



DATE: April 4, 2017

CATEGORY: Unfinished Business

DEPT.: Community Development

TITLE: **Community Stabilization and Fair Rent Act Rental Housing Committee Candidate Interview Process**

RECOMMENDATION

Conduct interviews with new applicants for the Rental Housing Committee, and provide direction to staff regarding preferred candidates and/or next steps of the selection process.

BACKGROUND

The Community Stabilization and Fair Rent Act (“CSFRA”) was adopted by voters on November 8, 2016 to regulate rent increases and to provide just-cause eviction provisions. The effective date of the CSFRA is currently suspended due to a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO). While the TRO remains in effect, the City Council cannot appoint the Rental Housing Committee (RHC). However, City staff has continued its preparations to implement the CSFRA, including the process to interview candidates for the RHC.

The City Council initiated the interview process with 17 applicants on January 24, 2017, and identified 10 candidates to move forward in the selection process. On February 8, 2017, three written questions were provided to these candidates. Nine candidates elected to move forward in the process and went through a second round of interviews on February 21, 2017. The City Council discussed the selection of six applicants from this round of interviews for appointment to the RHC.

After some discussion, the City Council directed staff to open a new application period for additional candidates. This new application period was opened on March 3, 2017 and closed on March 17, 2017. The new application form included the written questions answered by the previous candidates. The City received 10 new applications, two of whom were ineligible, for a total of eight new applicants (see Attachment 1).

The hearing on the preliminary injunction is currently scheduled for April 4, 2017. No decision is expected that day. If the Court denies the preliminary injunction, the CSFRA would become effective and the City Council could then appoint the RHC, which it may wish to do so expeditiously to allow the RHC to begin the implementation of the CSFRA.

ANALYSIS

The purpose of this evening's meeting is for the City Council to interview the new applicants and provide further direction to staff regarding the selection process. While no appointments will be made at this meeting, the City Council can provide direction to staff regarding their preferred candidates or other aspects of the selection process. The primary goal of this application process is for the City Council to identify qualified individuals who can fill the six seats (five Committee members and one alternate) in order for the City Council to be able to make the appointments at a public meeting if and when the CSFRA goes into effect.

Interview of the New RHC Candidates

Interviews for the eight eligible new RHC candidates are scheduled for April 4, 2017, starting at 7:30 p.m. in the Plaza Conference Room at City Hall. The interviews will be audio recorded. Staff has outlined a recommended interview process similar to the one followed on February 21, 2017:

- Each interview will be scheduled for 15 minutes. The order of candidates was randomly drawn by the City Clerk.
- The City Councilmembers will further evaluate the candidates on their relevant experience, understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the RHC, and ability to implement the CSFRA.
- The City Council asked the following questions of the prior candidates:
 - What do you think makes an effective Committee and what is your experience with group decision and policy making?
 - Are there any "Best Practices" that should be considered in implementing the rent stabilization program?

- Describe a section in the CSFRA that requires analytical or policy-making skills. What particular skills or experiences make you qualified to work toward reasonable and informed decisions that pertain to those sections?
- Do you feel that it is possible for the Committee to make fair and balanced decisions regardless of the Committee composition? Why or why not?
- How would you encourage maintenance beyond the minimum for rental properties within the parameters of Measure V?
- How would you appoint hearing officers and what criteria would you use?

The following is the schedule for the April 4, 2017 interviews:

7:30 p.m. Start Interviews

Michael Hovish

Keith Ellis

Karen Willis

Steven Johnson

Bryan Danforth

Vanessa Honey

Marcell Ortutay

Izzie Tiffany

9:30 p.m. Council Deliberation

Following the interviews, staff recommends the City Council review the candidates from both application rounds and develop a list of six final candidates (five members of the RHC and one alternate).

FISCAL IMPACT

Costs associated with the RHC are to be funded by fees set by the Committee. However, until the CSFRA goes into effect, the RHC is formed, and the fees are set, adopted, and collected, the City bears the cost of all work associated with implementation of the CSFRA. The City can and will seek reimbursement from the Committee. On February 14, the City Council approved a midyear budget adjustment of \$362,000 to fund initial costs of implementation of the CSFRA.

NEXT STEPS

Once the interviews are completed, the City Council could direct staff to bring the appointment of the RHC members back on a future agenda item if/when the CSFRA becomes effective.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Conduct interviews for the second round of applicants and select the top candidates from the first and second round of applicants for the five seats and one alternate spot on the RHC, and direct staff to bring those names forward for formal appointment when the CSFRA is effective.
2. Conduct interviews for the second round of applicants and decide at a separate City Council meeting the top candidates from the first and second round of applicants to appoint to the five seats and one alternate spot on the RHC.
3. Provide other direction for the selection process.

PUBLIC NOTICING

The meeting agenda and Council report have been posted on the City's web page and announced on Channel 26 and cable television.

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Attachment: 1. RHC Applications