

1 **TOWN OF EASTON, MARYLAND**
2 **Workshop with Landlords**
3 **Council's Chambers – 7:00 a.m.**
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5 April 26, 2013
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7 **PRESENT AT CONVENING**
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9 Mayor Robert C. Willey
10 Council President John Ford
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12 Councilmember Leonard E. Wendowski, Sr.
13 Councilmember Kelley K. Malone

14 Also present was Town Clerk Mrs. Kathy Ruf.

Mr. Steve Wheeler, Ms. Daphne Cawley and Mr. Dave Douglass were present on behalf of the landlords.

Mr. Al Silverstein was present representing the Talbot Chamber of Commerce.

MEETING

At 7:04 a.m., President Ford welcomed everyone and stated there was no set agenda.

Mayor Willey stated that some of the landlords feel like they have been involved in a process. They are present to explain to the council what has been happening in the town with the rental housing inspections.

Ms. Cawley and Mr. Wheeler stated that they have put together a group that has concerns with the Building Code Department. Mr. Wheeler stated that the discussions have become heated so they are present to represent the group. Mr. Wheeler stated that at a previous meeting, he asked to be part of the process but has not been involved.

Discussion occurred regarding the rental license fee and what they get for their money.

Mr. Wheeler stated that property owners want to sell their rental property which will result in renters on the street, loss of homes for the workforce and increased crime. He stated that properties with rents of \$500 to \$800 are being affected; approximately 600 to 1000 properties.

Mayor Willey stated that inspections need to be meaningful and landlords and inspectors need to work together for both to come out winners.

Ms. Cawley asked if the council was aware of the change in inspections. She recounted her experience with a rental housing inspection that took place March 13. She stated that she has talked to lawyers and the properties can be grandfathered. Discussion occurred regarding properties in the Historic District and which decision should be abided by. The landlords want rules defined. They stated that they get no satisfaction with the Building Code Official. The landlords asked for response from the town regarding their concerns.

Mr. Wendowski stated that he wanted specific instances to review. He stated that he will look into their complaints and respond.

Mr. Silverstein asked for a timeframe for responses.

Mr. Wheeler stated that other landlords want to go to the newspaper and television but he asked for this forum first. He asked to be kept informed if any decisions should be made. He asked that the group be addressed for suggestions.

Ms. Malone stated that she appreciates hearing from the property owners and is looking forward to a happy medium.

Mr. Wheeler stated that when the town is involved, the word everyone is using is inimitable.

Mayor Willey stated that he will get back to the group.

Mr. Dave Thompson stated that there are discretionary enforcement decisions with one particular person. He stated that there needs to be a balance to make this work.

President Ford stated that reasonable legislation is needed.

Mr. Wheeler asked that fines and condemnation notices be waived for 30 to 60 days while this matter is being reviewed. He stated that he will ask the landlords to give any notices and fines to the Mayor and asked for a reprieve from any actions.

ADJOURN

At 7:56 a.m., President Ford adjourned the meeting.

Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk