

**Rent Stabilization Commission
City of West Hollywood
Thursday, July 12, 2018 @ 7:00 PM
West Hollywood Park Public Meeting Room – Council Chambers
625 North San Vicente Boulevard**

Minutes

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Kurpies called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Commissioner O’Keefe led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL: Commission Secretary Tom Trevor took roll call.

PRESENT: Commissioner Richard Maggio, Commissioner David Gregoire, Commissioner Karen O’Keefe, Commissioner Agassi Topchian, Commissioner Garrett Charity, Vice Chair Rob Bergstein, Chair Josh Kurpies.

ABSENT: There were no absences.

STAFF PRESENT: Rent Stabilization and Housing Manager Peter Noonan, Commission Secretary Tom Trevor.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: A motion was made by Vice Chair Bergstein to approve the agenda for the July 12, 2018 meeting. Commissioner O’Keefe seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion was made by Vice Chair Bergstein to approve the minutes of the June 28, 2018 meeting as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Maggio. The motion was approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Dinah Thomas, West Hollywood, spoke about elections.

DIRECTOR’S/MANAGER’S REPORT: Rent Stabilization and Housing Manager Peter Noonan reviewed the calendar. The annual study session is scheduled for August 23, 2018. The Commission determined the December 27 meeting lacked a quorum and the meeting was canceled.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS: Commissioner O’Keefe commented on election procedures.

Chair Kurpies announced Assemblymember Richard Bloom would be hosting an open house at his district office in Santa Monica on July 25, 2018 from 5 – 7 p.m. The Chair also commented on contents of the July newsletter.

Chair Kurpies and Commissioner O’Keefe recused themselves from the Unfinished Business item. Chair Kurpies excused himself from the remainder of the meeting. Vice Chair Bergstein assumed the duties of Chair for the duration.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: LANDLORD/TENANT COST SHARING FOR EARTHQUAKE RETROFITTING. Manager Noonan presented a report on the item to the Commission.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Charis Michelson, West Hollywood, spoke on the item.

James Egan, West Hollywood, spoke on the item.

Derek Woolley, West Hollywood, spoke on the item.

Norma Sandler, West Hollywood, spoke on the item.

Cynthia Blatt, West Hollywood, spoke on the item.

Leontina Despotevic, West Hollywood, spoke on the item.

Ray Jaffey, Los Angeles, spoke on the item.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION:

Commissioner Topchian expressed his appreciation for the concerns of both tenants and landlords. He believes a pass through is less onerous than an upward rent adjustment.

Vice Chair Bergstein asked staff to keep a list of questions the Commission would like Council to consider in addition to any resolution the Commission adopts.

Commissioner Charity commented that the Costa-Hawkins Act and restrictions it places on rent stabilized jurisdictions are problematic. He felt the pass-through should be based on the size of the unit. He also expressed a concern regarding the hardship waiver. He encouraged the public to contact Council if they are interested in recommending grant applications to assist landlords in completing retrofitting projects.

Commissioner Maggio also felt the pass through cap should be based on unit size and noted the City Council should look at grants and other funding options to subsidize retrofitting.

Commissioner Gregoire felt landlords could leave the rental business without having means available for paying or recouping costs for retrofitting. He raised concerns about some tenants being able to pay a pass-through but also noted the capped monthly maximum assures tenants what the absolute maximum monthly amount could be. He felt allowing landlords to pass through an amount in the \$30 range was a small price to pay to ensure rent stabilized housing in the City would withstand a major earthquake. He supported the recommendation in the report.

Vice Chair Bergstein thanked staff for their depth of knowledge and ability to explain the topic at the many community meetings held. He raised the following questions and asked they be provided to the City Council: How would a tenant qualify for a hardship waiver, and how would they requalify, and how often? If a tenant qualifies, who will pay that amount back to the landlord? What happens if a landlord does not retrofit their building within the five year

limit? Could the City offer any financing in exchange in maintaining rents at a certain affordable level? Can the City help publicized other sources of funding (like the PACE program). Should the pass through be based on the size of the apartment? Who will track the payments? If the pass through is not covered by an increase in rent upon vacancy (if Costa Hawkins is repealed and rent decontrol at vacancy is removed), how will it affect the process? He is not comfortable recommending a specific dollar amount for the monthly cap.

The Commission then discussed the draft resolution before it and made two changes. The Commission removed the specific dollar amount on the monthly cap, which was proposed at \$38 a month; and the Commission specified the hardship exemption should be based only on financial need and not apply only to seniors age 62 and older and persons living with a disability.

Following Commission discussion, Commissioner Maggio made a motion to adopt Resolution RSC 18-528 as amended. Commissioner Charity seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 5-0-0.

Commissioner O'Keefe returned to the meeting following the vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT: James Egan, West Hollywood, spoke on Measure J that was enacted in Palm Springs regarding taxes.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS: Commissioner Charity thanked the public for their comments and his fellow Commissioners for their deliberation on a difficult topic. He said he had faith the City Council would make the right decision. He encouraged the public to research Proposition 10, the November ballot initiative to repeal the Costa Hawkins act.

Vice Chair Bergstein mentioned the recent newsletter and asked that future newsletters include an article about available legal services. He also commented that the 30-Day Notice to Increase Rent worksheet had not been included. He encouraged tenants to always avail themselves of their rights under the RSO, and to come to City Hall if they need assistance.

STAFF COMMENTS: Manager Noonan said that beginning with this edition the newsletter was now a bi-fold mailing and would no longer be delivered in an envelope. The rent increase worksheet would still be available and the newsletter would include how a landlord could download all rent stabilization forms online.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Rent Stabilization Commission will be held at 7:00 p.m. on July 26, 2018 in the West Hollywood Park Public Meeting Room – Council Chambers.

These minutes were submitted by Tom Trevor, Commission Secretary and approved by a motion of the Rent Stabilization Commission on this 26th day of July 2018.

A copy of the audio recording of this meeting can be obtained from the City Clerk's office upon request. You may also view a video of this meeting at <http://www.weho.org/weho-tv/other-city-meetings>
(Disclaimer: Staff records the meetings for the sole purpose of composing the official meeting minutes; therefore the audio recordings are not of commercial quality.)

ATTEST:



Rob Bergstein, Vice Chair



Commission Secretary