

City of Perth Amboy – Rent Leveling Board Meeting  
Monday, September 13, 2021, via zoom  
Minutes: Meeting called to order @ 7:00 p.m.

**Welcome:** Chairperson S. Hubberman read open public meeting act.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Roll Call:** Vincent Mackial, Luz Ramirez, Kevin Kowitski, Chris Rosario, and Chairperson Sharon Hubberman,

William Opel, Esq. and Dianne Roman (recording secretary to the RLB and City representative)

Absent: Gisella Ramos

**Introduction of New Members**

Mrs. Roman introduced the new members of the RLB; Kevin Kowitski, Michelle Moreland, and Chris Rosario. And announced the departure of Nardia Mendez. Mrs. Roman will make a recommendation to the council to appoint Gisella Ramos, alternate board member, as a permanent board member.

**Approval of Minutes: 6/7/21**

<u>Vincent Mackiel</u>	<u>Luz Ramirez</u>
Motion	2 <sup>nd</sup> the Motion

**Topics of discussion:**

Motion to open TD	
<u>Vincent Mackiel</u>	<u>Luz Ramirez</u>
Motions	2 <sup>nd</sup> the motion

**Topics of Discussion:**

**City's Rent Controlled continued conversation regarding 5% cap vs CPI**

Discussion: Chairperson Hubberman opens the discussion recapitulating the role the RLB plays in the city. She details that when the city ordinance first went into place in the 1980's, the inflation rate was significantly higher thus leading to the adoption of a 5% rental increase cap at the time. The discussion for this meeting will address whether the current 5% cap meets the current needs of Perth Amboy residents.

Mr. Mackiel adds that a lower rental increase cap would be beneficial for the city residents. He cites the rent control ordinances of New Brunswick, Jersey City, and neighboring municipalities' lower percentage as an example to follow. Mr Mackiel further states that the healthcare crisis, along with the increased cost of living and the low median annual household income in the city of Perth Amboy support the need of a lower rental increase cap.

Mr. Mackiel expresses concern over the Consumer price index (CPI) applicability and whether residents will be able to understand it.

Mr. Kowitski asks about the percentage change in the neighboring municipalities, and if these were lowered recently. Mr. Kowitski states that he would like to know if the rental increase cap is being decreased in alignment with projected inflation rates, and would like access to this data to back up the RLB proposal of lowering the rental increase cap.

Chairperson Hubberman explains that the CPI is a measure of the basket of goods and services in the market, and thus an appropriate measure to track changes for the working class. Ms. Hubberman has been monitoring the CPI over time in comparison with the current 5% cap. She has evaluated this data and concluded that the current rental increase cap, notwithstanding inflation, is significantly higher than the CPI at the time.

Chairperson Hubberman suggests review of the metrics used to measure change in relation to the market.

Mrs. Roman announces the arrival of Michelle Moreland to the zoom meeting.

Chairperson Hubberman asks Mrs. Roman about any data the office of Housing and Social Services may have received in regards to the rental units in the city.

Mrs. Roman states that the office keeps stock of current rent prices. Mrs. Roman will share this information with the board. Mrs. Roman adds that the housing intern, Kimberly Silverio, has prepared a report analyzing the current allowable rental increase caps in surrounding municipalities and will show this report with the RLB.

**Motion to close this topic/ City's Rent Controlled continued conversation regarding 5% cap vs CPI:**

Vincent Mackiel

Motions

Chris Rosario

2<sup>nd</sup> the motion

**Old Business: Rental Registration**

Mrs. