacement Event**

From 2020 to 2024, there have been 74 minimum housing code cases/complaints at Tanglewood. In eighteen of these, either no violations were found at the time of inspection, or the case was dismissed - dismissal can occur when duplicate requests are received for the same unit, the tenant does not respond to attempts to complete the inspection, or the tenant calls back and cancels their request. Of the remaining 56 cases, 27 were brought into compliance by the owner. Currently there are 29 open cases and of these, 11 have been open more than 215 days.

In 2020, the city created a Multifamily Enhanced Rental Inspection process to identify emerging challenges at multifamily communities - this process includes generating quarterly reports to identify apartment communities with a concentration of housing cases within a 24-month period. Upon creation of the new process and evaluation of the first report in 2020, the report revealed that Tanglewood Apartments had housing cases on 13% of units in the previous time period. In response, staff enacted the enhanced inspection process and proactively met with the then-owner to discuss open cases. While Tanglewood has remained below the 15% threshold since 2020, it's important to emphasize that enforcement activities have been continuous on all open and new cases, including during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 which impacted enforcement in various ways as staff learned how to navigate the evolving situation of the pandemic (e.g., temporarily delayed inspections that involved entering occupied units following the shutdown, paused civil penalties, no in-person meetings, etc.).

Beginning in early 2023, residents and advocacy groups began reaching out to the city for assistance at Tanglewood. Additionally, a fire occurred at Tanglewood in early 2023 that effectively closed one building and resulted in new cases. These cases are still open but the building is not occupied. During this time, the apartment community also suffered structural and infrastructure damage, including vehicle-related harm to a building's brick veneer and damage to the community's main water line. Staff met with the owner and the owner's new property management and maintenance team in April 2023 to emphasize the need for urgency and establish a plan for repairs. The owner shared that they were experiencing cash-flow challenges from the lasting impacts of Covid,

non-payment of rents, low occupancy and other expenses related to the fire and water-main damage. Throughout the remainder of 2023, staff held multiple in-person meetings and conference calls with ownership, property management and maintenance teams, and continued enforcement activities for all open and new cases. The owner achieved compliance on 17 cases, but nine new cases were also opened during this time.

In February 2024, staff learns that the owners are trying to sell the property. In March 2024, HNS Housing Services staff proactively reach out to affordable housing partners to explore Tanglewood as a possible NOAH acquisition project. Unfortunately, the history of deferred maintenance and the scope of necessary repairs were deemed to be cost-prohibitive and, as a result, housing partners had no appetite to pursue acquisition.

Later in 2024, staff learned of a pending sale of the property and met proactively with the proposed buyer's agent and contractor to review the current list of violations. Following the sale of the property in August, Code Enforcement staff met with the new owner who at that time shared that their plan was to repair and re-lease the property. While the owner's repair plans sounded promising, tenants and advocates begin to report concerns about displacement/eviction. Code Enforcement leadership and Community Relations (CRC) staff met with the new owner on October 31, 2024, to discuss tenant displacement concerns. At that time, staff is told that approximately 50-units are occupied, and that the owner has plans to deliver approximately 40 notices of lease non-renewal. Residents at the property are on month-to-month leases, so the non-renewal notice gave tenants 30 days to vacate.

**Staff activated the Displacement Protocol in late October based on the new owner's plans to not renew leases. City partners are on-site beginning October 31, knocking on doors and beginning household needs assessment/intake.**

On November 1, 2024, CRC organized, hosted and facilitated a meeting at the Belmont Center between the tenants and the new owner. The meeting aimed to address significant issues regarding potential displacement, communication barriers, and property repairs and provided an opportunity for residents to hear directly from management. Management agreed to offer flexible office hours for individual consultations, encouraged resident cooperation with inspection access to expedite work, and claimed that there were no immediate plans for evictions however stated that they would be reviewing expired leases.

Staff continues to monitor the property and conduct enforcement activities allowed by the Code, however, no substantial repairs have been made since the last compliance of one unit in November 2024. Additionally, management has advised staff that they plan to make all repairs when the property is vacant.

### **Displacement Protocol Activities**

City staff designated Tanglewood Apartments as a displacement event in October 2024. When a displacement event occurs, the City of Charlotte identifies the event and notifies Crisis Assistance Ministry (CAM), which assigns a project coordinator. The coordinator immediately begins collaborating with the displacement response team to assess resident needs and identify the necessary support services tailored to the challenges faced by displaced tenants. A project initiation meeting is held to outline the event's details, including the location, resident demographics, and current conditions, while setting a high-level timeline with key milestones. Roles, responsibilities, and communication protocols are also established during this meeting, ensuring clarity and alignment among team members.

The displacement response team, which includes the City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, Housing Collaborative, CAM, and other approved contractors, works together to implement a coordinated response. CAM takes the lead in developing and executing a standard operating procedure (SOP) that guides communication protocols, securely manages data sharing, and facilitates regular team meetings and updates. Acting as the

primary point of contact, CAM handles internal and external communications, including media inquiries, and provides updates to community stakeholders. Bi-weekly status meetings with the City ensure progress tracking, risk identification, and resource allocation adjustments.

CAM conducts resident interviews and assessments to determine individual needs and develop tailored relocation plans. Outreach efforts are prioritized to build trust with tenants, including distributing project-specific flyers, coordinating community fairs, and hosting meetings to gather feedback. If additional services are needed, such as housing navigation or case management, CAM subcontracts with partner organizations, subject to City approval of the scope and payment terms. Throughout the project, CAM consistently tracks data, updates information based on resident interactions, and produces weekly status reports. At the conclusion of the event, CAM delivers a comprehensive closure report summarizing outcomes and lessons learned, ensuring transparency and accountability in supporting displaced residents.

### **Displacement Event Status**

City staff designated Tanglewood Apartments as a displacement event in October 2024. Since then, the displacement team has maintained ongoing communication and provided services to affected residents. A total of 47 households have been impacted by this event. As of mid-January, 28 households had reached out to the displacement team for assistance. Of these, 15 households have transitioned into permanent housing at other locations, while nine are actively searching for new rental housing, including three that are in the process of completing lease paperwork. Four households have been referred to coordinated entry for shelter assessments due to their high level of need. The remaining households have not contacted the displacement team for services.

### **Key Insights and Learnings**

Key insights of code enforcement efforts and learnings include:

- Evidence indicates that the previous owner neglected routine maintenance during their nearly 20-years of ownership, resulting in substandard conditions at the property.
- Unforeseen events and expenditures (fire that closes an entire building; car crash that damages main water line) can negatively impact owner cash flow and further exacerbate repair timeline.
- Both deferred maintenance and large unforeseen events can create a rolling timeline of code violations and enforcement procedures.
- Staff meetings with ownership are an important component of enforcement, but may be insufficient to gain compliance. Between 2020 and 2024, staff met with the owner and property management team 4 times, with additional conference calls and other correspondence/communication.
- When new ownership is involved, it's critical to meet as early as possible with the new ownership group to understand their plans for property including anything that will impact tenant housing stability, share outstanding violations and begin discussing a plan of action. Prior to the sale of the property and again within 45 days of the sale, Code Enforcement staff met with the new ownership group to review outstanding violations and discuss repairs/plans for the property. However, the property owners did not follow-through on their stated plans.
- Creating opportunities for two-way dialogue between residents and owners when possible is helpful. Code Enforcement and Community Relations staff met with the new owner to share resident concerns about displacement and encourage them to meet with residents. Subsequently, Community Relations coordinated and facilitated a meeting with residents and the new owner group in an attempt to provide an opportunity for residents to voice their concerns and the new owner to share their plans for the property. However, working earlier in the situation to resolve conflicts may have been more beneficial.
- There were opportunities throughout the timeline to enact in-rem repair on a selective basis.

- Quick response to displacement pressures is imperative. Immediately upon learning of the sale of the property together with owner communicate of lease non-renewal to households, staff implemented the city's mass displacement protocol event. City partners were on-site quickly, going door-to-door to reach residents and begin assessment/needs surveys.
- Partnerships are critical to facilitate resident relations and engagement, and displacement protocol.

### Timeline

The table below highlights key dates and actions taken. Note that enforcement activities on each case have been continuous throughout this period, are ongoing, and will persist until all violations are resolved.

