

**Rent Stabilization Commission
City of West Hollywood
Thursday, May 14, 2015 @ 7:00 PM
West Hollywood Park Public Meeting Room – Council Chambers
625 North San Vicente Boulevard**

Minutes

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Topchian called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mayor Lindsey Horvath led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL: Commission Secretary Laura Schoonover took roll call.

PRESENT:

Chair Agassi Topchian, Vice Chair Gail Sanes, Commissioner Josh Kurpies, Commissioner Richard Maggio and Commissioner Stephanie Harker.

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT:

Director of Human Services and Rent Stabilization Elizabeth Savage, Manager of Rent Stabilization and Housing, and Commission Secretary Laura Schoonover.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

A motion was made by Commissioner Maggio and seconded by Vice Chair Sanes to approve the agenda for the May 14, 2015 meeting. The motion was approved (5-0-0).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made by Commissioner Maggio and seconded by Vice Chair Sanes to approve the minutes of the April 23, 2015 meeting. The motion was approved (5-0-0).

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Doug Routh of Los Angeles spoke regarding his 15 years as a Rent Stabilization Commissioner from 1985 to 2000.

Ruth Williams of West Hollywood spoke regarding her service on the Commission and commented on her fellow Commissioners, Babette Lang and Gerda Speigler

Kevin Norte of West Hollywood spoke regarding his time on the Commission from 1992 to 1999.

Jesse Slansky of Los Angeles spoke regarding an upcoming open house being held by West Hollywood Community Housing Corporation and invited the public to attend to learn more about their work.

Rob Bergstein of West Hollywood spoke regarding the Rent Stabilization Ordinance and expressed his gratitude for the protection that it provides to tenants. He also spoke of former Rent Stabilization Commissioner Howard Jacobs.

Joe Praml of West Hollywood spoke about his time on the Commission from 2003 to 2004 and his work with the Coalition for Economic Survival.

Larry Block of West Hollywood congratulated Commission Harker on her appointment to the Rent Stabilization Commission and commented on the recent Aging in Place event that occurred on May 9th. Mr. Block also commented on various aspects of the Rent Stabilization Ordinance.

Michael Wojtkielewicz of West Hollywood spoke regarding exemption from the Rent Stabilization Ordinance for tenants of affordable housing units.

Heidi Shink of West Hollywood offered her congratulations to all past and present Rent Stabilization Commissioners on their service and on celebrating 30 years of rent stabilization. She also commented on the importance of maintaining a strong ordinance.

Victor Omelczenko of West Hollywood spoke regarding his gratitude for the ordinance and for the Commissioners themselves. He commented on the long time service of such Commissioners as David Routh, David Gregoire and Richard Maggio. Mr. Omelczenko also spoke about rent stabilized units in historically designated buildings and the importance of providing housing for the middle class as well as low income and disabled persons.

Robert Switzer, 40 year resident of West Hollywood, spoke regarding his service on the Rent Stabilization Commission from 1987 to 1988 and congratulated the Commission for their work.

DIRECTOR'S/MANAGER'S REPORT:

Rent Stabilization and Housing Manager Peter Noonan notified the public that a listing of upcoming meetings was available at the back table. Director of Human Services and Rent Stabilization Elizabeth Savage thanked the public for being in attendance and the past Commissioners for the foundation that they have laid. Ms. Savage also thanked staff for their work.

RENT STABILIZATION ORDINANCE 30TH ANNIVERSARY:

Chair Topchian read the Proclamation of the Rent Stabilization Ordinance that was signed by the City Council.

Photos were then taken of the current Commissioners and the Council Members that were in attendance.

Mayor Lindsey Horvath thanked present and past Commissioners for their work in defending and upholding the Rent Stabilization Ordinance. She spoke of the history of West Hollywood and the primary role that preserving affordable housing played in the City's creation. She thanked the Coalition for Economic Survival (CES) for the work that they do in assisting and educating the public on their housing rights.

Mayor Pro Tempore Lauren Meister thanked everyone who was in attendance to celebrate 30 years of rent stabilization. She spoke regarding the importance of pet friendly housing and the precedent setting section of the Rent Stabilization Ordinance that allows for seniors, disabled, and people living with HIV/Aids to be allowed to have pets regardless of any building restrictions on pets. Ms. Meister thanked all past and present Commissioners for the work in preserving and upholding the ordinance.

Councilmember John Duran spoke of the original Council Members and the courage and dedication they displayed in enacting the Rent Stabilization Ordinance. He spoke regarding the ongoing challenges and changes that litigation has brought to the Rent Stabilization Ordinance, in particular Costa-Hawkins and the Ellis Act. Mr. Duran spoke about the escalating rental rates in West Hollywood and the importance of maintaining resident diversity. He spoke of the future challenges to affordable housing and the rent stabilization ordinance and the creation of new policies and programs to deal with these challenges.

Chair Topchian thanked staff for the work that they do every day and asked Manager Peter Noonan to introduce staff members that were in attendance.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Maggio thanked past Commissioners for attending and for their comments. He thanked staff as well.

Commission Harker thanked the public who were in attendance and for their comments. She thanked past Commissioners for their work. Ms. Harker announced the upcoming Save Water Save LA event on May 17th. She also announced the upcoming Candidate Forum on May 20th.

Commissioner Kurpies thanked past and present Council Members for their work in establishing and guiding the City, and past Commissioners for safe guarding the ordinance. Mr. Kurpies thanked past and previous City staff for their work. He also spoke of the negative impacts of Costa-Hawkins and the Ellis Act and the need to overturn this legislation.

Vice Chair Sanes thanked past Commissioners for their work in laying the foundation of defending the Rent Stabilization Ordinance and she spoke of the passion that is still exists for maintaining affordable housing.

Chair Topchian thanked all of the past Commissioners and commented on how important their work has been in enabling the current Commission to enforce the ordinance. He also thanked staff for their work. Chair Topchian spoke about his past work with the Coalition for Economic Survival and his ongoing passion for enforcing the Rent Stabilization Ordinance.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:34 p.m in memory of Babette Lang, Gerda Speigler, Sal Guariello and Howard Jacobs. The next regular meeting of the Rent Stabilization Commission will be held on May 28, 2015 in the West Hollywood Park Public Meeting Room – Council Chambers.

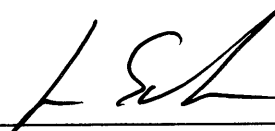
These minutes were taken and submitted by Laura Schoonover, Commission Secretary.
Adopted this 28th day of May, 2015.

A copy of the audio recording of this meeting can be obtained from the City Clerk's office upon request.
(Disclaimer: Staff records the meetings for the sole purpose of composing the official meeting minutes; therefore the recordings are not of commercial quality.)

ATTEST:



Agassi Topchian, Chair



Laura Schoonover, Secretary