



INDEPENDENT

Glendale seeks ‘slum’ designation authority over problem rentals

Councilman Aldama calls apartment complex near City Hall ‘a mess’



[STEVE STOCKMAR/INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA]

Councilmember Jamie Aldama called the Glendale Manor apartment complex in his Ocotillo District “a mess.”

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COUNCILMEMBER JAMIE ALDAMA

“

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RENE MURDIE, GLENDALE MANOR AREA MANAGER, RESPONDING TO COUNCILMAN ALDAMA'S REMARKS

IF YOU GO

What: Glendale City Council voting meeting

When: Tuesday, Oct. 26

Where: Council Chambers, 5850 W. Glendale Ave.

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The City Council at its Sept. 14 workshop reached a consensus on a proposed draft ordinance to classify a “slum” if the property has deteriorated or is in a state of disrepair and features conditions that are dangerous to the health or safety of the public, which could range from structurally unsound exterior surfaces to hazardous electrical systems or gas connections.

“This is a tool for the Council that we've been missing to improve the lives of our citizens,” said Councilman Jamie Aldama who made the initial request for city staff to research the potential to designate deteriorated rental properties as slums.

An official slum designation, as Glendale's Code Official Tim Boling noted at the workshop, would be recorded with the Maricopa County Assessor's Office, and is then revealed through a title search during a sale process. That action, it is hoped, can motivate rental owners to clean up the property and address tenant issues that lead to violations.

In extreme situations, if conditions are not improved, Boling explained, the city may apply to the Superior Court for the appointment of a receiver to manage the property.

Aldama's interest in pursuing the designation authority arose from a property in the Ocotillo District he serves.

"This stems from the longtime issues we've had with ... and I'll say it, the owners may not like it ... but Glendale Manor has been a mess," he said at the public workshop.

"And it continues to be a mess."

The Glendale Manor Apartments, located at 6539 W. Glendale Ave., just a few blocks west of City Hall, have a chronicled history.

In October of last year a 38-year-old father of four was stabbed to death in a unit at Glendale Manor. In June this past summer, Glendale Manor residents reported no working air conditioning during sweltering heat, which triggered the city's code enforcement staff to step in.

In September the city reported that there were 13 open code compliance cases against Glendale Manor. And public records show that the Glendale Police Department has made 41 arrests on felony charges at the address between Jan. 1 and Sept. 15 of this year.

Those charges range from dangerous drug use/possession to child/vulnerable adult abuse to aggravated assault with a deadly weapon. Records don't indicate which of those charges may have been dropped.

The complex has 328 units, and currently has 12 vacancies.

Transpacific Asset Management LLC, a California-based multifamily investor, purchased the property in 2016 for \$10 million. Real estate transaction records show the complex was built in several phases from 1963 to 1973, and features a mix of Studio, 1-, 2-, 3- and 4-bedroom unit types.

At the time of Transpacific Asset Management's purchase, it was noted that the previous owner made improvement attempts.

"In January of 2014 the current sellers acquired Glendale Manor as a distressed asset and immediately began an aggressive rehab and re-tenanting strategy," Alon Shnitzer, senior managing partner at ABI and who represented the 2016 seller, said in a [Real Estate Daily News press release](#).

Rene Murdie, area manager involved in the day to day operations at Glendale Manor, has worked on site almost six years. She maintains that the property has made progress in cleaning up the complex and getting past its troubled history.

"If there's a violation of some sort we jump on it, we take care of it," she said from inside the complex' management office. "I can tell you in the last 25 months with just two vendors alone we've spent a good \$400,000 just in parts, appliances and things like that for everyday needs. Also in the last two years we've spent well over \$350,000 on rebuilding structural issues that need to be done."

Murdie was shocked to hear of Aldama's comments and of the city's steps toward enacting a slum ordinance with Glendale Manor in mind.

“Come visit this property. Open arms to anybody. Come walk with us, we’ll walk with you. We’ll show you what’s going on and show you what we’ve done,” she said. “I’d love to meet him. I’d love him to sit down and tell me his points, and why he thinks that we should be in that position.”

She further maintained that the property has worked with the city in the past and will continue to do so.

“We’ve had meetings with the city, and I thought we were all moving in the same direction,” Murdie said. “I feel like we kind of shake hands one minute and then it seems like, hey, okay, we all want to move this place forward but then we kind of get stabbed in the back by the city from behind for one reason or another.”

Deputy City Manager Rick St. John said this week that the proposed ordinance is scheduled to go before Council at the Tuesday, Oct. 26 voting meeting. If approved it would take effect 30 days after the vote.

“Are we perfect? No. Will we ever be? Probably not,” Murdie said. “I would hope to get as close as we can, but we definitely feel that we’ve done a lot and continue to do a lot.”

MORE: [Click here to watch the Sept. 14 City Council workshop. The slum ordinance discussion starts at the 1:19:00 mark.](#)