Jan -Feb 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Multifamily Enhanced Rental Inspection process was established in January 2020 to identify emerging challenges and includes generating quarterly reports to identify apartment communities with a large percentage of code cases within a 24-month period.</li> <li>• Staff evaluated Minimum Housing Code cases over the previous 24-month period. Tanglewood Apartments was at 13% of units and staff enacted enhanced inspection process with the then-owner.</li> </ul>
2020 - COVID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During 2020, enforcement of open cases continued, however, in-person meetings were limited, and civil penalties were halted in response to the pandemic.</li> </ul>
Mar 2020 – Jan 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During this time, enforcement continued on all active cases per normal enforcement procedures.</li> <li>• Evaluation of quarterly Enhanced Multi-Family Inspection reports continue to show that Tanglewood Apartments did not meet the 15% threshold (Tanglewood was at 13% in 2020, 11% in 2021, and 13% in 2022).</li> </ul>
Feb 2023 – April 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Legal Aid of North Carolina contacted the city in February 2023 and requested inspections.</b></li> <li>• On March 16 staff receive notice from Charlotte Fire Department that fires have occurred at the property effectively closing one building.</li> <li>• Staff met onsite with the owner and owner's contractors/property management to discuss the need for urgent attention to repairs and maintenance.</li> <li>• The owner reported cash-flow challenges including low occupancy, non-payment of rents, and expenses related to fire and water-main damage.</li> </ul>
April 2023 – Dec 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff met with the owner and property manager multiple times to address open cases, including walking the entire property with the parties.</li> <li>• Owner gained compliance on 17 cases but others remained open, and 9 new cases were initiated during this period.</li> <li>• The owner continued to express that they face revenue shortfalls and high repair expenses.</li> </ul>
Feb 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Code Enforcement leadership conducts on-site visit and Code Enforcement staff meet onsite multiple times with property manager. Staff shares that a sense of urgency is needed. At each meeting / contact point the property manager/owner commits to resolving violations (e.g., owner action plan in place, expressed commitment to resolving violations, etc.).</li> <li>• <b>Staff learns that the owners are trying to sell the property.</b></li> </ul>
Mar 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>HNS Housing Services staff proactively reach out to affordable housing partners to discuss Tanglewood as a possible NOAH acquisition project.</b> Maintenance history and necessary repairs deemed to be cost-prohibitive and as a result there was no partner appetite to pursue acquisition.</li> </ul>
May – July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff meet multiple times with owner to discuss repairs, civil penalties and pending sale.</li> </ul>

Aug - Sept 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Property sale occurs / new owner takes possession of property.</b></li> <li>• At time of sale, there are 26 open cases at Tanglewood, with 6 started in the last 2 months, and 14 tenant complaints in the last year.</li> <li>• Accrued Civil Penalties at time of sale, in the amount of \$823K, remain the responsibility of previous owner/seller.</li> </ul>
Oct 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Code Enforcement staff meet on site with new owner</b> and owner's management team to review current violations and establish timeline for repairs. Owner advises they have committed \$2M for repairs, and states that their plan is to repair property.</li> <li>• Tenants begin to express concerns about displacement.</li> <li>• Code Enforcement leadership and Community Relations (CRC) staff meet with owner on October 31 to discuss tenant displacement concerns. Staff learns that approximately 50-units are occupied, and Owner has plans to deliver approximately 40 notices of lease non-renewal. All current leases by this time are month-to-month.</li> <li>• <b>Displacement Protocol is activated October 30 based on owner's plans to not renew leases. City partners are on-site beginning October 31, knocking on doors and beginning needs assessment/intake.</b></li> </ul>
Nov 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CRC organizes and hosts tenant-landlord meeting in early November at Belmont Center, allowing property owner to clarify plans for the property. CRC and HNS staff attend meeting, along with applicable community partners.</b></li> <li>• 60-days have elapsed from time of sale, and new civil penalties begin accruing on open cases against new owner.</li> </ul>
Dec 2024 - Current	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff continues to monitor the property; however, no substantial repairs have been made since the last compliance of one unit in November 2024. Management has advised that they plan to make all repairs when the property is vacant.</li> <li>• Currently, there are 29 open cases at Tanglewood with 25 cases accruing civil penalties against the new owner.</li> <li>• As of late January, there were 17 occupied units and 79 vacant units. The owner had begun renovation work on approximately 25 units. The remaining tenants are scheduled for eviction court hearings throughout February.</li> </ul>

### Code Enforcement Case Summary

<u>Year</u>	<u># Housing Cases</u>	<u># Housing Compliances</u>	<u>Civil Penalties* as of 12/31</u>	<u>Cases Dismissed or No Violations</u>	<u># Nuisance Cases</u>	<u># Nuisance Compliances</u>
2020	13	11	0	6	3	3
2021	15	7	1 issued	6	2	2
2022	21	11	0	5	6	6
2023	9	17	6 issued	2	0	0
2024	28	15	17 issued	7	6	6

