

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the

Rent Review Advisory Committee Wednesday, December 5, 2018

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 6:45 p.m.

Present were: Members Sullivan-Cheah, Johnson, and Chiu

Absent: Vice Chair Murray and Member Griffiths

Program staff: Greg Kats, Grant Eshoo

City Attorney staff: John Le

2. AGENDA CHANGES

Staff informed the Committee that the parties in Agenda Item 7-D came to an agreement prior to the meeting.

3. STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

Staff announced it would call roll of the parties present at the beginning of New Business.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT, NON-AGENDA ITEMS, NO.1

Catherine from the Alameda Renters Coalition announced that free legal services for tenants were now being provided by Centro Legal de la Raza.

5. CONSENT CALENDAR

5-A. Approval of the minutes of the November 7, 2018 regular meeting

The Committee agreed to table consideration of this item to a future meeting.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

7. NEW BUSINESS

Staff called roll of the parties present. All parties were present except the tenant in Agenda Item 7-C. Staff informed the Committee it would call roll again at the end of new business to see if the missing tenant had arrived.

7-A. Case 1149 – 3268 Briggs Ave., Apt. B

Tenants: Stella Park

Landlords: Calvin and Serena Wong

Proposed rent increase: \$300.00 (25.0%) to a total rent of \$1,455.00, effective January 1, 2019

Ms. Wong informed the Committee that they had recently purchased the property. She said they wanted to improve the driveway, and obtained an estimate that it would cost \$35,000. She said they were requesting the increase to help pay for improvements to the property. She said they were currently making about \$180 income per year. Mr. Wong added that they would like to have a reserve fund for future expenses.

Ms. Park stated that she understands why the landlords want to raise the rent, but her income had not increased by 25%, the amount they were asking for, or as fast as rents have gone up. She said she was hoping to discuss and negotiate the amount of the rent increase with the landlords and proposed a 10% increase, acknowledging that the landlords did not raise the rent the previous year.

Member Johnson asked the landlords about the amount requested at this and other units on the property.

Member Sullivan-Cheah asked the parties about the layout of unit and property as a whole. Ms. Park said no upgrades have been made to her property since she moved in but the unit was in good condition.

Member Sullivan-Cheah asked the landlords what they thought of Ms. Park's offer of a 10% (\$115.50) increase. The landlords countered with a \$195 offer. Ms. Park said that her health insurance had gone up a lot and had substantial student loan payments. Ms. Park asked the landlords if they would accept a rent of \$1,300.

The parties could not reach an agreement and took their seats and the Committee began deliberations.

Member Johnson said she thought the 10% increase offered by the tenant seemed fair, and also understood the landlords' income concerns.

Member Chiu discussed each sides' perspectives and said he thought the tenant's last offer of \$1,300 was reasonable.

Member Sullivan-Cheah said that he understood \$1,300 to be Ms. Park's upper limit of what she would be able to pay, and noted that Ms. Park's unit did not have some of the amenities that other units on the property had, such as balconies.

Member Johnson expressed that the landlords would probably be better off incrementally increasing the rent each year to build a reserve rather than asking for a large lump sum increase.

Motion and second for an increase of \$135 to a total rent of \$1,290, effective January 1, 2019 (Members Sullivan-Cheah and Johnson). Motion passed 3-0.

7-B. CASE 1181 – 2157 Santa Clara Ave Unit Q

Tenants: Regis Paul Marcellin

Landlords: David Chui

Proposed Rent Increase: \$87.10 (4.9%), to a total rent of \$1,849, effective November 16, 2018

Mr. Marcelin said he had lived in the unit for eight years. He discussed the history of rent increases at the unit, at least one of which had been reversed following staff review. Mr. Marcelin said he would agree to the requested increase if the landlord committed to adhering to Ordinance 3148 and improved the unit with utility efficiency upgrades.

Mr. Chui said that they intend to comply with the Ordinance, and had remedied past errors. He said that they had AMP audit the property and AMP determined that some of the upgrades suggested by the Mr. Marcelin were unfeasible, but they would implement some improvements that they could. Some upgrades were already in-place, Mr. Chui said, such as dual-flush toilets to help save water. He said although the rent increase did not go into effect until November 16, 2018, the rent is always due on the first of the month, and therefore had the tenant pay a prorated increase for November on November 1, 2018, even though the effective date of the increase did not start until November 16, 2018.

Mr. Marcelin said that he did not have a dual-flush or water-saving toilet, and he had an old refrigerator that used a lot of electricity. He said he hoped to have a long-term tenancy and establish a good relationship with the new landlord, as he had with his previous landlord.

The parties agreed to the proposed increase of \$87.10.

7-C. CASE 1183 – 442 ½ Pacific Ave

Tenants: Rasheed Shahbazz

Landlord: Truyen Dang

Proposed Rent Increase: \$76.00 (5.0%) Effective date December 1, 2018

Staff called role a second time and Mr. Shabazz was still not present. The rent increase will therefore go into effect as noticed, or as otherwise agreed-upon by the parties.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT, NON-AGENDA ITEMS, NO.2

Eric Strimling from the Alameda Renters Coalition welcomed and thanked the new RRAC members, Chiu and Johnson, as this was their first RRAC meeting.

9. MATTERS INITIATED

None.

10. ADJOURNMENT

- a. The meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

RRAC Secretary
Grant Eshoo

Approved by the Rent Review Advisory Committee on January 23, 2019