CHAPTER 155

MINIMUM HOUSING CODE

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155.01 SHORT TITLE. For purposes of brevity, this chapter may be cited as the "The Minimum Housing Code of the City of Guthrie Center, Iowa."

155.02 PURPOSE. The purpose of this chapter is to establish minimum standards and shall be used to determine when one or more building conditions would result in a condition that would make a structure unsafe for human habitation in furtherance of the public health, safety and welfare.

155.03 DEFINITIONS. For use in this chapter, certain words used herein shall be interpreted or defined as follows:

1. "Dwelling" means a building used as the living quarters for one or more families.

2. "Minimum" means the lowest basic standard allowance.

155.04 ESTABLISHMENT OF STANDARDS. The following standards are hereby established:

STRUCTURE - EXTERIOR

1. Foundation Walls and Roof. Every foundation, exterior wall, roof, and all other exterior surfaces shall be maintained in a workmanlike state of maintenance and repair and shall be kept in such condition as to exclude rodents.

2. Foundations. The foundation elements shall adequately support the building at all points.

3. Roof. The roof shall be structurally sound, tight, and have no defects which might admit rain, and roof drainage shall be adequate to prevent rain water from causing dampness in the walls or interior portion of the building. Every gutter and downspout shall be firmly fastened and maintained in good condition.

4. Doors. Every exterior door, door hinge, and door latch and lock shall be maintained in good and workable condition. Every exterior door, when closed, shall fit reasonably well within its frame.

5. Windows. Every window or hatchway shall be substantially tight and shall be kept in sound and operable condition and repair.

6. Structural Safety. Every outside stair, every porch, and every appurtenance attached thereto shall be so constructed as to be safe to use and capable of supporting the loads to which it is subjected and shall be kept in sound condition and good repair.

7. Handrails. Where necessary for safety, every flight of stairs and porch which is more than two risers high, shall have handrails so located and of such design as required by any applicable building code. Every handrail and balustrade shall be firmly fastened and shall be maintained in good condition.

8. Accessory Structures. Accessory structures shall be maintained in a similar condition to living units taking into consideration the use of the structure.

9. Chimneys. Chimneys and vents shall be made structurally safe, durable, smoke-tight, and capable of withstanding the action of flue gases and fireproof from the rest of the structure.

10. Grading and Drainage. All premises shall be graded and maintained so as to prevent the accumulation of stagnant water thereon, or within any building or structure located thereon.

STRUCTURE - INTERIOR

11. Interior Doors. Provide a door for each opening to a bathroom or toilet compartment.

12. Plumbing. The plumbing system and its appurtenances for each building shall provide satisfactory and safe water supply, drainage, venting and operation of fixtures.

13. Electrical. All habitable rooms and other appropriate spaces requiring electrical service shall be provided with a system of wiring, wiring devices, and equipment to safely supply electrical energy for proper illumination, appliances, resident security, and other electrical equipment.

14. Heating. Every dwelling and multi-family dwelling shall have heating facilities properly installed, safely maintained and in good working condition, and that are capable of safely and adequately heating all habitable rooms, bathrooms, and toilet rooms located therein.

15. Floors. All floor construction shall provide safe and adequate support for all existing or probable loads and shall be reasonably free of objectionable vibration. A suitable surface for finish flooring shall exist or be provided.

16. Interior Walls, Ceilings and Floors. All interior walls, ceilings and floors shall be structurally sound, in good repair.

17. Stairs. All stairs of every structure shall be maintained in sound condition and good repair by replacing treads and risers that evidence excessive wear or are broken, warped or loose. Every inside stair shall be so constructed and maintained as to be safe to use and capable of supporting a load as required by the provisions of any applicable building code.

18. Bath and Kitchen Floor. Every toilet, bathroom and kitchen floor surface shall be constructed and maintained so as to be substantially impervious to water and so as to permit such floor to be easily kept in a clean and sanitary condition.

