

Albany Council – Update on Rent Review

MAY 1, 2017

A. Current Status.

The last Council meeting to deal with Rent Review was on March 6, 2017. At that meeting City Staff presented a draft of a Request for Proposals which would set up a Rent Review Program for the City of Albany. Staff is looking for non-profit and professional mediation organizations and individuals to provide support services to tenants and landlords and to conduct mediation.

Specifically, the organization or individual would provide three types of services:

- (a) Technical assistance including public meetings and assistance in the drafting of a Rent Review Ordinance,
- (b) Counseling services for tenants and landlords and community outreach and education, and
- (c) Administration of the Rent Review Program including mediation.

The Council unanimously approved the Request for Proposals and requested Staff to send it to interested parties. Staff indicated that it would report back to Council within 30 to 60 days concerning responses received. Based on the responses received, Staff will complete a detailed structure of the Program and a Rent Review Ordinance will be prepared. At the March 20, April 3, April 17, and May 1, 2017, Council meetings, Rent Review was not on the Agenda. On May 1, 2017 Staff sent out a notice that Responses to the Request of Proposals would be due June 16, 2017.

B. Background.

During June, July, and September of 2016, the Social and Economic Justice Commission (Commission) held several public hearings on proposed rent control in Albany. During the hearings in June and July, tenants received notice of the hearings but no effective notice was given to landlords. As a result, primarily tenants appeared at these hearings. In late August a concerned Albany apartment owner sent out notices to Albany apartment owners of a Commission hearing

scheduled for Sept. 1. At that hearing many landlords testified concerning their objections to rent control.

Despite the objections of landlords at the September 1, 2017 hearing, on Oct. 3, 2016 the Commission presented its recommendations to Council which included an immediate rent moratorium, good cause eviction control, and the adoption of a rent control ordinance. After considerable input from landlords and APRA, Council decided not to adopt a rent moratorium or good cause eviction control at this time and directed Staff to conduct more research concerning the creation of a rent review Board with non-binding mediation.

On November 16, 2016, Staff conducted a public workshop on rent review which was well attended by landlords. The feedback from the workshop and an on-line survey indicated a general consensus on the following :(a). Rent review should cover all types of rental units, (b). The trigger for rent review should be rent increases of 10% and above.

On December 5, 2016, Council received an update from Staff and additional public testimony. Council then directed Staff to start working on a Request for Proposals to establish a rent review program in Albany.