

# AGENDA ITEM REQUEST FORM

Department: Rent Program

Department Head: Nicolas Traylor

Phone: 620-6564

Meeting Date: October 18, 2017

Final Decision Date Deadline: October 18, 2017

**STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE:** Members of the community have sent letters to the Rent Board and Rent Program staff members. Staff members recommend letters that do not pertain to a specific item on the Rent Board agenda be included as consent items for consideration by the Rent Board.

## INDICATE APPROPRIATE BODY

- |   |   |  |  |   |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> City Council               | <input type="checkbox"/> Redevelopment Agency                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing Authority     | <input type="checkbox"/> Surplus Property Authority          | <input type="checkbox"/> Joint Powers Financing Authority |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finance Standing Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Safety Public Services Standing Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Local Reuse Authority | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>Rent Board</u> |   |

## ITEM

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation/Proclamation/Commendation (3-Minute Time Limit) |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Hearing   | <input type="checkbox"/> Regulation  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>CONSENT CALENDAR</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contract/Agreement   | <input type="checkbox"/> Rent Board As Whole                                     |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grant Application/Acceptance                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Claims Filed Against City of Richmond                   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution   | <input type="checkbox"/> Video/PowerPoint Presentation (contact KCRT @ 620.6759) |  |

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** RECEIVE letters from community members regarding the Fair Rent, Just Cause for Eviction, and Homeowner Protection Ordinance, RMC 11.100 – Rent Program (Paige Roosa 620-6537).

AGENDA ITEM NO:

**G-6.**

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To: Rent Control Board  
From: Nanine Watson

After having my property vacant for a number of years, I decided to remodel it. As in any building project, your costs are always more than you budgeted. I made my building into two units. I was really surprised when I learned how much it cost to add new PGE service and add a water meter. I decided to keep the PGE on the same service and have the tenants split the costs and it has worked very well. The water and garbage I pay. When I was going to increase the rent, I reread the ordinance and saw that I would have to pay the PGE if it was on the same meter. This seems grossly unfair; I would have an additional expense of \$2400 and have no way to pass it on to the tenants.

Since speaking to Paige, I have called and gotten estimates from a plumber and an 2 electricians of what it would cost to install a separate PGE service and it a about \$7000.00 and that doesn't include the permits. I have yet to talk to the PGE people to know their costs. This cost is prohibitive for a small landlord. I think that people who have this situation should be "grandfather in" and they should be able to charge for the PGE like they have always done. It is asking too much to have the landlord incurred an annual expense of \$2400 for the PGE or a major expenditure of \$7000+ just because it didn't meet the recently passed Rent Control requirements.

If you building a new building or remodeling one, the landlord would have knowledge in advance about the requirement, but to do this after the fact is not fair.

I hope you will consider modifying that part of the ordinance so it is fair.

Sincerely,

Nanine Watson  
2910 Cutting Blvd.  
Oakland, Ca. 94804

5 October 2017

Mr. Nicholas Traylor  
Executive Director, Richmond Rent Program  
440 Civic Center Boulevard, Second Floor  
Richmond, California 94804

Dear Mr. Traylor,

Thank you for agreeing to read this letter. I have a suggestion for reform of the rent control ordinances that questions one of the basic assumptions of the program.

I have read the online documents that built a strong case for rent control. In a region such as the Bay Area, where rents have often reached the stratosphere, some effort to provide affordable housing (in the form of reasonable rents) is entirely laudable. The questionable assumption is that the tenant is always the low income party to a rental agreement. In my mother's case, and I suspect in many others, the landlord is elderly, has a low income, depends on the rents for most of her or his income, and has owned the buildings for many years. Also in her case, the tenants have substantially more income. In this instance, rent control benefits the comfortable middle class at the expense of the low-income elderly. As I mentioned before, I suspect that this case is not unique.

Second, the owner move-in provisions as currently interpreted by the Board provide very limited conditions for an owner to move into his or her own building. How many senior citizens have at some point in their lives bought rental property with the intention of moving into one of the units as part of a retirement plan (on a very limited senior income)? This plan would be nullified under current rent control policies. Also, how many people go through a divorce in which one partner gets the house and the other gets the rental property with the expectation that the divorcee can move into one of the units for basic shelter that he or she already owns? Suppose a young landlord becomes unemployed and is foreclosed upon in the primary residence? Should not such a person have the option (based on financial hardship) to move into a unit that he or she already owns? Such severe restrictions make it very difficult for people to live in property that is theirs and has been purchased in good faith.

Some changes in rent control policies could ameliorate these unreasonable limitations on owner move-ins. First, allow anyone over the age of 62 (a senior as already defined in the ordinances) to move into a unit that he or she already owns. Second, allow an owner under the age of 62 to move into his or her own property under certain specified conditions (divorce, indigence due to unemployment, death in the family, etc.). In short, as matters now stand, means testing has no place in the Richmond Rent Program system.

Perhaps the whole rent control enterprise should be reimagined. Perhaps it should be structured to support ALL low-income or needy Richmond residents, tenants AND landlords alike.

What do you think?

Sincerely yours,

James R. Davis