19. Ventilation. Every bathroom and water closet compartment shall have light and ventilation.

155.05 APPOINTMENT OF BUILDING INSPECTOR. The Council shall appoint a building inspector. Said inspector shall be an authorized representative of the City. The inspector, who may be a consultant or a member of the staff of the City, shall be qualified to determine degree of standards of the dwelling in accordance with this code and to determine what corrections are needed to bring a structure up to minimum standards.

155.06 INSPECTION OF BUILDINGS. In accordance with the rights of entry as provided in Section 19 and 22, Chapter 103A, *Code of Iowa*, the City may require an entry and inspection and will, as a matter of policy, require an inspection when any of the following conditions exist:

1. Sponsored Program. On any dwelling when funds for renovation or demolition of a building are provided through a program sponsored by City.

2. Complaint of Hazard. In all cases when there is reasonable evidence that hazardous conditions existing on the property represent a threat to surrounding properties and when a reasonable complaint has been filed by a resident of the City.

3. Nuisance. When the City has found a property to be a public nuisance.

4. Fire Hazard. When the property has been condemned by the State Fire Marshal; or where there has been substantial recent fire damage, an inspection may be required in order to determine what measures are necessary to bring the property back up to standard.

5. Change of Occupancy. When there is a change of ownership in a structure and there is reasonable evidence, as determined by the Council, to suspect that the property does not meet minimum standards as provided for in this chapter or a previous tenant has filed a complaint with the City stating that minimum standards, as provided for in this chapter, are not being met within a specific dwelling and the inspection has not yet been accomplished.

155.07 WATER AND/OR SEWER CONNECTIONS. If water and/or sewer adjoins a property and it is determined that existing water supplies are not safe, sanitary or reliable and/or it has been found that on-site waste disposal systems have contributed to surface or sub-surface pollution, the property shall be connected to the adjoining water and/or sewer facilities. The City shall automatically require connections to facilities adjoining the property whenever there is a change of occupancy. This connection shall be made prior to the new occupants moving into the structure.

155.08 RESPONSIBILITY. Any person or agent who offers for sale or rent a property, other than first occupancy related to new construction, without first notifying the City of said offering, shall be considered in violation of this chapter.

155.09 REASONABLE DOUBT. When reasonable doubt exists that a dwelling does not meet the minimum standards as set forth in this code, the Council may require an inspection of the property.

155.10 REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS. All complaints of residents of the City must be filed with the City Clerk. The City Clerk will, at the next regular session of the Council, present the complaint to the Council. The Council may, at its discretion, investigate said complaints and order inspections when it is deemed reasonable by the Council.

155.11 NOTIFICATION AND POSTING. It shall be the responsibility of an owner, or his authorized agent; to notify the City Clerk whenever there is a change of ownership of a structure,

as a result of the sale of the property. The Council may require inspection of a building prior to the occupancy change if there is a reasonable question as to whether or not such building meets the standards provided for in this chapter. If, after inspection of a structure, said structure is found to be in violation of the standards in this chapter, the structure shall be posted in a conspicuous place on the front exterior of the structure and the structure may not be reoccupied until the deficiencies have been corrected and the City notified of the corrections.

155.12 INSPECTION PROCEDURES. The Council will order inspections as it deems necessary to carry out the intent of this chapter. The inspector shall report the results of said inspection to the Council or authorized officials so that notice may be sent to correct the deficiencies that exist. Said notification and posting of deficiencies shall be accomplished within 10 days of the inspection.

155.13 APPEALS. Any person who is required by any section of this chapter to make repairs to his property, or is restrained from sale or rental of the property, because of the provisions of this chapter may appeal said findings within a 30-day period and the Council shall provide a hearing within 30 days of receipt of the appeal, to hear the said appeal. Within 15 days after said hearing the City shall formally, in writing, make its findings known to the property owner.

155.14 COSTS. Costs incurred under this chapter shall be paid out of the City treasury. If a property deficiency is found based on the inspection pursuant to Section 155.12, the inspection costs shall be charged to the owner of the premises involved and levied as a special assessment against the land on which the dwelling is located, and shall be certified to the County Treasurer for collection in the manner provided for other taxes.

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