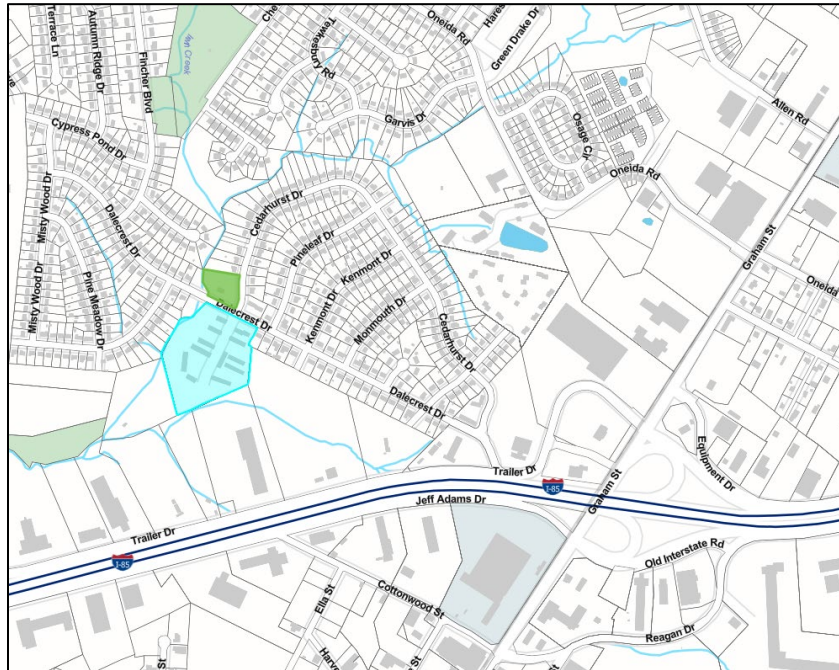
\*Civil Penalty totals- Previous owner 23 outstanding invoices for \$823,500.

\*Civil Penalties being issued to current owner- 25 of 29 cases.

### **Attachments:**

- Location map and illustrative photos showing variety of violations/conditions
- Copy of displacement flyer distributed to residents







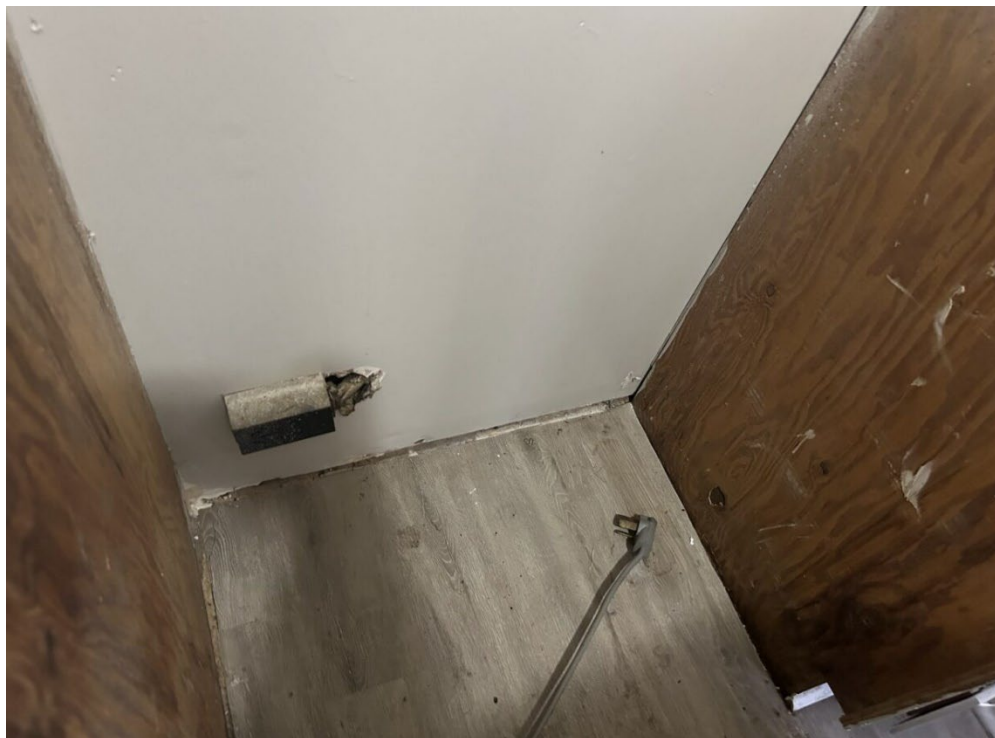












# TANGLEWOOD RESIDENTS... WE'RE HERE TO HELP.



## YOU'RE NOT ALONE

**Tanglewood Apartments is under new ownership and some residents must vacate by November 29. The following resources are available:**

To receive one-on-one assistance in locating new affordable housing, please contact the **Housing Collaborative** at 704.334.8722 between the hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. You will need to complete a short assessment of needs for information to be collected securely. All information provided should be related to housing and relocation. It's important to let the Housing Collaborative staff know that you are from Tanglewood Apartments.

