TO: Chair and Members Economic Development and Planning Committee

WARD(S) AFFECTED: WARDS 1 and 8

COMMITTEE DATE: August 9, 2010

SUBJECT/REPORT NO: Neighbourhood Residential Rental Housing Community Liaison Committee – Voluntary Rental Registry Program (PED10185) (Wards 1 and 8) (Outstanding Business List Item)

SUBMITTED BY: Tim McCabe General Manager Planning & Economic Development Department

PREPARED BY: Joe Xamin  905-546-2424 ext. 6656

SIGNATURE: 

RECOMMENDATION:

a) That staff be directed to implement a Voluntary Rental Housing Registry Program for Wards 1 and 8 requiring property owners provide contact information to the City;

b) That the item Neighbourhood Residential Rental Housing Community Liaison Committee – Voluntary Registry Program be identified as completed and removed from the Outstanding Business List.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On May 4, 2010 the Economic Development and Planning Committee approved “Report PED10049(a), “Neighbourhood Residential Rental Housing Community Liaison Committee – Rental Registry Program/Voluntary Certification Program”, and directed:
“(a) That staff be directed to investigate and report back to the Economic Development and Planning Committee with a defined scope, costing and an implementation plan for Wards 1 and 8 for a Voluntary Rental Housing Registry Program requiring the property owners contact information.”

This report contains the scope, costing and implementation plan for a web-based Voluntary Rental Registry Program for Wards 1 and 8 to collect rental property owners’ contact information voluntarily.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 4

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<tr>
<th>FINANCIAL / STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (for Recommendation(s) only)</th>
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**Financial:** There is no cost associated with creating and implementing a Voluntary Rental Housing Registry, other than the postage costs in sending out letters to approximately 3,000 landlords (approximately $1,500.00).

**Staffing:** At this point in time it is difficult to predict the impact of such a program on current staff. However, it is anticipated that the administration can be accommodated with current staff resources. This will be assessed on an ongoing basis as the registry is maintained.

**Legal:** There are no legal implications associated with a Voluntary Rental Housing Registry.

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<th>HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (Chronology of events)</th>
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In accordance with the October 15, 2008, Council direction, the Neighbourhood Residential Rental Housing Community Liaison Committee (NRRHCLC) was established to investigate the feasibility of regulating residential rental housing in Hamilton. The NRRHCLC operated from January to July 2009 and conducted extensive consultation.

On September 8, 2009, Citizen Committee Report entitled “Report 009-001 of the Neighbourhood Residential Rental Housing Community Liaison Committee (Wards 1, 8, 10 & 12)” was presented to the Economic Development and Planning Committee and included eight recommendations to manage rental housing in the proposed study areas. This report was referred to the General Manager of Planning and Economic Development for a report back on the issues prior to any further action being taken. One of the eight recommendations was:
“(d) That staff be directed to investigate and report to Economic Development and Planning Committee regarding the potential effectiveness of creating a rental housing registry that would include the property owner and their contact information.”

In approving staff Report PED10049(a) on May 4, 2010, the Economic Development and Planning Committee directed staff to report back “with a defined scope, costing and an implementation plan for Wards 1 and 8 for a Voluntary Rental Housing Registry Program requiring the property owners’ contact information.”

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

N/A

**RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

Legal Services was consulted in the preparation of this report.

**ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION**

(include Performance Measurement/Benchmarking Data, if applicable)

As noted in Report PED10049(a), a Voluntary Rental Housing Registry would request that landlords provide only their contact information to the City. This would provide the City a means of contact in order to resolve any issues or concerns regarding rental properties. Last year as the Neighbourhood Residential Rental Housing Community Liaison Committee consulted with various stakeholders, the Committee learned that numerous issues could potentially be avoided or resolved by a simple phone call by the Ward Councillor or staff to the property owner/landlord. A Voluntary Rental Housing Registry as described was also supported by some landlords as an alternative to full licensing.

The recommended Voluntary Rental Housing Registry will be a web-based program. The City will write and invite landlords to join the voluntary registry by asking them to provide the address of their rental property or properties as well as their contact information which would include their name, a physical mailing address (other than the rental property), phone number(s), and/or e-mail address. The program will be voluntary; landlords may choose not to participate in the program. There will be no associated fees for the voluntary registry. No tenant information will be collected as this information is not required for the registry.
Staff will use existing property standards and maintenance complaint data to identify rental properties. Staff will also work with the academic institutions and neighbourhood associations in order to identify other rental properties. Once a list of addresses is compiled, the City will contact the landlords.

The Voluntary Rental Housing Registry will be for Wards 1 and 8 as identified in the original scope of the NRRHCLC. The program could potentially be expanded to other City wards; however, in order to gauge the effectiveness of a Voluntary Rental Housing Registry it is recommended that the scope be maintained for Wards 1 and 8 at this time.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:**
(include Financial, Staffing, Legal and Policy Implications and pros and cons for each alternative)

Council could choose not to implement a Voluntary Rental Housing Registry Program.

**CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN** (Linkage to Desired End Results)


**Financial Sustainability**
- Generate assessment growth/non-tax revenues

**Healthy Community**
- Plan and manage the built environment
- A Rental Housing Registry Program would provide a list of existing rental properties

**APPENDICES / SCHEDULES**

JX/dt