



City of New Bedford
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City of New Bedford
Jonathan F. Mitchell, Mayor

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Mayor Mitchell and City Councillors move to strengthen housing and sanitation codes to better protect neighborhoods

Changes would give city inspectors a stronger hand in dealing with “problem properties” and unkempt properties

New Bedford, Massachusetts- Mayor Jon Mitchell, joined by several City Councillors, announced today a package of changes to housing and sanitation codes that would strengthen the City’s ability to bring problem properties and other neighborhood nuisances into compliance.

The first proposed ordinance change would improve the condition of New Bedford’s neighborhoods by cracking down further on so-called “problem properties.” Under an existing ordinance, a property can be added to “Problem Properties List” and once designated, the cost of future police responses can be charged directly to the property owner. The number of previous valid police complaints determines whether a property qualifies to be added to the List.

Under the change being proposed today, the number of necessary police complaints would be cut in half, from the current eight complaints in a twelve month period to four complaints in the same period.

The second proposed ordinance change would improve the ability to contact the owners of certain non-owner occupied residential buildings. The inability of tenants or city inspectors to contact landlords directly has been a persistent challenge at many buildings.

Under the change being proposed today, certain non-owner occupied buildings would be required to post a sign with the contact information of the property owner or manager/agent inside a building’s public area. Non-owner occupied single-family homes would be specifically excluded from the new sign requirement.

A third proposed ordinance change would strengthen New Bedford’s existing “Clean and Lien” ordinance to more quickly reduce the impact on residents from nearby properties with litter, filth, or dangerous conditions. Currently, the ordinance allows fourteen days for property owners to dispose of litter that is a source of filth or is dangerous to the public’s health, safety, or welfare.

Under the change being proposed today, property owners would have to clean their properties within five days.

Mayor Mitchell had this to say about the package of ordinance changes:

“Working together with the City Council over the past six years, we have made significant progress in improving the condition of the city’s neighborhoods and holding the owners of problem properties accountable, but there is still more work to be done. We need to give our inspectors the tools they need to do their jobs better and continue to improve the city’s appearance and livability. Residents and neighbors deserve a well-kept, clean, and healthy neighborhood and should not be subject to dirty or unkempt properties.”

Examples of previous “Clean and Lien” efforts:



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