02009-<u>15</u>
Adopted Date: 11-10-2009
Effective Date: 11-10-2009

Attachment # 4

The City of Dunn Chapter 4. Buildings and Building Regulations, Article II. Regulatory Codes is hereby amended by Revising the following section:

Section 4-39. Rental Housing Code

# Sec. 4-39. Rental housing code.

- (1) Exercise of regulation and license power, finding and purpose.
  - a. Pursuant to G.S. 160A-174, it is hereby found and declared by the city council that it is necessary to define, prohibit, regulate, or abate acts, omissions, or conditions detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of its citizens and the peace and dignity of the city in that there exists in the city dwellings, dwelling units, rooming houses and rooming units, as defined in this section, that are residential rental properties that fail to meet the requirements of the MHC and are unsafe and unsanitary, and dangerous and detrimental to the health, safety and morals, or otherwise inimical to the welfare of the residents of the city. The city council has considered and evaluated evidence gathered by its own departments, officials and agents, as well as information from citizens, in enacting this Code.
  - b. Pursuant to G.S. 160A-194, it is hereby found and determined that the leasing for consideration and monetary gain of residential properties, including, dwellings, dwelling units, rooming houses and rooming units is a business subject to the regulation by the city to protect the public health, welfare, safety, order and convenience of its citizens and the city.
  - c. The purpose of this code is to establish minimum standards to safeguard life, limb, health, property and public welfare by regulating and controlling the use, occupancy, and maintenance of all residential dwellings and structures or portion thereof within the incorporated limits of the city that are income/producing residential properties or properties or portions thereof for which payment of any kind is received for the use or occupancy of the property or portion thereof.

## (2) Scope.

- a. The provisions of this section shall apply to all buildings or portions thereof used, or designed or intended to be used, for human habitation, except owner occupied dwellings. For purposes of this section, "owner occupied" shall mean occupancy by the record titleholder of the property in question or his/her child, parent, grandchild, or spouse of the record titleholder.
- b. Dwellings, dwelling units, rooming houses and rooming units shall comply with all the requirements of this section.
- c. This section is designed to apply in situations where any owner (as defined in subsection (c)) receives some financial benefit of one kind or another as a result of his/her allowing another individual or individuals to use or occupy real property, or a portion of that real property, for residential purposes.

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- (3) Definitions. For the purpose of this section, certain terms, phrases, words and their derivatives shall be construed as specified in either this section or as specified in the building code. Where terms are not defined, they shall have their ordinary accepted meanings within the context with which they are used. Words in the singular include the plural and the plural the singular. Words in the masculine gender include the feminine and the feminine the masculine. Whenever the terms "dwelling," "dwelling unit," "rooming house," "rooming unit," or "premises," are used in this section, they shall be construed as though they were followed by the words "or any part thereof".
  - a. Approved means acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction ("AHJ").
  - b. Building Code means the applicable state building code, or the city minimum housing and/or rental housing code, as the same may be amended from time to time. The city minimum housing code may sometimes be referred to as "MHC" and the rental housing code may sometimes be referred to as "RHC." Unless otherwise specified herein, "MHC" shall refer to the city minimum housing code and "RHC" shall refer to this rental housing code of the city.
  - c. *Building official* means the official or other designated authority charged with the administration and enforcement of the city minimum housing code or rental housing code, or that official's designee(s).
  - d. Dwelling means any building, which is wholly, or partly used or intended to be used for living or sleeping by human occupants that is not occupied by the owner thereof. This term shall include dwelling units, rooming houses, and rooming units, as defined herein.
  - e. *Dwelling unit* means any room or group of rooms located within a dwelling and forming a single habitable unit with facilities, which are used, or intended to be used for living, sleeping, cooking and eating.
  - f. Hot water means hot water supplied to plumbing fixtures at a temperature of not less than one hundred ten (110) degrees Fahrenheit.
  - g. Occupant means any person, with permission from the landlord, who is living, sleeping, cooking, or eating in, or having actual possession of a dwelling, dwelling unit or rooming unit, or a legal dependent of that person.
  - h. Owner means any individual, person, firm, corporation or legal entity, who jointly or severally along with others, shall be in actual possession of or have charge, care and control of any structure or dwelling unit or premises within the city as owner, employee, or agent of the owner, or as trustee, guardian, or fiduciary of the estate or person of the title holder.

