

**Rent Stabilization Commission
City of West Hollywood
Thursday, May 12, 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 7:01 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Chair Sanes led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL: Commission Secretary Laura Schoonover took roll call.

PRESENT:

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

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT:

Rent Stabilization and Housing Manager Peter Noonan, Rent Stabilization Information Coordinators Anwar Zraikat and Yellena Orloff, and Commission Secretary Laura Schoonover.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

A motion was made by Commissioner Bergstein to approve the agenda for the May 12, 2016 meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gregoire. The motion was approved (7-0-0).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Kurpies proposed an amendment to the minutes of the April 14, 2016 meeting to correct the date of approval. Commissioner Harker requested that a spelling error be corrected. The amended minutes will be brought back to the Commission at the May 26 meeting.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Maggio to approve the minutes of the April 28, 2016 meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Harker. The motion was approved (7-0-0).

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Michael Wojtkielewicz of West Hollywood spoke regarding the lack of protections provided under the Rent Stabilization Ordinance to residents who are not housed in rent stabilized units.

DIRECTOR'S/MANAGER'S REPORT:

Rent Stabilization and Housing Manager Peter Noonan reviewed the items on the Look Ahead calendar.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Gregoire suggested that if there are no items on the July 14 agenda other than the reorganization of the Chair and Vice Chair, that staff should consider cancelling that meeting and postponing the reorganization.

Commissioner Bergstein suggested that the July 14 meeting could consist of a presentation from the Commission's priority list.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Incentives for Multi-Family Historic Buildings: This item was continued to May 26.
2. Things to Know: Update on Section 8: Rent Stabilization and Housing Manager Peter Noonan provided a summary on rent increases on Section 8 units in West Hollywood. Mr. Noonan then took questions from the Commission about the Section 8 program in West Hollywood.

Public Comment: Michael Wojtkielewicz of West Hollywood spoke regarding Section 8 housing in West Hollywood.

3. Things to Know: Rent Stabilization Information Coordinators Anwar Zraikat and Yellena Orloff provided an overview of available informational materials pertaining to Rent Stabilization and Housing that can be found on the City's website and at City Hall. Staff then took questions from the Commission which expanded into Ellis Act information, information available in foreign languages, mobile device access to Rent Stabilization information and the recently upgraded rental referral list on the City's website.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Bergstein spoke regarding a customer service issue relayed to him from a landlord. He also requested that tonight's meeting be adjourned in memory of Frank Shanks, a West Hollywood community member.

Commissioner Kurpies spoke regarding his recent attendance at the Human Services Commission meeting and a question that he received regarding tenant protections and tenant fears of retaliation from landlords.

Commissioner Harker spoke regarding tenant protections and requested that staff agendize a conversation to discuss possible recommendations that the Commission could make to Council. She also encouraged the public to attend the upcoming RSO Building Blocks seminar "Save Money Avoid Fines: Code Compliance" on June 14 and to participate in the "Stamp Out Hunger" program on May 14. She also announced that the 15th Annual Russian Arts and Culture Festival will be held on May 15.

Vice Chair Maggio requested that when a Commission liaison attends another Board or Commission meeting that they report back to the Rent Stabilization Commission.

Commissioner Gurfinkel commented on his experiences with the Russian speaking population in West Hollywood. He suggested that staff agendize a topic for a future meeting where staff would bring forward a report on projected costs and potential options for how the City could utilize various translation services to reach out to members of the foreign language speaking population. The Commission then deliberated with Commissioners Gregoire, Maggio and Sanes expressing support for the idea but remarking that the topic was not within the Commission's purview and the Commission does not direct work to staff.

Commissioner Gurfinkel then made a motion that the Rent Stabilization and Housing Manager produce a report on all potential resources the City could utilize for translation services and place the report on the earliest meeting date possible for discussion. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kurpies. The motion was approved (4-3-0) with Commissioners Gregoire, Sanes, and Maggio voting nay.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Rent Stabilization and Housing Manager Peter Noonan spoke regarding the primary function of the Commission. He also announced that the minutes now include a comment that informs the public that the Commission meetings are available and can be viewed online. Mr. Noonan then spoke about the City's mediator service and that all tenants, regardless of whether or not they are in a rent stabilized unit, can avail themselves of that service. Mr. Noonan spoke about a recent meeting with landlords regarding the possible increase of the annual unit registration fee and the possibility of creating a unit registry for non-RSO rentals.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned in memory of Frank Shanks at 8:50 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Rent Stabilization Commission will be held on May 26, 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 26th day of May, 2016.

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:



Gail Sanes, Chair



Commission Secretary