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Staff Report for Resolution Approving the Annual Rent Review Program Evaluation for July 2012 - June 2013

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Rent Review Program is a useful resource for both landlords and tenants who seek information, facilitation, and compromise on proposed rent increases. The program is utilized by the community to provide a rent dispute forum for tenants and landlords and is applicable to multi-family residential properties of three (3) units or more as well as mobile homes if a tenant rents the mobile housing unit.

Staff recommends that the City Council review and approve the Annual Rent Review Program Evaluation for July 2012 through June 2013 (attached with resolution).

BACKGROUND

Title IV, Chapter 32, Article 5, 4-32-500 of the City’s Municipal Code requires an annual review of the Rent Review Program to be prepared by the Rent Review Board (RRB) for the City Council. Since May 2001, the Rent Review Program has been an integral part of the City’s comprehensive housing services. The Rent Review Program has proven to serve as a helpful resource for landlords and tenants that seek information and resolution regarding lawful and reasonable rent increases.

The RRB consists of five (5) City Council-appointed positions. The Board composition includes: two (2) tenants, one (1) resident landlord, one (1) non-resident landlord, and one (1) homeowner representative. Ms. Mia Ousley (homeowner representative) was officially sworn in as a Board member on November 5, 2012 to formally replace Mr. Steven Leung who served as the homeowner representative since 2008. Ms. Lizzie Brown, who has served as tenant representative since 2002, was reappointed on February 4, 2013 to serve until 2015. Ms. Karyl Lee-Figueroa (tenant representative) was officially sworn in as Board member on May 6, 2013 to fill the remaining RRB tenant vacancy. Mr. Darien Beebe (resident landlord) resigned on May 15, 2013, and the process to

select his replacement is under way.

Due to the increase in activity involving the City's Rent Review Program and limited City staff and resources, the City outsourced the administration of the Rent Review Program to the nonprofit ECHO Housing for fiscal year 2013-2014. ECHO Housing is a full service housing counseling organization providing services to very low- and moderate-income clients. The City has partnered with ECHO Housing in providing fair housing and tenant-landlord counseling services to San Leandro residents since the early 1990's. Due to this longstanding partnership ECHO Housing can effectively serve as an experienced, centralized and streamlined intake resource for rental housing-related inquiries (including Rent Review Board concerns) on behalf of the City.

Current Agency Policies

Title 1, Chapter 1-3, Article 14 of the Municipal Code authorizes the Rent Review Board. Title IV, Chapter 32, Article 5, 4-32-500 of the Municipal Code authorizes the Rent Review Program. Title 13, Chapter 1, Articles 1-9, of the Administrative Code authorizes the rules of order.

Previous Actions

The Rent Review Ordinance was adopted April 2001. The Municipal Code was amended in March 2002, October 2003, and July 2005.

Board/Commission Review and Actions

On June 18, 2013, the Rent Review Board unanimously approved the Annual Rent Review Program Evaluation and instructed City staff to forward the evaluation to City Council for review and approval.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

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