

**Rent Stabilization Commission
City of West Hollywood
Thursday, March 8, 2018 @ 7:00 PM
West Hollywood Park Public Meeting Room – Council Chambers
625 North San Vicente Boulevard**

Minutes

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Vice Chair Bergstein led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL: Commission Secretary Tom Trevor took roll call.

PRESENT: Chair Josh Kurpies, Vice Chair Rob Bergstein, Commissioner Richard Maggio, Commissioner David Gregoire, Commissioner Agassi Topchian, Commissioner Garrett Charity, and Commissioner Margaret Buckles.

ABSENT: None.

STAFF PRESENT: Rent Stabilization and Housing Manager Peter Noonan, Legal Counsel to the Commission Alison Regan, Information Coordinator Gloria Aviles, Information Coordinator Chris Uszler, Commission Secretary Tom Trevor.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: A motion was made by Commissioner Gregoire to approve the agenda for the March 8, 2018 meeting. Commissioner Maggio seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion was made by Commissioner Topchian to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2018 meeting as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Charity. The motion was approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Stephanie Harker, West Hollywood, spoke regarding partial allowance of Air B & B in single-family dwellings.

DIRECTOR'S/MANAGER'S REPORT: Rent Stabilization and Housing Information Coordinator Gloria Aviles reviewed the Look Ahead calendar.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS: Commissioner Maggio reminded the public that the New Business item on the agenda would follow two appeals.

Vice Chair Bergstein stated he recently addressed the Council as a private citizen on the topic of smoke-free housing and said that the City Manager had been directed by Council to place the subject on a future agenda. The Vice Chair said he attended the Planning Commission as liaison and presented that commission a report on recent RSC activities.

APPEAL:

D-4183CD

1224 N. La Cienega Blvd
(Rent Reduction)

Legal Counsel Alison Regan provided a case summary and analysis of the appeal as provided in the staff report.

Steve Short, representative for the landlord, spoke on the appeal.

Charis Michelson, appellant, spoke on the appeal.

Following Commission deliberation, a motion was made by Commissioner Maggio to adopt Resolution 18-515, affirming the hearing examiner's decision. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Buckles. The motion was approved.

Chair Kurpies arrived at 7:32 p.m.

D-4257 (et al)

905 N. Fairfax Ave
(Rent Reduction)

Legal Counsel Alison Regan provided a case summary and analysis of the appeal as provided in the staff report.

Josh Weinberg, Los Angeles, representative for the landlord, spoke on the appeal.

Jessica Huntzier, West Hollywood, tenant, spoke on the appeal.

David Rowan, West Hollywood, tenant, spoke on the appeal.

Matthew Harkenrider, West Hollywood, tenant, spoke on the appeal.

Tanya Gurlow, West Hollywood, tenant, spoke on the appeal.

Following Commission deliberation, a motion was made by Commissioner Gregoire to adopt Resolution 18-516, affirming the hearing examiner's decision. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Topchian. The motion was approved 5-2-0, with Commissioners Buckles and Charity voting no.

Chair Kurpies called for a recess at 8:18 p.m.

Commissioner Buckles was excused from the meeting during the recess.

Chair Kurpies called the meeting back to order at 8:22 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS:

COST SHARING OPTONS FOR MANDTORY SEISMIC RETROFITTING AND POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS ON GUIDING POLICIES FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS: Information Coordinator Chris Uszler presented a report that provided the Commission with additional information on the City's upward rent adjustment approach, cost sharing approaches used by other rent stabilized jurisdictions, and a summary of public input received at recent community events.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Stephanie Harker, West Hollywood, spoke on the New Business item.

David Finkelstein, Beverly Hills, spoke on the New Business item.

Yola Dore, West Hollywood, spoke on the New Business item.

COMMISSIONER DISCUSSION:

Commissioner Gregoire said he wants to avoid Ellis evictions and wants Council to consider a pass-through option rather over the NOI process. He would like more study from staff on hardship exemptions and a cap on pass-through amounts.

Commissioner Maggio said he wants to retain rent stabilized units.

Commissioner Topchian wants to avoid significant impact on both tenants and landlords. He favors neither a surcharge nor a rent increase. He suggested a waiver or exemption for tenants in need of help, as well as landlords may have limited resources. He wants to be sure that reduction of housing services (particularly parking and storage) are addressed in any mitigation impact plans.

Commissioner Charity favors pass-through and surcharge over a permanent increase. Furthermore, he is in favor of a hardship exemption.

Vice Chair Bergstein is not in favor of NOI. He would like to avoid seeing any units taken off the market. He would like to see if some sort of partnership between landlord and tenants addressed. He asked about automatic gas shut-offs.

Chair Kurpies wants to see seismic retrofit considered in a different light than other capital projects. He favors options other than the NOI. He asked for more study of linkage fees. Whatever the approach is taken, he wants to protect fixed-income tenants. He wants to keep dialog open and look at options for more effective public outreach. He would like to see tenants costs kept to a minimum.

Recommendation: Receive the report and attachments and discuss. If appropriate, form initial recommendations for the City Council to consider when setting guiding policy for further analysis of a cost sharing approach for mandatory seismic retrofitting in West Hollywood.

AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE: Vice Chair Bergstein provided an update. An initial suggestion to Council has been drafted and could be presented to the Commission for discussion as soon as late April.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS: Commissioner Topchian thanked staff for an informative report and thanked the community for its input.

Commissioner Charity thanked staff for the presentation and to the Commissioners and public for their comments.

Commissioner Maggio thanked the staff for the detailed report.

Commissioner Gregoire thanked staff and members of the public who spoke and to liaisons from other commissions who spoke.

Chair Kurpies thanked staff and everyone who spoke at the commission meeting and at the seismic retrofit community meetings. He spoke on the City of Santa Monica's homelessness outreach. Assemblyman Richard Bloom's office is hosting an event about updates on recent "scams" as they affect seniors in particular on March 23.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Rent Stabilization Manager Peter Noonan thanked Chris Uszler for his report. Corri Planck has been assembling homelessness pamphlets for West Hollywood. He informed the Commission that the homelessness initiative formerly in the City Manager's office will now be a new division, the Human Services Division. Council directed staff to develop a rehabilitation program/grants primarily targeted at affordable housing buildings – grant source available for seismic upgrades/capital improvements in non-profit owned buildings in the city.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:41 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Rent Stabilization Commission will be held at 7:00 p.m. on April 12, 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 12th day of April 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:



Josh Kurpies, Chair



Commission Secretary