Remote Rent Board Meeting Minutes - Held Via Zoom

Wednesday, January 25, 2023 Start time: 5:00pm

II. Roll Call

Elliott Simpson, Tenant, District 3 - Chair
Barbara Vestal, Landlord, At-Large - Vice Chair
Vacant, District 1
Vacant, District 2
Ian McCracken, Landlord, District 4
Philip Mathieu, Tenant, District 5
Elias Kann, Tenant, At-Large

Staff present:

Zachary Lenhert Licensing & Housing Safety Manager
Amy McNally, Associate Corporation Counsel

III. Minutes - 00:01:00

The Vice Chair made a motion to approve the minutes with one amendment to Section VI, Agenda Item D:

> Change "00:58:45 - Tenants who spoke on behalf of the application(s) submitted are:" to "00:58:45 - Tenants who spoke *to comment on* the application(s) submitted are"

Seconded by Philip Mathieu. Vote 5-0 (2 vacancies on the Board)

IV. Communications - 00:02:29

A. **Please note: Written public comment must be received via email (rentboard@portlandmaine.gov) by 12pm the day before the scheduled meeting. Please make sure that the subject line reads "Written Public Comment".**

B. **Written Public Comments**

Two comments were received in regards to the Grant Street applications. The Chair referred members of the public and the Board to review these documents in the agenda packet.

C. **In-Person/Hybrid Meeting Update - Memo - 00:03:33**

Zachary Lenhert from the Housing Safety Office (HSO) spoke in short about this memo. He expects the Board to start in-person/hybrid meetings in the near future.

V. Unfinished Business - 00:06:08

A. Rent Increase Application - Public Comment
Owner: Francine D'Alfonso
Property: 39 Holly St
CBL: 142-E-014-001
Increase: Capital Improvement Costs

This application was tabled from the previous meeting.

00:46:02 - The Vice Chair makes a motion that the Board partially approves the applicant's request based on a consideration of Capital Improvement Costs and Fair Rate of Return. The Board agrees to establish a new base rent for 2023 of $1,681.00. Seconded by Elias Kann. Vote: 5-0 (Two vacancies on the Board).

The Board will return to the decision form at the end of the meeting.

B. Rent Increase Application - Public Comment - 00:47:35
Owner: Home State Properties LLC
Property: 25 Grant St
CBL: 036-D-013-001
Increase: Capital Improvement Costs

This application was tabled from the previous meeting, along with the next agenda item for 27 Grant Street. These applications will be discussed jointly.

No tenants spoke as objectors for either application.

00:58:16 - Philip makes a motion to grant the rental increase requested by the Landlord for 25 Grant Street. Seconded by Ian. Vote: 5-0 (2 vacancies on the Board).

The Board will return to the decision form at the end of the meeting.

C. Rent Increase Application - Public Comment - 00:47:35
Owner: Home State Properties LLC
Property: 27 Grant St
CBL: 036-D-012-001
Increase: Capital Improvement Costs

This application was tabled from the previous meeting, along with the previous agenda item for 25 Grant Street. These applications were discussed jointly.

00:58:57 - Philip makes a motion to accept the rental increase requested by the Landlord as proposed for 27 Grant Street. Seconded by Ian. Vote: 5-0 (Two vacancies on the Board).

The Board will return to the decision form at the end of the meeting.

VI. New Business - 00:59:35

A. **Executive Session - The Board may go into executive session pursuant to 1 M.R.S. 405(6)(E) to consult with its attorney regarding the Board's legal rights and duties**

This is a placeholder at this point in the meeting.

B. **Rent Increase Application - Public Comment - 00:59:59**
Owner: Richard MacLaughlin
Property Address: 57 Walton St, Unit 1
CBL: 141-A-007-001
Type of Increase: Renovation/Reconfiguration and Increased Housing Service Costs

The unit is vacant, so no tenants spoke as objectors.

No public comment was received.

01:31:12 - The Vice Chair makes a motion that the Board table this application to the next meeting, and to make sure the applicant understands that he can amend the application before the next meeting to include capital improvement costs. Seconded by Elias. Vote: 5-0 (2 vacancies on the board)

The Board will return to the decision form at the end of the meeting.

C. **Rent Increase Application - Public Comment - 01:32:02**
Owner: Lawson Properties LLC
Owner's Representative: Andrew Jordan w/ Bellport Management
Property Address: 278 Park Ave, Unit 5
CBL: 065-E-001-001
Type of Increase: Renovation/Reconfiguration and Fair Rate of Return

The owner's representative, Andrew Jordan with Bellport Management, presented the application on behalf of the owner.

The unit is vacant, therefore there are no tenants to speak as objectors.

No public comment was received.

01:49:10 - The Vice Chair makes a motion that the Board considers this as the renovation of the unit which would allow a resetting of the base rent, combined with a fair rate of return analysis based on a disproportionately low rent. The Board approves setting the new base rent at $1,376.83, and stipulate that the applicant would be entitled to any other rent increases that are automatically allowed under the ordinance for 2023.

Seconded by Ian. Vote: 5-0 (Two vacancies on the Board)

01:51:07 - The Vice Chair requested that the Board finishes with the decision forms first before moving onto the last agenda items with the forms and procedures.

Amy McNally with Corporation Counsel assisted with drafting the forms.

Decision Form for 39 Holly Street

Some edits were made to the form

01:56:42 - The Vice Chair makes a motion to accept as drafted. Seconded by Elias. Vote: 5-0 (Two vacancies on the Board)

Decision Form for 25 Grant Street

Some edits were made to the form

02:01:10 - The Vice Chair makes a motion to accept as drafted. Seconded by Philip. Vote: 5-0 (Two vacancies on the Board)

Decision Form for 27 Grant Street

Some edits were made to the form

02:03:04 - Elias makes a motion to accept as written. Seconded by the Vice Chair. Vote: 5-0 (Two vacancies on the Board)

Decision Form for 278 Park Ave

Some edits were made to the form

02:06:16 - Elias makes a motion to accept as written. Seconded by the Vice Chair. Vote: 5-0 (Two vacancies on the Board)

D. Discussion of New Forms and Procedures - 02:06:55

The Chair refers Board members to the “City of Saint Paul Rent Stabilization” document included in the agenda packet for this agenda item.

The Vice Chair and Philip Mathieu have volunteered to draft an MNOI application.

Board members discussed the possibility of having a special workshop prior to the regularly scheduled Rent Board meeting in February.

The Vice Chair also suggested that the other Rent Board applications be adjusted to the new ordinance as well.

02:50:57 - The Vice Chair makes a motion to schedule a special meeting, which would be a workshop meeting for 4pm on February 8th to look at forms and rules. The Chair added that no actions, vote, or public comment will be taken at this meeting.

Seconded by Philip. Vote: 5-0 (Two vacancies on the Board)

VII. Adjourn

02:52:53 - The Vice Chair makes a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Elias. Vote: 5-0 (Two vacancies on the Board)

Meeting end time: 7:53pm