

Remote Rent Board Meeting Minutes - Wednesday, October 25, 2023

Wednesday, October 25, 2023

II. Roll Call - 0:00:40

Elliott Simpson, Tenant, At-Large - Chair
Barbara Vestal, Landlord, At-Large
Patricia Jane Washburn, Tenant, District 1
Matthew Walker, Tenant, District 2
Vacant, District 3
Antwane Mills, Tenant, District 4 (absent)
Philip Mathieu, Tenant, District 5 - Vice Chair

Staff present:

Dylan Orr, Rental Registration Coordinator
Zachary Lenhart Licensing & Housing Safety Manager
Benjamin Plante, Esq., Counsel for the Rent Board

III. Approval of Minutes - 0:01:26

A. September, 27, 2023 Minutes

Barbara Vestal makes a motion to approve minutes once amended to identify Philip Mathieu as acting Vice Chair. Seconded by Patricia Washburn. Vote: 5-0 (Mills absent)

IV. Communications - 0:03:22

A. Memo from Staff

00:03:31 - Zachary Lenhart, Licensing & Housing Safety Manager for the Housing Safety Office (HSO), introduced Dylan Orr as the new Rental Registration Coordinator and Secretary for the Rent Board. Communicated that Landlords have been inquiring how to adjust the determination of an appropriate increased Base Rent pursuant to Sec. 6-233(c).

VI. New Business - 0:05:51

A. Rent Increase Application - Public Comment

Owner: Trelawny 657 LLC

Agent: Paul Bulger, Esq with Jewell & Bulger, P.A.

Property Address: 655 Congress St

CBL: 046-D-021-001

0:07:20 - Matthew Walker motioned to reorder agenda and address New Business before Unfinished Business. Seconded by Patricia Washburn. Vote: 5-0 (Mills absent)

0:11:13 - Matthew Walker voluntarily recused himself due to conflict of interest as a tenant of the property.

0:11:47 - Chair Elliott Simpson addresses their absence from previous meeting when application was last heard and familiarization with review of current information.

0:15:18 - Applicant and Objectors address any concerns of Chair's participation in consideration of application.

0:32:17 through 0:42:21 - Ethan Strimling of Trelawny Tenants Union speaks as an objector.

0:43:18 through 0:47:31 - Matthew Walker, a tenant of 655 Congress St, speaks as an objector.

No public comment was received.

0:48:46 through 0:54:42 - Response from Paul Bulger

0:55:41 through 0:58:40 - Response from Ethan Strimling

0:59:30 through 1:00:54 - Response from Matthew Walker

1:01:30 through 1:02:17 - Final response from Paul Bulger

2:15:54 - Elliott Simpson motions that the expenses associated with natural gas delivery are considered rent per the definition of rent in the ordinance and encourages the applicant to pursue the avenue of rent adjustments outlined in the ordinance by filing an MNOI application. Seconded by Barbara Vestal. Vote: 4-0 (Mills absent, Walker recused)

V. Unfinished Business - 2:29:32

A. Annual Rent Board Report Update

The Chair shares his screen for the Board to review the report. No voting will take place regarding this item.

VII. Adjourn - 3:33:11

Patricia Washburn motions to adjourn. Seconded by Barbara Vestal. Vote: 5-0 (Mills absent)