To coordinate and provide ongoing communication and moving details, please contact **Champion House of Care** at 704.746.8081 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday – Sunday, or email [championhouseofcare@gmail.com](mailto:championhouseofcare@gmail.com). Let them know that you are from Tanglewood Apartments.

**Legal Aid of North Carolina** can provide legal assistance. Contact them at 704.594.8662. For information see landlord/tenant laws brochure at [legalaidnc.org/get-help/](http://legalaidnc.org/get-help/)

## EMERGENCY RESOURCES

**Housing Collaborative**  
**704.334.8722**

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**Champion House of Care**  
**704.746.8081**

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**Legal Aid of  
North Carolina**  
**704.594.8662**

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**For additional assistance,  
please call the City of  
Charlotte's Housing  
Services division at  
704.336.3380 or email  
[hnsinfo@charlottenc.gov](mailto:hnsinfo@charlottenc.gov).**

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# RESIDENTES DE TANGLEWOOD... ESTAMOS AQUÍ PARA AYUDAR.



## NO ESTAS SOLO

**Tanglewood Apartments tiene nuevos propietarios y algunos residentes deben desalojarlos antes del 29 de noviembre de. Los siguientes recursos están disponibles:**

Para recibir asistencia personalizada para localizar nuevas viviendas asequibles, comuníquese con **Housing Collaborative** al 704.334.8722 entre las 9 a. m. y las 5 p. m. Deberá completar una breve evaluación de las necesidades de recopilación de información de forma segura. Toda la información proporcionada debe estar relacionada con la vivienda y la reubicación. Es importante informar al personal de Housing Collaborative que usted es de Tanglewood Apartments.

Para coordinar y brindar comunicación continua y detalles de la mudanza, comuníquese con **Champion House of Care** al 704.746.8081 de 8 a. m. a 8 p. m., de lunes a domingo, o envíe un correo electrónico a [campeonhouseofcare@gmail.com](mailto:campeonhouseofcare@gmail.com). Hágales saber que usted es de Tanglewood Apartments.

**Legal Aid of North Carolina** puede brindar asistencia legal. Comuníquese con ellos al 704.594.8662. Para obtener información, consulte el folleto sobre las leyes para propietarios/inquilinos en [legallaidnc.org/get-help/](http://legallaidnc.org/get-help/).

## EMERGENCIA RECURSOS

**Housing Collaborative**  
**704.334.8722**

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**Champion House of Care**  
**704.746.8081**

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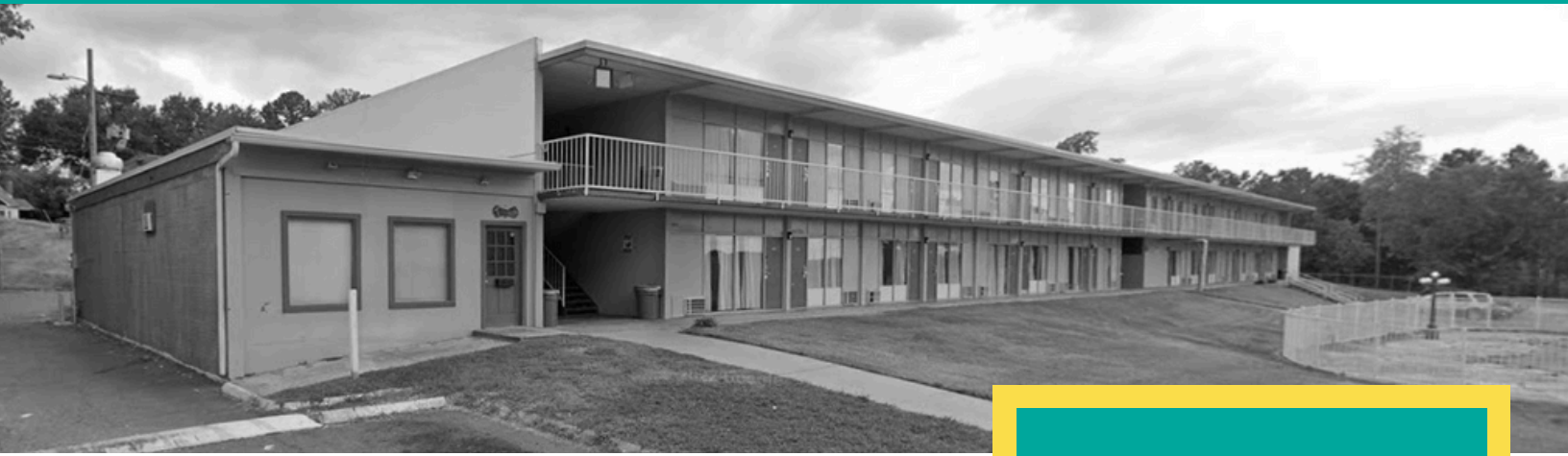
**Legal Aid of  
North Carolina**  
**704.594.8662**

