

Being a low income housing provider for over 35 years, I was shocked to find the City blaming all of its ills on landlords and wanting to punish us by making it more expensive to provide housing, such as making us purchase licenses and then revoking the license if the tenant misbehaves.

The problem with this City is too much subsidized housing for the number of quality tenants. This is a problem caused by past City officials, such as Mayor Clancy approving the building of a tenement house in downtown Cedar Rapids. True to the saying, "Build it and they will come", they did, from all the big cities with all the social problems and crime, street smarts and gangs. Hearing of the small Iowa police forces, it was an open door for them.

Ultimately, the City OK'd the building of more and more low income housing yet not having the number of quality low income tenants to fill the units. Now the City is overbuilt by at least 2,000 units. Many owners of low income property are running 30 to 50% vacancy rates, with the eviction rate at over 1,500 per year. Communities with a very limited amount of low income housing exhibit a lower crime rate, better quality of life, higher wages being paid and fewer social ills.

Cedar Rapids does not need to start charging fees, hiring additional staff, inspecting more property and punishing property owners for vacant property with all the silly laws they dreamed up. They need to face the fact that they allowed the overbuilding of low income housing in the City and pass a moratorium for no new low income housing to be built for 10 to 15 years or until all housing in the City is full with quality tenants.