- i. *Person* means any individual, firm, corporation, association, legal entity or partnership.
- j. Plumbing means and includes all of the following supplied facilities and equipment: gas or fuel pipes, gas or fuel burning equipment, water pipes, garbage disposal units, waste pipes, water closets, sinks, installed dishwashers, lavatories, bathtubs, shower baths, installed clothes-washing machines, catch basins, drains, vents and any other similar supplied fixtures, together with all connections to water, sewer, gas or fuel lines.
- k. Rooming house means any dwelling, or that part of a dwelling containing one or more rooming units in which space is let by the owner and/or owner-occupant to any person who is not the husband or wife, son or daughter, mother or father, or sister or brother of the owner or operator, or a person who is married to one of those individuals.
- Rooming units means any room or group of rooms forming a single habitable unit
  used or intended to be used for living and sleeping, but not for cooking or eating
  purposes.
- m. Tenant means one who rents or leases from a landlord.
- (4) Refuse. Every owner of a building containing five (5) or more dwelling units shall supply facilities or refuse containers (dumpsters) as approved by the city for the sanitary and safe storage or disposal of refuse. In the case of a building with less than five (5) dwelling units, it shall be the responsibility of the tenant(s) and/or occupant(s) to provide an approved trash can, if not already provided by the owner. The city may require additional trashcans in any instance in which city officials deem it necessary to do so.

(5) Insects, rodents and vermin. Exterior windows and doors of a dwelling or rooming unit shall be reasonably weather-tight, lockable, rodent-proof and shall be kept in good working condition and good repair. Exterior windows adjoining kitchens, bathrooms and habitable rooms shall be provided with screens. Exterior exit doors shall also be provided with screens. If central air conditioning is provided in the dwelling unit, then said doors and windows are exempt from the screen requirements.

## (6) Sanitary facilities.

a. Dwellings. Dwelling units shall be provided with a kitchen sink, and an interior bathroom or lavatory equipped with facilities consisting of a flush toilet, sink and either a bathtub or shower. Toilets and bathtubs or showers shall be located within a room, which affords privacy by means of a standard doorframe and door.

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b. *Fixtures*. All plumbing drainage fixtures shall be connected to the city's sanitary sewer or an approved private sewage disposal system, if the city's sewer was not available at the time of installation. All plumbing fixtures shall be connected to an approved system of water supply and provided with hot and cold running water necessary for its normal operation. Every dwelling shall have supplied water heating facilities which are installed in an approved manner and are maintained and operated in a safe and good working condition and are properly connected with the hot water lines to the kitchen sink, lavatory washbowl or basin, and bathtub or shower. All plumbing fixtures and sanitary facilities shall be installed and maintained in a safe and sanitary condition and in accordance with applicable requirements of the building code.

### (7) Mechanical requirements.

- a. Heating. Every dwelling and every dwelling Unit shall be provided with primary heating facilities that are capable of maintaining a minimum room temperature of sixty-eight (68) degrees Fahrenheit in all habitable rooms, kitchens and toilet rooms measured three (3) feet above the floor near the center of the room and two (2) feet inward from the center of each exterior wall during ordinary minimum winter conditions. Unvented fuel-burning heaters and portable heaters are not permitted as the primary heating source. Heating devices, appliances or equipment shall be of an approved type. All chimneys, vents, heating facilities and equipment shall be installed and maintained in a safe working condition and in accordance with the state building code, the North Carolina Residential Code and the North Carolina Mechanical Code.
- b. Smoke detectors. Every dwelling, dwelling unit, rooming house, and rooming unit shall have an Underwriters Laboratory, Inc. (UL) listed smoke detector installed on every habitable floor level and outside each bedroom area. Detectors shall sound an alarm, audible from all sleeping areas. Detectors may be battery operated or may receive their primary source of power from the building electrical system (with battery backup), and shall be installed in accordance with the approved manufacturer's installation instructions.
- c. Carbon monoxide detectors. Every dwelling, dwelling unit, rooming house, and rooming unit with solid fuel burning heating facilities, equipment or appliances with an intended source of fuel being natural gas, LP gas, oil or wood shall have an Underwriters Laboratory, Inc. (UL) listed carbon monoxide detector installed. Detectors shall sound an alarm, audible from all sleeping areas. Detectors may be battery operated or may receive their primary source of power from the building electrical system (with battery back-up), and shall be installed in accordance with the approved manufacturer's installation instructions.

