



MINUTES
RENT REVIEW BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13, 2018
TRAINING ROOM
3300 CAPITOL AVENUE
BUILDING B, FREMONT
CALIFORNIA
6:30 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Board Chair Saiz.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Board members Saiz, Shah, Massoud, Malani, and Hu

Absent: Board member Fox

Staff: Nancy Sa, Lucia Hughes, Bronwen Lacey, Jeffrey Cambra

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Board member Malani made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 23, 2018 meeting. Board member Shah seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

5. STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rent Review Program Manager Nancy Sa made a correction to a statement made at the last Rent Review Board meeting by Board member Fox that according to CA state law, rents can only be increased once per every 12 months. This is not a state law, and is a City ordinance according to the City's Rent Review Ordinance.

6. RENT REVIEW BOARD HEARING RRB 2018-16 DEBRIEF

All Board members and staff felt that the hearing went well considering it was the first hearing the Board had. However, there were a few points for improvements, as well as some procedural questions that came up.

Board Chair Saiz found that it was difficult to differentiate between recognition and approval when listening to the parties present, as well as to stay away from being solution oriented.

Board member Malani mentioned that because some of the terms had changed from what was provided on the staff report, he was a bit confused during the hearing. Staff agreed to check in regularly with both parties leading up to the hearing to see if anything had changed in their cases.



Board member Hu wondered how the Board could better draw out an agreement from both parties and get the tenant to recognize on their own that she actually has a good deal. He felt that the process was rushed. He wished he had more time to ask follow-up questions. He also asked if it would be possible to call a recess if new information is submitted to the Board during the hearing so that the members can have a few minutes to review the submission.

Board member Massoud felt that the Board pushed for a solution. There was no middle ground. She also mentioned that it was difficult when one party is not budging, and found it difficult that the landlord was not present themselves.

Board member Shah found it difficult that the desired outcome that was presented on the rent review form was different from what the tenant actually presented at the hearing.

Rent Review Ordinance Implementation Consultant Jeffrey Cambra discussed several areas of improvement based on the last hearing. He acknowledged that it is hard to create empathy between parties when the interested party is not present. He also reviewed the three distinct phases of the rent review hearing, and the importance of being aware of what phase of the process the hearing is in. Although the recommendations of the Board are not binding, it is important that all recommendations that come from the Board are fair, reasonable, and logical in order to establish the credibility of the Board. It is important that both parties feel heard at the end of the hearing. Mr. Cambra also pointed out that an agreement was not actually heard at the hearing, and that when this happens, the Board can take a step back and ask both parties how they feel about the agreement on the table. Rather than force an agreement on the parties, the Board can shift from facilitative and evaluative to making a recommendation. This is important because the Board is exercising independent judgment from the parties.

7. RENT REVIEW ORDINANCE MID YEAR REPORT

Ms. Sa presented the draft midyear report on the rent review ordinance. The midyear report is not meant to be used as a tool to evaluate the effectiveness of the ordinance. Rather, it is an update on the status of the ordinance implementation and operation. It will be presented to the City Council on July 10, 2018.

Board member Malani asked if we can add more languages to translate the rent review materials to. He also asked about outreach and marketing efforts. Ms. Sa informed the Board that staff is continually doing outreach and marketing, and asked the Board to inform staff of any upcoming events or outreach efforts they know of.

8. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Board member Shah asked if an agenda item can be added to all regular meeting agendas that remind the Board of the next regular meeting date.

Board Chair Saiz stated that he would like to schedule another role play exercise for the Board at a future meeting.



Board member Malani asked to agendaize for a future meeting the possibility of making recommendations for rent review ordinance amendments to the City Council. He also asked staff to present on what the language requirements are for rent increase notices in Fremont.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.