



## *Village of Baltimore*

*Fairfield County*

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Village Administrator

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### **Village of Baltimore Rental and Vacant Property Maintenance Program Public Announcement**

The Village of Baltimore is announcing the implementation of a Rental and Vacant Property Maintenance Program. Village Council and Administration have become increasingly concerned about the rise in the number of deteriorating rental and vacant properties. This problem impacts the entire village in several negative ways. The number of police calls and property maintenance complaints for these properties are increasing, while neighborhood property values are decreasing.

“With the increased numbers of rental and vacant properties, it is vital that we all work together to make sure that our neighborhoods are safe and well-maintained,” states Mayor Kalish.

Village Officials are aware that there are many responsible landlords doing business in the village. However, they want to discourage those that have not been good stewards to their tenants or to the neighborhoods. Property owners having vacant properties in the village must also understand that they continue to be responsible for the maintenance of the property.

The 2000 Census indicated that 37.2% of the village’s housing units were renter-occupied. This is in comparison to the national average at that time of 33.8%. After reviewing County Auditor and Village water billing files, Village officials believe this percentage will be much higher when the 2010 Census is released in the near future. The 2000 Census also showed 53 vacant homes compared to 79 in the 2010 Censuses and an estimated 89 vacant units as of February, 2011.

Property maintenance complaints have continued to increase each year. Property maintenance enforcement was established by Village Council as a “complaint driven” program, meaning that we investigate a property when someone makes a complaint, either verbal or in writing, regarding a specific issue. In 2008, 30 complaints were handled; in 2009 42 complaints were addressed; and 2010 complaint cases increased to 67.

A program consisting of education, assistance and enforcement will assist those landlords unsure of their responsibility. Education will be provided through informational meetings and the publishing of a “Guide for Good Neighbors”. Information will be highlighted to educate neighbors of poorly maintained properties on how to report the infractions to the village. To assist property owners with clean up, highly advertised “Clean-Up Baltimore Days” will be held on Saturday, May 7 and again in the Fall of 2011.

Jim Hochradel, Chairman of the Council Service Committee, emphasizes Council’s wish to work with landlords on this issue. “We want to work with good landlords to improve the rental properties in their neighborhoods. We hope to bring the pride back to those living in Baltimore by having special events such as “Clean Up Baltimore Days.”.

Village Officials are hoping that education and assistance will provide property owners and renters with the encouragement they may need to keep their properties well maintained. However, as with any program of this nature, enforcement must also be part of the program. Village Council has directed the Administration to continue with aggressive enforcement of received complaints. Both the Police Chief and Village Administrator will track the number of complaints and calls to rental or vacant properties. Should the number of deteriorating properties not significantly decrease, possible future options being discussed include rental property registration and inspections.

Police Chief Mike Tussey states his concern with police calls to some areas of Baltimore, “We are sending officers to the some of the same residences over and over. We need to find a way to make landlords aware of this.”.

While many village landlords are responsible and take good care of their property, this program will also benefit them by providing more appealable neighborhoods in which to do business. Mayor Kalish agrees, “It’s a win-win situation; the Village will look better, which is what we all want.”.

Village officials will hold an informational meeting regarding this program on Tuesday, April 26 at 7:00 p.m. at the Liberty Union – Thurston Elementary School multipurpose room located at 1000 South Main Street. Landlords, property owners and other interested persons are invited to attend. A discussion of the problem, possible solutions, and what other steps may be taken should the condition of many of these rental units continue to deteriorate will take place at this meeting. Questions can be directed to Marsha Hall, Village Administrator by calling (740) 862-4491 or by email at [mhall@baltimoreohio.org](mailto:mhall@baltimoreohio.org).