(8) Substandard dwellings.

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- a. General. Any dwelling, dwelling unit, rooming house, or rooming unit, or the premises on which the same is located, that contains inadequate sanitation, structural hazards, hazardous electrical wiring or equipment, or inadequate heating equipment, all as defined in this section, or that otherwise endangers life, limb, health, property, safety or the welfare of the public or the occupants thereof, shall be deemed and hereby are declared to be substandard dwellings for the purposes of this section. In determining whether a dwelling is substandard as provided in this section, references shall be made to other appropriate sections of this section, other ordinances and/or articles of the general building code of the city.
- b. Inadequate sanitation. Dwellings, or portions thereof, shall be deemed substandard when they have inadequate sanitation, including but not limited to the following:
  - 1. Lack of, or inadequate garbage and rubbish storage and removal facilities, failure to maintain the property in a clean, sanitary condition, and/or any violation of subsections 4-31(8)i.4., 5.
  - Infestation of insects, vermin or rodents, and/or any violation of subsection 4-31(8)i.
  - 3. Lack of, or inadequate bathroom, lavatory, flush toilet, washbowl or basin, bathtub or shower, or kitchen sink, and/or any violation of subsection 4-31(8)c.
  - 4. Lack of, or inadequate plumbing fixtures, or lack of connection to required sewage disposal system, and/or any violation of subsection 4-31(8)c.
- c. Structural hazards. Dwellings, or portions thereof, shall be deemed substandard when they are or contain structural hazards. Structural hazards shall include but not <u>be</u> limited to the following:
  - 1. Deteriorated or inadequate foundation.
  - 2. Defective or deteriorated flooring or floor supports.
  - Flooring or floor supports of insufficient size to carry imposed loads with safety.
  - 4. Members of walls, partitions or other vertical supports that split, lean, list or buckle due to defective materials or deterioration.
  - Members of walls, partitions or other vertical supports that are of insufficient size to carry imposed loads with safety.

- Members of ceilings, roofs, ceiling and roof supports or other horizontal members that leak, sag, split or buckle due to defective materials or deterioration.
- Members of ceilings, roofs, ceiling and roof supports or other horizontal members that are of insufficient size to carry imposed loads with safety.
- 8. Fireplaces or chimneys that list, bulge, leak gases or smoke, or settle due to defective material or deterioration.
- 9. Fireplaces or chimneys that are of insufficient size or strength to carry imposed loads with safety.
- Fireplaces or chimneys that, as a result of inadequate or faulty flashing, permit leaks or seepage.
- d. *Hazardous electrical wiring or equipment*. Dwellings, or portions thereof, shall be deemed substandard when they contain hazardous electrical wiring or equipment, including any electrical equipment, wiring or appliances that are not installed and/or maintained in good condition or a safe manner in accordance with the building code, and all applicable laws including subsection 4-31(8)e.
- e. *Inadequate mechanical equipment*. Dwellings, or portions thereof, shall be deemed substandard when they have inadequate mechanical equipment, including any violation of subsection 4-31(8)f.
- f. *Inadequate insulation*. Dwellings, or portions thereof, shall be deemed substandard when they have inadequate insulation, meaning that they have less than R-19 or equivalent insulation in all attic areas above heated or cooled areas.
- g. *Violation*. It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, corporation or other entity to knowingly allow another person to occupy any dwelling, dwelling unit, rooming house, rooming unit, or portion thereof, that is a substandard dwelling as defined by this section. A violation of this section is a misdemeanor and is punishable as set forth herein below.

