Latest shooting brings up security concerns

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Some residents of Crossing Place Apartments, 3636 Coleman Road, said they do not feel safe living there and therefore want to get out of their leases.

A nonfatal shooting took place at about 1 a.m. Jan. 29 and was the second shooting in two months. The first took place on the morning of Dec. 11, 2010.

Animal science freshman and complex resident, Janson Parker said his roommates have been looking into breaking their lease since the second incident.

Parker said he is concerned about his safety while living at Crossing Place Apartments and the management has not done a proper job addressing security at the complex or explaining the incident to residents.

“The shooting happened right below us and those guys are pretty outstanding, not in a good way though,” he said. “(The managers) haven’t really done much about it but give us all a piece of paper letting us all know something happened — just to not get us worked up, just to let us know — but they haven’t done anything even about the last (shooting).”

Corky Gatewood, vice president of marketing and professional development of Ambling Management, the company that owns Crossing Place Apartments, has been unreachable for comment.

Parker said there was a security guard on hand for the days following the initial shooting, but he has not noticed any changes in security after the more recent incident. He said this is why he and his roommates are trying to get out of their lease.

But unless the leasing contract requires the complex to provide such security measures, their absence is not grounds for breaking a lease, said Elan Nichols, an MSU assistant clinical professor of law.

Nichols works in the housing law clinic at the MSU College of Law, and she said under most circumstances both parties must agree to breaking a leasing contract and it is unusual for landlords to give their consent.

“Crime is a difficult matter when it happens on a rental property,” she said. “Certainly if there have been damages to property or person it may be addressable in a court of a law, but in the case of general safety concerns there isn’t much that can be done.”

Nichols said if the city or township the property is located in has codes regarding what security measures the facility must have and the facility does not meet those requirements, then it could be grounds for breaking a lease.

But Bath Township Supervisor Tom Schneider said he is not aware of any requirements for rental properties.

Schneider said Bath Township recently acquired Crossing Place and the surrounding complexes from DeWitt Township. Before that acquisition, the township did not have any major rental properties so there are few rules on the books, he said.

“One of the things that can be taken from (the shooting) is we could use it as a tool to look at properties such as the one in question,” he said. “It’s just a matter of perhaps procedural practices of the rental company.”

Some residents, such as communication senior Nicole Levy, said they feel the blame is not that of managers but the residents who live there.

Levy said the managers have done all they can to remedy the situation, but there have been shortcomings by the company that owns the complex, Ambling Management.

“The management is doing all they can do in their power,” she said. “I think it’s the leasing company itself, Ambling.”

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