

STANDARD PRESS RELEASE



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LOCAL REALTORS® CALLING FOR MAYORAL VETO OF RENTAL HOUSING ORDINANCE

East Mississippi REALTORS® (EMR) respectfully call on Mayor Jimmy Smith to **VETO** the recently passed Rental Housing Ordinance {Code of Ordinances of Meridian, Mississippi; Chapter 13 HOUSING; Secs. 13-3---13-19- Reserved; ARTICLE II RENTAL HOUSING ORDINANCE}.

On March 4, 2025, the Meridian City Council passed a Rental Housing Ordinance which calls for property owners to register all rental units within the city and for such units to be periodically inspected by City inspectors. Failure to comply with the new ordinance would result in termination of city utilities and possible fines. The ordinance lacks clarity with the inspection process as well as the scope of code requirements (particularly for older homes and HUD rentals).

EMR showed strong opposition to this ordinance due to the negative impact it could have on our local rental market, property owners, as well as tenants. Our City has thousands of rental properties and most property owners and tenants were not made aware of this ordinance nor did they have a chance to express their concerns. The result of this ordinance could very possibly send a shockwave through our community subsequently leaving a shortage of available rental units, possible increases in monthly rents, and conceivably decreases in property values.

It was made clear that EMR believed the public should be aware of this ordinance and property owners given the opportunity to meet with City representatives. Our requests for such a meeting have been unanswered.

Thus, EMR is requesting a Mayoral **VETO** of this ordinance. We are also urging a “Call to Action” from the public and those who would be directly affected by these changes to please contact Mayor Smith’s office at 601-485-1926 (option 4) requesting a veto as well.

EMR has and is continuing to express their willingness to work with the City on a rental ordinance that is impartial, clear, and satisfactory to the City as well as property owners and tenants. Our community’s need for ample and safe housing takes priority for our association and we wish to ensure that anyone impacted has an opportunity for their concerns to be included in the creation of an ordinance that is reasonable for all.