



## **Takoma Park City Council Meeting – May 18, 2016 Agenda Item 10**

### **Work Session**

Discussion of Proposed Extension of Owner Occupied Group House Registration

### **Recommended Council Action**

Give direction on proposed amendment deleting the sunset clause initially established for the registration of owner occupied group houses.

### **Context With Key Issues**

On July 22, 2013, *Takoma Park Code*, Chapter 6, Housing was amended by Ordinance #2013-25 which established a new registration requirement for owner occupied group houses. The amendment included a "sunset clause," with the registration requirement scheduled to expire on June 30, 2016. Staff has found the registration requirement a means of ensuring that basic life safety standards are met within these otherwise unregulated housing options. There are 26 owner occupied group houses currently registered with the City.

Additional amendments to the City Code may be warranted and will be presented for consideration following completion of the FY17 Affordable Housing Strategic Plan.

### **Council Priority**

A Livable Community for All; Ensure we have a range of safe, quality, and stable housing options for residents of varying incomes.

### **Environmental Impact of Action**

N/A

### **Fiscal Impact of Action**

N/A

### **Attachments and Links**

- Draft Ordinance Amending *Takoma Park Code*, Chapter 6.08, Rental Housing Licenses and Owner-Occupied Group House Registrations
- FACT SHEET - Owner Occupied Group House: Registration Requirements

Introduced by:

First Reading:

Second Reading:

Effective Date:

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND  
ORDINANCE 2016-XX  
AMENDING *TAKOMA PARK CODE*, CHAPTER 6.08, RENTAL HOUSING LICENSES  
AND OWNER-OCCUPIED GROUP HOUSE REGISTRATIONS**

WHEREAS, the City's owner-occupied group house registration requirement was scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2016; and

WHEREAS, the registration requirement proved to be effective in promoting the health and safety of residents of owner-occupied group houses.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND:**

**SECTION 1.** Chapter 6.08, Rental Housing Licenses and Owner-Occupied Group House Registrations, of the *Takoma Park Code* shall be amended as follows:

**6.08.120 Owner-occupied group house—Application and registration.**

A. Owner-occupied group houses must be registered with the City ~~on or before June 30, 2014,~~  
~~or~~ within 30 calendar days of operating the facility as a group house.

B. Application for a new certificate of registration or the renewal of an existing registration shall be made by the owner occupant on a form provided by the City containing such information as necessary to administer and enforce the provisions of this chapter.

C. Upon receipt of an application for registration and a \$50.00 registration fee, the City shall inspect the property to verify that no serious life safety code violations exist prior to the issuance of a certificate of registration. Examples of serious life safety violations include, but are not limited to, lack of egress from sleeping rooms, inoperative smoke detectors, and the lack of essential utilities such as heat, water and operable sanitary facilities. The owner occupant will be given a reasonable opportunity to make required corrections. All identified life safety code violations must be corrected by the established reinspection date set by the Code Official.

D. A certificate of registration will be issued to the owner occupant upon verification that identified life safety code violations have been corrected.

E. The certificate of registration shall remain valid for a term of three calendar years, expiring on December 31st of the third calendar year.

~~F. All provisions contained in this section shall expire on June 30, 2016, and shall be of no effect thereafter~~

**SECTION 2.** This Ordinance will be effective immediately.

ADOPTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND, THIS  
\_\_\_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_ 2016, BY ROLL-CALL VOTE AS FOLLOWS:

AYE:

NAY:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:



City of Takoma Park Maryland  
**REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS**  
**Owner Occupied Group House**

**Registration Requirement:**

The City of Takoma Park law requires the registration of all Owner Occupied Group Houses (*Takoma Park Code Chapter 6.08.120*).

**Definition:**

An Owner Occupied Group House is defined as a single family home that is occupied by the owner or a family member as their primary residence and by one or more non-related individuals who pay rent or share in the costs of utilities. The kitchen, bathrooms and common areas are shared by everyone living in the house. The registration process is designed to ensure that the house is safe for all of the occupants.

**Registration Process:**

Application forms are available online at [www.takomaparkmd.gov](http://www.takomaparkmd.gov) or upon request from the City of Takoma Park's Housing and Community Development Department.

The completed application form and a \$50 registration fee must be submitted to the Department within 30 days of the initial operation of the group house. Applications for renewal of an existing registration must be completed within 30 days of the expiration.

Following the submission of the completed application and the required registration fee, the City will schedule a date and time for the inspection of the house. The inspector will walk through the house with the owner to verify that there are no serious life safety code violations present at the time of the inspection. If any violations are identified, the owner will be given a reasonable amount of time, generally 30 days depending upon the severity of the problem, to correct any violation. All identified life safety code violations must be corrected before a Certificate of Registration will be issued.

Once issued, the Certificate of Registration is valid for three years.

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## Basic Life Safety Standards:

During the inspection, the City inspector will walk through the house with the owner to verify that the following requirements have been met:

- Smoke Detectors: Smoke alarms must be installed on the ceiling of every level of your home and both inside and outside bedrooms.
- Cooking Facilities: The house is be equipped with a kitchen stove (top burners and oven), a refrigerator, shelves for dry food storage and adequate work surface for food preparation. Kitchen stove/ range must have vertical clearance above the cooking top of at least 30 inches to unprotected combustible material.
- Sanitation Facilities: Sanitary facilities are located within the house, easily accessible by all occupants, in proper operating condition, and adequate for personal cleanliness and disposal of human waste.
- Bedrooms/Sleeping Rooms: All bedrooms and sleeping rooms have at least one operable outside window or an exterior door that provides a safe unobstructed means of escape and which can be approved for emergency egress or rescue. If bedroom or sleeping room is on the second floor or a lower level, a door or stairway with a handrail and a clear path to the outside is also required.
- Window Bars: Required escape windows have not been barred except with breakaway bar systems approved by the Montgomery County Fire Marshall.
- Door Hardware: Every exterior door, door hinge, and door latch is maintained in good condition. Double-cylinder dead-bolt locks are not permitted for use on any exit door or individual bedroom door. Individual bedroom doors require a keyed door lock on the outside of the room door.
- Fire Hazards: The house is free of general fire hazards, including but not limited to the accumulation of combustible materials near a furnace or water heater and the storage of excess belongings which block fire exits.

## Questions?

For more information on the City of Takoma Park's Owner Occupied Group House Registration requirements, please contact the Housing and Community Development Department at 301.891.7119 or by email at [Housing@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:Housing@takomaparkmd.gov) Our offices are located on the Third Floor of the Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park MD 20912.