



Wednesday, November 6, 2019
Minutes of the Special Meeting of the City Council

CALL TO ORDER

A Special Meeting of the South Pasadena City Council was called to order by Mayor Khubesrian on Wednesday, November 6, 2019, at 7:37 p.m., in the Council Chamber, located at 1424 Mission Street, South Pasadena, California.

ROLL CALL

Present: Councilmembers Cacciotti, Mahmud, and Schneider; Mayor Pro Tem Joe; and Mayor Khubesrian.

Absent: None

City Staff Present: City Manager DeWolfe; City Attorney Highsmith; City Clerk Zneimer; and Chief City Clerk Ayala were present at Roll Call. Other staff members presented reports or responded to questions as indicated in the minutes.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Pro Tem Joe led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mayor Khubesrian announced that Public Comment would be taken after the staff report was presented on Item No. 1. She further asked if there were any members of the audience that would prefer to provide their public comment before the staff report. No response from the audience.

ACTION/DISCUSSION

1. Adoption of Urgency Ordinance Requiring “Just Cause” for Termination of Tenancies

City Manager DeWolfe provided the staff report.

Significant dialogue and discussion was had on this item. City Council had questions regarding: retroactivity of urgency ordinance; defining 'substantial remodel'; original drafter of proposed urgency ordinance; lawfulness of adopting an urgency ordinance; rationale behind proposing the urgency ordinance under the category of 'safety to the public'; and what other cities were also considering, or have passed, similar action regarding the subject matter.

City Attorney Highsmith provided responses and explanations accordingly.

Additionally, recognition was given to Mr. John Srebalus for having presented City staff and City Attorney with a draft of the ordinance being proposed tonight.

Public Comment:

Prior to taking public comment, Mayor Khubesrian announced that given the number of public comment cards that have been submitted on Agenda Item No. 1, the audience is asked to select one speaker who will be allotted up to 7 minutes to speak on the item – in favor of passing the urgency ordinance - with every speaker thereafter allowed to speak for 2 minutes. The same would be applied for those speaking in opposition of passing the urgency ordinance.

Ms. Anne Bagasao was selected as the primary speaker on behalf of the group in support of passing the urgency ordinance.

The following public comment speakers spoke in support of passing the urgency ordinance. Speakers expressed the following concerns during their public comments: receiving eviction notices; receiving notices of significant rent increases; the impact these notices have had on their families; being long-time residents of South Pasadena; concern over other residents receiving said notices, having to be evicted, and the impact; etc.

- Anne Bagasao (South Pasadena Resident) – selected as primary speaker
- Micke Kramer (South Pasadena Resident)
- Jim Tavares (South Pasadena Resident)
- Christine Bullard (South Pasadena Resident): In addition to the above, Ms. Bullard shared she received an eviction notice and the hardship this will have on her family.
- Austen Blokker (South Pasadena Resident): In addition to the above, Mr. Blokker shared his experience with landlord harassment, having received an eviction notice and the hardship this will have on him.
- Cambria Tortorelli (South Pasadena Resident): In addition to the above, Ms. Tortorelli spoke as a landlord and in full support of the urgency ordinance being passed.
- Ryan Bell (Pasadena Resident, Member of Pasadena Tenants Union): Shared that Pasadena has also recently passed similar ordinance, and spoke in support of the South Pasadena residents experiencing these evictions.
- Teresa Eilers (South Pasadena Resident): In addition to the above, shared information about assisting with affordable housing for those that will need to seek new housing.
- Karen Kearney (South Pasadena Resident): In addition to the above, Ms. Kearney shared she received an eviction notice and the hardship this has had on her.