## (9) Enforcement.

- a. *Authority*. The city manager and his/her designee is hereby authorized and directed to enforce all of the provisions of this section.
- b. *Right of entry*. When it is necessary to make an inspection to enforce the provisions of this code, or when the building official has reasonable cause to believe that there exists in a dwelling a condition which is contrary to or in violation of this code which makes the dwelling substandard, the notice

provisions contained in subsection 11(c) shall be followed to arrange the inspection. These measures allow the building official to request entry upon the premises for the purpose of making examinations and inspections in a manner that will do the least possible inconvenience to the persons in possession, to perform the duties imposed by this code, provided that if said dwelling is occupied that credentials be presented to the occupant. Inspections conducted pursuant to this authority shall be reasonably tailored to support the health, safety and welfare objectives of this Code and to identify compliance deficiencies with the Code's requirements. If said dwelling is unoccupied, the building official shall first make a reasonable effort to locate the owner or other person having charge or control of the dwelling and request entry in accord with section (11). If entry is refused, the building official shall have recourse to the remedies provided by law to secure entry, including applying for an administrative search warrant

c. Enforcement procedures. Enforcement procedures under this section shall be as specified in the city's minimum housing code, and specifically include the notice and hearing requirements as well as the procedural and process protections of subsection 4-31(11) so that owners have an opportunity to meet and respond to alleged violations of this section.

pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 15-27.2.b.

- d. Responsibilities defined. Owners remain liable for violations of duties imposed by this code even though an owner may have, by agreement or otherwise, imposed on the occupant or tenant or any other individual or entity the duty of furnishing required equipment or of complying with this section.
- (10) Other remedies unaffected. Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit or forbid the city or any other person or entity from pursing any other remedies available at law or in equity to enforce the provisions of this section.
- (11) Inspections; duty of owners and occupants; inspections process and when inspections required.
  - a. For the purpose of making inspections to effectuate the purposes of this Ordinance, the building official may request entry upon the premises for the purpose of making examinations and inspections in a manner that will do the least possible inconvenience to the persons in possession. The owner or occupant of every dwelling, dwelling unit, or rooming unit, or the person in charge thereof, shall be requested to afford the building official reasonable access to such dwelling, dwelling unit, or rooming unit, and its premises at all reasonable times for the purposes of such inspection, examination, and survey. If any Owner or Occupant of any Dwelling, or portion thereof, refuses to permit the building official reasonable access, the building official shall have the right to enforce the terms of this section in any lawful manner, including the right to obtain an administrative search warrant pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 15-27.2. b. Such warrants

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must be obtained in compliance with all statutory requirements, including the making of necessary showings to the issuing officer and other conditions mandated by statute for valid issuance. Every occupant of a dwelling or dwelling unit shall give the owner thereof, or his agent or employee, access to any part of such dwelling or dwelling unit, and its premises, at all reasonable times for the purpose of making such repairs or alterations as are necessary to effect compliance with the provisions of this section or with any lawful order issued pursuant to the provisions of this section or any related ordinance. If any owner or occupant of any dwelling, or portion thereof, refuses to permit the inspecting person reasonable access, the inspecting person shall have the right to enforce the terms of this section in any lawful manner, including the right to obtain an administrative search warrant pursuant to G.S. 15-27.2.

b. Inspections. The <u>building official</u> or his designees shall conduct inspections of any dwelling, dwelling unit or rooming unit upon the occurrence of any of the following:

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- If a tenant files a petition with the city manager or his designee alleging that
  the dwelling, dwelling unit or rooming unit occupied by such tenant is in
  violation of this section or the MHC. Said petition shall set forth the
  particular conditions observed by the tenant to allege that the dwelling,
  dwelling unit or rooming unit is in violation of the RHC or the MHC.
- 2. If a public authority or private not for profit entity that is contracted with the city or Harnett County to provide public safety services, including, but not limited to fire protection within the city, files a petition with the city manager or his designee alleging that a dwelling, dwelling unit or rooming unit is in violation of this RHC or the MHC. Said petition shall set forth the particular conditions observed by such public authority or private not for profit entity to allege that the dwelling unit or rooming unit is in violation of the RHC or the MHC.
- If it appears to the chief building inspector of the city, from an exterior visual inspection that a dwelling, dwelling unit or rooming unit may be in violation of this RHC or the MHC.
- 4. If at least <u>five (5)</u> residents of the city file a petition with the city manager or his designee alleging that a dwelling, dwelling unit or rooming unit is in violation of the RHC or MHC. Said petition shall set forth the particular conditions observed by such residents.

