

09-09-2020 Town Council Meeting Responses to Council Questions #1

ITEM #19: Update on Town Efforts to Respond to the COVID-19 Crisis

Council Question:

Do we have a sense for how many residents in Chapel Hill who would qualify under the CDC's national eviction moratorium?

Staff Response:

We do not have access to income information for all renters in Chapel Hill and are not aware of the circumstances for each resident. Therefore, we are not able to determine how many residents might qualify for this program.

The Center for Disease Control's [Temporary Halt in Residential Evictions to Prevent Further Spread of COVID-19](#)¹ is in effect through December 31 and applies to tenants facing eviction for non-payment of rent. The tenant must provide a signed declaration (under penalty of perjury) to their landlord to document their income and the eligibility of their hardship. We understand from Orange County staff that Legal Aid is preparing a template for the declaration that tenants may use. During this time, residents could still be evicted for other reasons.

Orange County has a relatively low eviction rate in comparison to surrounding communities, and evictions have decreased since June (from 66 to 28 in August). Though the moratorium is in place, rent and late fees will continue to accrue. We encourage residents experiencing financial difficulties related to COVID-19 to contact the Housing Help Line (919-245-2655) to determine if they would be eligible for assistance through the County-wide Emergency Housing Assistance Program. In addition, Orange County has hired an attorney to provide free legal counseling to residents facing eviction.

Council Question:

Is there any education being provided on this to renters at the local level, in terms of qualifications, its financial implications for renters, etc.?

Staff Response:

We will work with our partners in the County, Hillsborough, and Carrboro as well as our community partner organizations to share information about eligibility and financial implications. We will especially highlight that though residents cannot be evicted for non-payment of rent, monthly rent and late fees will continue to accrue.

¹ https://www.novoco.com/sites/default/files/atoms/files/cdc_eviction_moratorium_090120.pdf