- Gretchen Robinette (South Pasadena Resident)
- Robert Flores (South Pasadena Resident, Member of United CalTrans Tenants)
- Sean McMorris (San Gabriel Resident): Shared concern over landlord action due to the AB 1482 legislation and the negative impact on tenants across the state.
- Evelyn Allen (South Pasadena Resident): In addition to the above, Ms. Allen shared she received an eviction notice and the hardship this has had on her family.
- Yuki Simmons (South Pasadena Resident): In addition to the above, Ms. Simmons shared she received an eviction notice and the hardship this has had on her family.
- Kanon Simmons (South Pasadena Resident): In addition to the above, Mr. Simmons shared his family received an eviction notice and the hardship this has had on his family.
- Judith Harris (South Pasadena Resident)
- John Srebalus (South Pasadena Resident): Recognized Mr. Johnathan Eisenberg for assisting with the draft ordinance, and the City of Pasadena for offering the original draft. Thanked the community and named various others for their direct support and assistance with the ordinance.
- Jacinta Lincke (South Pasadena Resident)
- Sylvia Gomez (South Pasadena Resident): In addition to the above, Ms. Gomez shared she received an eviction notice and the hardship this has had on her family.
- Rachel Hamilton (South Pasadena Resident): In addition to the above, Ms. Hamilton shared she received an eviction notice as well as a rent increase notice and the hardship these have had on her family.
- Peter Mendenhall (South Pasadena Resident)
- Larry Estrada (South Pasadena Resident): In addition to the above, Mr. Estrada shared he received an eviction notice and the hardship this has had on him and his neighbors.
- Raquel Chatfield-Taylor (South Pasadena Resident): Read a statement from fellow South Pasadena Resident, Brendan Young expressing support for passing of the urgency ordinance.
- Alex Schroeder (South Pasadena Resident): Spoke in support of tenants who have been mistreated, also cautioned the City Council about the unintended consequences to landlords if the ordinance is passed.
- Dashiell Roll (South Pasadena Resident)

After the completion of Public Comment, Mayor Khubesrian asked for those in the audience in support of passing the ordinance to please stand. A significant majority of those in attendance stood in support. Mayor Khubesrian asked for those in the audience opposed to the ordinance being passed to please stand. Two members of the audience stood in opposition.

City Council continued discussion and dialogue over the urgency ordinance including: citing some of the cities that had recently taken action on this subject matter; resources from the Tenants Housing Rights Center; thanked the community for expressing their support for the ordinance, etc.

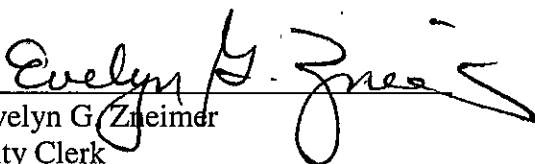
In addition, Councilmember Mahmud, expressly informed and advised the community that the Council is committed to being responsive and helping those tenants that have already received a 60-day eviction notice, as well as those that may receive a 60-day eviction notice. However, the ordinance is not a guaranteed protection on the City's part for those tenants that have already received a 60-day eviction notice, as the ultimate validity of the ordinance – and its retroactive effect – will likely ultimately be determined by a court. Councilmember Mahmud further advised those affected tenants to seek assistance through the City-contracted Housing Rights Center, and to exercise prudence and prepare for potential legal action should tenants be subject to unlawful detainers. In addition to the Housing Rights Center, there are pro bono legal services available, as well as legal publications (such as Nolo Publications).

Lastly, Councilmember Mahmud encourages landlords to be mindful of the essential housing services they are providing, and as such, they are expected to be good, reasonable, and compassionate landlords.


MOTION BY COUNCILMEMBER CACCIOTTI WITH ADDITIONAL DIRECTION, SECOND BY COUNCILMEMBER SCHNEIDER, CARRIED 5-0 TO approve Urgency Ordinance No. 2334 Temporarily Establishing and Requiring Just-Cause for Termination of Tenancies, to be immediately effective and remain in place until January 1, 2020, when the state-wide Tenant Protection Act (AB 1482) is applicable, with additional directive for staff to send letters to State representatives, County representatives, and prosecuting agencies to assist South Pasadena in this effort to prosecute unscrupulous landlords who take advantage of South Pasadena.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, at 9:11 p.m. Mayor Khubesrian adjourned the meeting.



Evelyn G. Zheimer
City Clerk



Marina Khubesrian, M.D.
Mayor