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- c. The city manager or his designee shall follow the process set forth herein for purposes of conducting all inspections required by this section:
  - The city manager or his designee shall send a letter to the owner of the dwelling, dwelling unit or rooming unit subject to inspection via certified mail

and regular mail at the last known address for such owner as set forth in the tax records maintained by the city and shall post a copy of such letter on the subject property for notification to the tenant. Said letter shall request that the owner and/or the tenant contact the city manager or his designee as set forth in said letter within seven (7) days of said letter to try and schedule a mutually agreeable time for purposes of conducting the inspection.

- 2. In the event that the city manager or his designee are not able to schedule a mutually agreeable time within the seven-day period set forth <a href="herein">herein</a>, with either the tenant or the owner or if the tenant or owner fail to respond to the notice to schedule an inspection, then the city manager or his designee shall schedule the time for the inspection and shall so notify the tenant and the owner by a letter sent via certified mail and regular mail to the owner and posted on the subject property for notification to the tenant. Such notification shall provide at least seventy-two (72) hours advance notice of the scheduled inspection.
- 3. If the notice provisions in subsections (1) and (2) do not result in consent to conduct the needed inspection, the Building Official shall have the right to enforce the terms of this Ordinance in any lawful manner, including the right to obtain an administrative search warrant pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 15-27.2. b.

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#### (12) License required for leased residential properties.

- a. The owner of every dwelling, dwelling unit, or rooming unit leased for consideration shall pay a license fee in accordance with the schedule of fees adopted by the city council for each fiscal year (unless otherwise exempted herein), based on the criteria established in that schedule, to obtain a license to comply with the duties imposed pursuant to this section and other related ordinances, and each person so licensed shall provide the following information to the city manager or his/her appropriate designee upon the filing of his or its initial application(s):
  - 1. The identification of the dwelling, dwelling unit or rooming unit by location;
  - 2. The name, address, and telephone number where the owner, agent and/or owner/operator who has charge, care or control of a building or part thereof in which the dwelling units are leased for consideration can be contacted; and
  - 3. An acknowledgement by licensee that he has complied with the terms of this section and other related ordinances to the best of their knowledge and belief.
- b. Following the filing of an initial application for a license as set forth in subsection (1), the city shall thereafter send an invoice to such owner based on his or its current information on file with the city for each dwelling, dwelling unit or rooming unit registered in the name of such owner at the beginning of each fiscal year of the city in accordance with the schedule of fees adopted by the city

council, unless such owner has notified the city of a change during the preceding fiscal year of the city and prior to July 1 of each year of the addition or deletion of the number of dwellings, dwelling units or rooming units registered in the name of such owner.

- c. If any owner should purchase a dwelling, dwelling unit or rooming unit or hold out for rent any dwelling, dwelling unit or rooming unit that was previously vacant and not held out for rent at the time of the filing of such owner's initial application, he or it shall amend their application to add such dwelling, dwelling unit or rooming unit to such owner's list for purposes of calculation of said owner's license fee for the next fiscal year of the city.
- d. If any owner should sell any dwelling, dwelling unit or rooming unit subsequent to such owner's initial application with the city, then such owner shall notify the city of the same and provide the city with the following information:
  - 1. The identification of the dwelling, dwelling unit or rooming unit by location sold by the owner;
  - 2. The name, address and telephone number of the purchaser of such dwelling, dwelling unit or rooming unit; and
  - 3. An acknowledgement by the licensee that the owner notified the purchaser of the licensing requirements of this RHC.
- e. Properties owned by local, state and federal governmental entities shall be exempt from paying the application fee set forth in this section, but shall make an application and receive a license as set forth herein.

