

**Rent Stabilization Commission
City of West Hollywood
Thursday, February 11, 2016 @ 7:00 PM
West Hollywood Park Public Meeting Room – Council Chambers
625 North San Vicente Boulevard**

Minutes

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Sanes called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Commissioner Kurpies led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL: Commission Secretary Tom Trevor took roll call.

PRESENT:

Chair Gail Sanes, Vice Chair Richard Maggio, Commissioner Stephanie Harker, Commissioner David Gregoire, Commissioner Alexander Gurfinkel, and Commissioner Josh Kurpies.

ABSENT: Commissioner Rob Bergstein.

STAFF PRESENT:

Rent Stabilization and Housing Manager Peter Noonan, Social Services Manager David Giugni, and Commission Secretary Tom Trevor.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

A motion was made by Vice Chair Maggio to approve the agenda for the February 11, 2016 meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Harker. The motion was approved (5-0-0).

At this time Commissioner Gurfinkel arrived.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Approval of the December 10, 2015 minutes was postponed. Regarding the minutes for January 28, 2016, Commissioner Kurpies requested that his comments regarding multi-language documents be amended. A motion was made by Commissioner Kurpies to approve the minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gregoire. The motion was approved (5-0-1) with Chair Sanes abstaining.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Michael Wojtkielewicz of West Hollywood spoke regarding the Open House events on the City's Housing Element Goals and Programs that took place in January. He commented on code compliance and building maintenance issues and the importance of monitoring aging housing stock as well as ensuring that new construction is completed to meet building code requirements.

Cynthia Blatt of West Hollywood spoke regarding New Business item 1 (Social Service RFP for Non-Profit Agencies). She expressed concerns regarding the expenditure of CDBG

(Community Development Block Grant) funds and how the Ellis Act is impacting residents and affordable housing.

DIRECTOR'S/MANAGER'S REPORT:

Rent Stabilization and Housing Manager Peter Noonan announced that the February 25, 2016 Rent Stabilization Commission meeting has been cancelled and that at the March 10, 2016 meeting there will be a policy discussion on unit transfers.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Harker spoke about the recent Open House events on the City's Housing Element Goals and Programs that she attended. She also discussed her attendance at the February 9, 2016 RSO Building Blocks "Affordable Housing Waitlists" seminar. She expressed concern about the abundant need for affordable housing in West Hollywood as well as public concern that existing affordable housing may be lost. She spoke regarding the lack of affordable housing opportunities. She reminded the public about the February 23, 2016 RSO Building Blocks seminar on "Emergency Preparedness for Apartment Buildings" and encouraged the public to attend.

Vice Chair Maggio spoke regarding the role of the Rent Stabilization Commission.

Commissioner Kurpies thanked the evening's public speakers for their comments. He spoke about his attendance at the Open House events on the City's Housing Element Goals and Policies and the RSO Building Blocks "Affordable Housing Waitlists" seminar. He commented that public attendance at these events was good and he thanked staff for their participation. Commissioner Kurpies spoke regarding the Senior Valentine's Day Dance and commented on the positive impact this type of event has on the public.

Commissioner Gurfinkel thanked the public for watching or attending tonight's meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Social Service RFP for Non-Profit Agencies:

Social Services Manager David Giugni gave a presentation on the process that the Social Services Division has for requesting proposals.

Mr. Giugni then asked a series of questions of the Commission.

- What are the significant social services needs of the community, as related to issues of Rent Stabilization?

Commissioner Harker asked Mr. Giugni about counseling services for people who are being forced to leave their affordable unit. She also spoke about tenants who fear retaliation from a landlord that prevents them from reporting a lack of housing services maintenance.

Commissioner Kurpies asked Mr. Giugni about the possibility of rental assistance for low income residents. He also spoke about possible incentives for landlords to accept Section 8 vouchers.

Commissioner Gregoire spoke about unit accessibility and how the City might help tenants that have accessibility issues.

Vice Chair Maggio commented on accessibility issues as well.

Commissioner Gurfinkel suggested that grief counseling services could be added to assist tenants who experience emergency situations.

Commissioner Gregoire also suggested that services be available in multiple languages.

Commissioner Maggio asked about the possibility of a joint study session between the Rent Stabilization Commission and the Human Services Commission.

Chair Sanes asked for clarification on the RFP (Request for Proposal) process.

Commissioner Kurpies suggested that staff actively refer tenants to other social service programs as the need is identified.

Commissioner Harker asked about wellness checks for elderly and disabled residents.

Vice Chair Maggio asked about other services offered through JFS (Jewish Family Services).

- Have there been recent changes to services needs or services delivery that have been brought to the attention of the Rent Stabilization Commission?

Commissioner Harker asked for clarification on the type of outreach that is done to reach residents.

Commissioner Kurpies talked about the increased need for services for the homeless.

- What barriers might exist for accessing available Social Services Programming which enhances/supports Rent Stabilization?

Commissioner Gregoire commented that outreach should be done in multiple languages.

Commissioner Harker suggested street based outreach to the homeless.

Chair Sanes followed up on Commissioner Harker's previous comments about people's fear of retaliation from landlords inhibiting them from reaching out for help.

Commissioner Gregoire suggested that specific outreach should be done to reach homebound residents.

Commissioner Kurpies again pointed out the importance of having information available in multiple languages and informing residents of social services offered through other agencies.

Commissioner Harker suggested ways to provide cell phones to homeless persons for the purpose of communicating with social services agencies.

The Commission appointed Chair Sanes and Commissioner Kurpies as designee and alternate designee to attend the March 8, 2016 Human Services Commission meeting and report back to the Commission.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Rent Stabilization Commission 2015-16 Priorities:

Rent Stabilization and Housing Manager Peter Noonan reviewed the outcome of the January 28, 2016 Study Session.

Commissioner Gurfinkel asked for clarification on how the priority items were weighted. After a discussion it was determined that the item of multi-language outreach materials should be moved to the 100 percent category. The motion to move the item was made by Commissioner Gurfinkel and seconded by Commissioner Gregoire. The motion was approved (6-0-0).

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Cynthia Blatt of West Hollywood spoke regarding the purview of the Commission and further commented on CDBG funding.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Maggio expressed his appreciation for the public speakers.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Rent Stabilization and Housing Manager Peter Noonan confirmed that a discussion on liaison appointments will be included on the March 10, 2016 agenda.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Rent Stabilization Commission will be held on March 10, 2016 in the West Hollywood Park Public Meeting Room – Council Chambers.

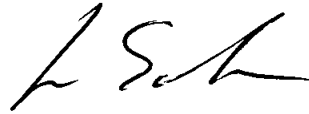
These minutes were submitted by Laura Schoonover, Commission Secretary and approved by a motion of the Rent Stabilization Commission on this 10th day of March, 2016.

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:



Gail Sanes, Chair



Commission Secretary