

Mar Vista Community Council Renters Subcommittee

Saturday, November 21, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

1. **Call to order at 2:06pm**

2. **Announcements**

Tyler encourages everyone to stay safe this Thanksgiving holiday.

3. **Public Comment**

Kalani notes that since the Republican Senate has not approved further COVID relief bills, there are local efforts to make funds for people who need to move that may be providing first and last month's rent. Specifically available for low-income residents, people with disabilities, age 62+ or with a minor dependent child. Tyler noted that the HCID website provides more information: <http://hcidladev.lacity.org/Relocation-Assistance>

Annie noted that the MVCC Renters meeting on September 19th included a workshop on renters rights and that anyone with concerns about their ability to pay rent or who is being threatened with eviction by their landlord should seek resources immediately.

4. **Reading and approval of minutes**

Tyler waives reading of minutes and asks anyone with concerns to submit feedback

5. **Unfinished business**

5.1 Stay Housed LA

The subcommittee has been sharing resources at every meeting. Stay Housed LA has educational information on renters rights, workshops to learn more, and a form to request help and access low cost or free legal support. People can visit www.stayhousedla.org to get more information.

If someone cannot pay rent, they need to submit a Declaration of Financial Distress for the current period within 7 days from the day rent is due. For the period September 1, 2020 to December 31st, 2020 renters are supposed to pay at least 25% of rent to avoid facing eviction. After January 31st, the current protections end and renters will be facing the possibility of eviction if they fail to pay.

Kalani noted that tenants should document everything and take pictures of units and property etc. Landlords often will try to harass tenants and refuse to fix things, clean etc. to coerce tenants into payment. This violates their legal requirements and tenants can file complaints with HCID LA to have an investigator look into the issue.

5.2 MVCC Board Approves Motion Supporting Renter's Vacancy Tax Motion

The MVCC board supports the Vacancy Tax Motion (council file 19-0623).

This is being considered as a 2022 ballot measure. Speaking as an economist and personal citizen, Tyler comments that he thinks this is a perfect tax. Landlords keep units off the market because they don't want to reduce the price.

If people have the time, they can support the measure in public comment on the LA City Council clerk file. Submit a comment by navigating to:

<https://cityclerk.lacity.org/publiccomment/?cfnumber=19-0623>.

5.3 Recap of Renters' Outreach Materials for January 16 meeting.

This meeting is especially important since the eviction protections will be ending January 31st unless otherwise changed. We are working to get Spanish language materials approved as well. English language versions of flyers are already approved. They will be printed for posting flyers and will be shared

Kalani pushes back on Spanish language interpretation and suggests that we link to a site that can translate in all languages. Tyler noted that all materials will be able to be translated electronically. Annie noted that Stacey has specifically advocated for resident who were predominant Spanish speakers and for whom English cannot be relied upon as the only language for communication. Mar Vista has a significant percent of Hispanic residents and we aim to be inclusive of community members who need language access.

6. New Business

January Meeting Outreach

Tyler notes that we will be looking for volunteers to help pass out flyers and share social media posts. Derl volunteered to help in Zone 7.

Kalani asked if we intend to include other neighborhood councils. The Renters Subcommittee will be reaching out to other NCs in the area and the content will be relevant for residents outside of Mar Vista.

Housing Element Update

Kalani commented that focus on affordable housing should be the focus of housing updates.

Annie Bickerton: Not sure if folks know what the housing element is; something called the regional housing needs assessment (RHNA), which is a statewide effort; takes place every 10 years; determines in-migration and out migration; takes stock of the housing needs of each jurisdiction; the local RHNA application is the housing element update; includes all incorporated cities and all unincorporated; it integrates the RHNA information into local General Plan so that we have enough housing to support our population; home owners association often have better organizations and legal help; renters do not have the same level of connection or participation because we do not own property even though renters often live in a neighborhood as long as homeowners. There is a website and newsletter from the City concerning the housing element. On a personal note, there is a lot of discussion about preventing lower income or historically marginalized communities have to bare the brunt of adding housing supply whereas incorporated cities have successfully fought more housing; a lot of undertones concerning segregation; a lot of organizations thinking about equitable access, inclusion and approaching the Housing Element with an equity lens. The City has recently started a new office concerned with equity. This is important for us to be aware of and to education ourselves; this will be going on until next year. Cities have a response period and then a negotiation between cities and the state; the more forward-thinking cities are, the less likely the state will impose housing changes. LA County is about 1 million short in housing, including 500k short in affordable housing. Community plan updates also have a role to play. We zone for excess but actual housing is underbuilt compared to zoned capacity. Encourage people to read and get informed. As this progresses, we will talk about the concepts and draft plans proposed by LA City. I don't think I have the ability to share in a chat

Tyler Laferriere: DONE does not include a chat

Annie Bickerton shared website via Zoom

Annie Bickerton: There is a Bitly link to LA Housing element update. You can click into that and subscribe to a mailing list. They just had some great workshops talking about the process and occasionally release updates.

Kalani Whittington: I have a comment and concern. It seems, in my opinion, in reading about the elements and perusing organizations and resources. This process could be easily solved by using the word forecasting.

Annie Bickerton: That sounds like the right word. It includes projected population growth. Forecasting is definitely the right word.

Kalani Whittington: When I was perusing housing information, if they included forecasting it would have made things a lot easier. It would be better marketing.

Annie Bickerton: I find a lot of city planning confusing, but part of the committee goal is to help people understand these things.

Tyler Laferriere: I am working on the RHNA calculator right now. I will present those at the next meeting.

Kalani Whittington: Forecasting in LA is very difficult, especially determining the undocumented immigrants, and that ebbs and flows:

Annie Bickerton: The Census is supposed to track both documented and undocumented. There was a lot of anxiety, lack of Federal investment, pandemic prevented door to door, shortened deadlines. We could be undercounting.

Kalani Whittington: The record turnout for voting might be a good indicator for people who have turned out for the census.

Annie Bickerton: It's really hard to tell, but a lot of well-meaning, intense effort were done to make sure people got counted.

Kalani Whittington: We should focus on branding concerning affordable housing. Developers love generic housing. 3,000 for a studio is outside the realm for most people. We should be focused on affordable housing and displacement. We should not just be appealing to tech companies but all stakeholders.

Tyler welcomes recommendations for motions or statements about city council files. Email format is firstname.lastname@marvista.org

7. Meeting adjourned at 2:58 p.m.