

# AGENDA ITEM REQUEST FORM

Department: Rent Program

Department Head: Nicolas Traylor

Phone: 620-6564

Meeting Date: December 20, 2017

Final Decision Date Deadline: December 20, 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 (Cynthia Shaw 620-5552).

AGENDA ITEM NO:

**G-2.**

***This page intentionally left blank***

**From:** Ilona Clark [in70clark@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 14, 2017 10:47 PM  
**To:** Rent Control; Virginia Finlay; Emma Gerould; David Gray; Lauren Maddock; Paige Roosa  
**Subject:** Richmond's future under rent control

To all the Members of the Richmond Rent Board,

You may have already reflected on your unique position in Richmond's history as the first rent board. As someone with past experience with the Oakland Rent control bureaucracy I've appreciated bearing witness to some of your discussions, reasoning and intention not to repeat some of the mistakes made in other jurisdictions.

You all have a very full plate. However, I would like to share with you some thoughts about your legacy and how your work can serve Richmond long after your terms are finished.

Stability and continuity:

Renters and business owners need stability in order to plan for the long term. Rather than risk a new board coming in to over turn or change much of your hard work, consider about how to make your decisions less easy to overturn by a potentially fickle new group.

For example, if a decision is voted for unanimously, it should need a unanimous vote to overturn it.

If at all possible, please do not have all of you turnover at once – there is something to be said for continuity and institutional knowledge – Think about all you've learned in the past year. Let's not re-invent the wheel every other year or, worse, become a rubber stamp for an agenda created by rent board staff – wonderful though they have been through all the mayhem.

Credibility:

As you know controversial decisions put you in opposition to both “sides” of the housing issue. This means credibility is vital to your effectiveness and that of future boards. Charging fees is necessary but not at all popular. You may need to raise fees in the future. Doing so will be difficult without knowing where the money is going, how many sake-holders are actually paying, etc.

Regular audits can help with this. Oakland rent board did not do an audit for many years and were finally pressured into it, after much foot-dragging, by both renters and landlord's groups. The process caused a lot of cynicism, bitterness and distrust of the rent board by everyone.

I suggest an audit every 2 years since that is how long members can serve – no kicking the can down to the next poor guy that comes along.

Thank you for your consideration in these matters. I remain confident that Richmond can do better.

ilona

--

Be kind, for everyone you meet carries a heavy burden.

Richmond Rent Board

Re: 1821 Pennsylvania, Richmond, CA 94801

My name is Roberto J. Garcia, Jr., I am the property owner at 1821 Pennsylvania Avenue, Richmond, Ca, 94801. I am writing to provide you with background information regarding allowance for a one time rent increases beyond 3% to market level.

I have owned the above property since 1997.

**OWNER'S BACKGROUND**

I have worked my entire life as an independent worker. Unfortunately, during my youth I made bad decisions that cost me including but not limited to, a good education, socialization, job skills, etc. Once I recognized my short giving, bad decision making, I set out to reform myself. I worked very hard at becoming a skilled worker, but unfortunately, through lack of knowledge, I never found employment in a viable company. I found myself looking for work, finding and making acquaintance with other workers like myself who eventually introduced me to homeowners in need of "handy work". Eventually, and through the years I taught myself to be a very skilled laborer, a home improvement "professional".

As I never worked for a company that would provide benefits such as, 401K, healthcare, dental care, pension plans or any type of retirement fund, I did not have dental or medical health care for several years. 2013 was the first time I had dental and health care through the Obamacare.

I learned earlier on that since I did not work for a company which would enable me to retire comfortably or on any level, I would have to make solid, well thought out plans to insure my future. For this reason I purchased the above property.

**PAST RENT INCREASES**

The rents have not been increased since 2005. In other words, I have never asked for a rental increase for each of the units rented since 2005. Despite the fact that some renters have gone into arrears. I have always showed compassion and understanding for those tenants that have been in arrears by setting up payment plans, working on a solution to help get them up to date on past rents due.

**UPKEEP, UPGRADES, REMODELS**

I have maintained the property in the best possible condition. I have made numerous upgrades and complete remodels of each unit. Wherein a unit has been occupied, as soon as a renter moved out, improvements were done. The result has been that each unit has been remodeled and meticulously maintained. Despite the complete remodels rental increases were not made.

As stated above, in part because I view this as property for my retirement, I take pride in maintaining the property, caring for and securing this valuable commodity.

### INCREASED PROPERTY TAXES, HOMEOWNER INSURANCE – UTILITIES

In 1998 the property taxes for this address was \$3,738.38

In 2017 the property taxes for this address is: \$8,738.50

Home insurance: \$1,533.00 yearly

PG&E, water, gas and garbage paid

Since 2005, despite increases in all the above services, rents remained the same.

### RECENT UPGRADES

As a safety measure, approximately 5 years ago the parking lot and driveway were newly paved and a security gate installed at a cost of \$14,200.00. *This cost include roof done ten years ago.*

Rents remained the same.

### PROPERTY FORECLOSURES- FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

This property has been placed in jeopardy for reasons within my control. I continually refused to increase the rents because I considered each and every tenants own financial burdens over and above my own. Although the decision was a poor one, causing my property to foreclose twice, one in about 2009 and as recently as 2016, I stubbornly and foolishly refused to increase my rents placing me in financial hardship.

Reasons why I fell behind are:

- 1) rents had not been increased since 2005 despite increases in property taxes, homeowner's insurance, PG&E, water, garbage, etc.
- 2) Renters who were in arrears and fell behind in their rents were not brought up to date, causing me to find behind on making the mortgage payments.

The foreclosures have placed me in a financial bind where I must increase the rents if I am to keep my life savings, the property I have cared for and maintained since its purchase.

### MARKET RATE

The above rental property is broken down as follows, (Please consider: all units have been completely remodeled):

Studio: \$800.00 (comparable rate for a remodeled studio in the same neighborhood: \$1,200)

Large one bedroom apartment: \$900.00 (comparable rate for a remodeled large one bedroom apartment: \$1,400)

### FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

I planned to make overall improvements to the outside of the apartment building. Following the improvements I would like to place an increase in rents.

It is my sincere hope that the rent board will consider the outlining reasons and allow me to adjust my rents to market value with yearly increases as set forth by the rental guidelines.

Should the board not allow the rents to be set at market value, I am requesting that, at minimum, the rent board allow for an increase of at the 3% legal rate for each year where rents were not increased beginning 2005.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Roberto J. Garcia, Jr.

***This page intentionally left blank***