Housing Committee Meeting Summary – October 5, 2026

COMMITTEE AGENDA TOPICS

1. Policy Referral – Minimum Housing Code, Air Conditioning

COMMITTEE INFORMATION

Committee Members Present: LaWana Mayfield (CMGC), J.D. Mazuera Arias (CMGC), Renee' Johnson (virtual), Kimberly Owens (CMGC)

Committee Members Absent: Joi Mayo

Other Council Members: n/a

Staff Resources: Raquishela Stewart, Housing & Neighborhood Services
Kirk Young, Housing & Neighborhood Services
Anna Schleunes, City Attorney's Office

Meeting Duration: 9:00 – 9:40 AM

MEETING SUMMARY

City Council member Mayfield called the meeting to order and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

Policy Referral: Minimum Housing Code, Air Conditioning

On June 30, 2026, Mayor Lyles asked the Committee to determine if any applicable Minimum Housing Code (Code) ordinance changes and/or policy recommendations to include the requirement to provide air conditioning should be made to Council for consideration. The Code applies to all dwellings regardless of ownership or tenancy; changes to the Code will be applicable to homeowners as well as landlords.

Options Considered by Committee.

The Committee considered two primary options (below). The city's resident and landlord support (window unit distribution, owner-occupied rehab programs, and landlord HVA pilot program) will continue regardless of any ordinance change.

1. **Recommend amending the ordinance to require air conditioning in all residential dwellings, and adding cooling to imminently dangerous violations.**

PROS

- **Health & Safety:** Provides the strongest and most consistent level of safety going forward
- **Standards**: Creates clear and enforceable cooling standards across all dwellings, with a 48-hour repair window
- **Cost Impacts**: Provides owners with flexibility re: cooling equipment type

CONS

- **Affordability**: Landlords may pass installation and maintenance costs on to tenants or remove rental units from market altogether, affecting affordability
- **Utility Cost Burden**: Increased utility costs for tenants who may already face financial challenges
- **City Resources**: Requires additional staffing and resources for enforcement

2. **Defer amending the code and evaluate performance of the city's existing resident and landlord supports over time.**

PROS

- **Affordability**: No impact to current rents or housing affordability
- **Standards**: Maintains existing compliance expectations with no new regulatory requirement (owners are still required to maintain *existing* cooling equipment)
- **City Resources**: No new resources required

CONS

- **Health & Safety:** Households at-risk of not having access to cooling during hot weather and extreme heat events
- **Standards**: Does not establish a universal cooling standard across all dwellings
- **Utility Cost Burden:** Landlords, homeowners and tenants that opt in to city cooling support programs may experience increased utility costs
- **Deferred Policy:** Potentially defers an ordinance update to a future Council to address

Proposed Minimum Housing Code Revision and Implementation.

The proposed minimum housing code ordinance revision includes:

- Amend Section 11-45(e) to add inoperable cooling equipment as an imminently dangerous condition during the months of May through September, and
- Amend Section 11-81(r) to require every residential dwelling to provide cooling equipment that is capable of maintaining temperature at a maximum of 80 degrees Fahrenheit in at least two habitable rooms during May through September.
- Revised ordinance implementation:
    - Cooling requirement would be applicable May through September
    - Violations would be considered imminently dangerous. The term "imminently dangerous" is defined in ordinance Section 11-45(e), and makes it unlawful for landlords to collect rent when the residence is imminently dangerous. Amending the ordinance to include this provision - while not something the City could monitor or enforce - would give tenants a legal civil defense in eviction proceedings for nonpayment of rent during the time that AC is inoperable, comparable to heat violations during the winter and other dangerous violations established in this section of the code.
    - Failure to repair would result in:
        - Evaluate eligibility for immediate repair or replacement of unit through the city's support programs
        - Provision of city-provided window units when possible, to help limit displacement
        - Refer tenant for relocation services if repair, replacement or window units is not an option
        - Standard enforcement processes, including issuance of civil penalties

Additional Resources Needed.

Additional resources will be critical to successfully implementing an AC mandate, consisting of an additional Code Enforcement Team (5-8 new FTEs). Peak code enforcement inspection season (May-September) already drives higher case volumes (e.g., tall weeds and grass, etc.). Tenant calls for AC issues are already elevated this year, likely influenced by media coverage of the policy referral, and increased call volume is expected if a mandate is approved. Additionally, Code Enforcement is already operating under constrained capacity. Charlotte has grown substantially since 2018, but Code Enforcement staffing

has not grown proportionately. As population, neighborhoods, apartment communities, and development continue to increase, enforcement capacity will ultimately need to be increased to maintain both current and future needs. Implementing an AC mandate without additional resources would slow inspection times during an already peak season, as staff would have to balance these new requirements with an already heavy code enforcement workload.

Committee Discussion Highlights:

- Expressed confidence that providing this protection to residents is the right step, emphasizing the importance of acting now to prevent heat-related deaths similar to those seen in other countries.
- Acknowledged that there is a possibility costs could be passed on to tenants, and noted that this concern is taken seriously.
- Expressed interest in exploring ways that Council can support Code Enforcement so inspectors can work on weekends.
- Raised concerns about the impact on homeowners in owner-occupied properties, especially in cases where Code Enforcement is already responding to nuisance or other complaints at these dwellings.

MOTION AND VOTE. Council member Mazuera Arias made a motion to recommend the full Council consider Option 1 to amend the Minimum Housing ordinance to require every residential dwelling to provide cooling equipment that is capable of maintaining temperature at a maximum of 80 degrees Fahrenheit in at least two habitable rooms during May through September, and add inoperable cooling equipment as an imminently dangerous condition during the months of May through September. Council member Owens seconded the motion. The motion was carried 3:1 in favor (Mayfield, Mazuera Aris, Owens voted yes, Johnson voted no without a process exception for owner-occupied dwellings).

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:40 a.m.

MEETING MATERIALS

All meeting materials are available online at the **Charlotte Agendas Site**. City Council Committee meeting videos and transcripts can be viewed on the **City of Charlotte's Gov channel**. The direct link to the October 5, 2026 meeting video is: **City Council Housing Committee - October 5, 2026**.