#### (13) Violations; penalty.

- a. It shall be unlawful for an owner of any dwelling unit, dwelling, or rooming unit leased for consideration to fail to obtain or maintain a current license as required in this section.
- b. Failure to obtain or maintain a current license under this section shall constitute a misdemeanor, as provided by G.S. 14-4 and shall subject the violator to a maximum fine of five hundred dollars (\$500.00), or imprisonment for not more than thirty (30) days; provided, however, that the owner/operator of any dwelling unit, dwelling, or rooming unit who may be in violation of any provision in this section shall not be liable for the fine referenced above for any such violation so long as he or she, within thirty (30) days of notice of violation of this section, obtains the required license(s) and pay a fee equivalent to twice the otherwise applicable fees for the license(s), and he or she shall not be subject to additional penalties for failure to obtain the required license(s). However, if the required license(s) is/are not obtained

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before the expiration of this 30-day period, an owner/operator shall be subject to the other penalties and fines as provided by this section.

- c. Alternatively, the failure to obtain or maintain a current license shall subject the offender to a civil penalty of fifty dollars (\$50.00) and revocation of the license granted under this section. Each day that violation continues shall constitute a separate violation and a separate offense for the purposes of imposition of penalties. In addition to the penalties and other remedies provided, the city manager may institute any appropriate action or proceedings to prevent, restrain, correct or abate a violation of this section.
- (14) *Methods of service of complaints or orders*. Service of complaints and orders shall be made in the manner required by G.S. 160A-445 and shall be deemed sufficient when one of the methods allowed by that statute has been followed.
- (15) Conflict with other provisions. In the event any provision, standard, or requirement of this section is found to be in conflict with any provision of any other ordinance or code of the city, the provision which establishes the higher standard or more stringent requirements for the promotion and protection of the health and safety of the residents of the city shall prevail.
- (16) *Unconstitutionality of part of section*. Should a court of competent jurisdiction determine that any portion of this section is unconstitutional; the remaining portions of the section shall remain in full force and effect and shall be fully enforceable.
- (17) Exemption from inspections.
  - a. Certain properties covered by this section may be subject to inspections by other governmental entities, including, but not limited to the state and the United States of America and agencies or political subdivisions of either the state or federal governmental. In such event, the owner of such properties shall provide, on an annual basis, a copy of such inspections with his or her application. If such inspections are satisfactory to the city manager or his or her designee, then such individual dwelling unit(s) shall be exempt from inspection under this section. Provided however, that if such inspections are not satisfactory to the city manager or his or her designee, then such individual dwelling unit(s) shall be subject to inspection as provided for in this section.
  - b. Notwithstanding anything in this section, if the city receives a complaint from a tenant, occupant or any other person regarding the condition of any dwelling unit exempt from inspection as set forth above, then the city shall be entitled to make any inspection authorized by this section.

(Ord. No. 02008-10, 7-8-08; Ord. No. 02009-03, 3-10-09; Ord. No. O2009-12, 7-14-09)

Sec. 4-40. Official copies.

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In the event that the city should have to initiate legal proceedings to collect the civil penalties provided for in this section, or to prevent, restrain, correct or abate a violation of this section, in addition to the recovery of any other expenses allowed by law, the city shall be entitled to recover all of its expenses associated with such legal action, including, but not limited to reasonable attorneys fees.

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An official copy of each regulatory code adopted in this article and official copies of all amendments thereto shall be kept on file in the office of the chief building inspector. These copies shall be the official copies of the codes and the amendments. (Code 1974, § 4-14; Ord. No. 02008-10, 7-8-08)

**Editor's note:** Ord. No. 02008-10, adopted July 8, 2008, renumbered the former section 4-39 as section 4-40. The historical notation has been preserved for reference purposes.

Secs. 4-41--4-60. Reserved.

EFFECTIVE DATE. The provisions of this ordinance shall become effective upon adoption by the Dunn City Council, in accordance with the laws of the State of North Carolina.

Adopted this, the 10th day of November 2009.

Oscar N. Harris, Mayor

Attest:

Debra G. West, CMC, City Clerk