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**Para obtener asistencia  
adicional, llame a la división  
de Servicios de Vivienda de la  
ciudad de Charlotte al  
704.336.3380 o envíe un  
correo electrónico a  
[hnsinfo@charlottenc.gov](mailto:hnsinfo@charlottenc.gov).**

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# LAMPLIGHTER INN RESIDENTS... **WE'RE HERE TO HELP.**



## YOU'RE NOT ALONE

The Lamplighter Inn will fully close December 11. All residents must vacate by that time. If you need assistance, please contact the following resources:

To receive one-on-one assistance in locating new affordable housing, please contact the **Housing Collaborative** at 704.334.8722 between the hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. You will need to complete a short assessment of needs for information to be collected securely. All information provided should be related to housing and relocation. It's important to let the Housing Collaborative staff know that you are from Lamplighter Inn.

To coordinate and provide ongoing communication and moving details, please contact **Action NC** at 980.443.3715. Let them know that you are from Lamplighter Inn.

**Legal Aid of North Carolina** can provide legal assistance. Contact them at 704.594.8662. For information see landlord/tenant laws brochure at [legalaidnc.org/get-help/](https://legalaidnc.org/get-help/)

## EMERGENCY RESOURCES

**Housing Collaborative**  
704.334.8722

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**Action NC**  
980.443.3715

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**Legal Aid of  
North Carolina**  
704.594.8662

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For additional assistance,  
please call the City of  
Charlotte's Housing  
Services division at  
704.336.3380 or email  
[hnsinfo@charlottenc.gov](mailto:hnsinfo@charlottenc.gov).

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# RESIDENTES DE LAMPLIGHTER INN... ESTAMOS AQUÍ PARA AYUDAR.



## NO ESTAS SOLO

**El Lamplighter Inn cerrará por completo el 11 de diciembre. Todos los residentes deberán desalojarlo antes de esa fecha. Si necesita ayuda, comuníquese con los siguientes recursos:**

Para recibir asistencia personalizada para localizar nuevas viviendas asequibles, comuníquese con **Housing Collaborative** al 704.334.8722 entre las 9 a. m. y las 5 p. m. Deberá completar una breve evaluación de las necesidades de recopilación de información de forma segura. Toda la información proporcionada debe estar relacionada con la vivienda y la reubicación. Es importante informar al personal de Housing Collaborative que usted es de Lamplighter Inn.

Para coordinar y proporcionar comunicación continua y detalles de la mudanza, comuníquese con **Action NC** al 980.443.3715. Hágales saber que usted es de Lamplighter Inn.

**Legal Aid of North Carolina** puede brindar asistencia legal. Comuníquese con ellos al 704.594.8662. Para obtener información, consulte el folleto sobre las leyes para propietarios/inquilinos en [legallaidnc.org/get-help/](http://legallaidnc.org/get-help/).

## EMERGENCIA RECURSOS

**Housing Collaborative**  
**704.334.8722**

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**Action NC**  
**980.443.3715**

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**Legal Aid of  
North Carolina**  
**704.594.8662**

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**Para obtener asistencia  
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de Servicios de Vivienda de la  
ciudad de Charlotte al  
704.336.3380 o envíe un  
correo electrónico a  
[hnsinfo@charlottenc.gov](mailto:hnsinfo@charlottenc.gov).**

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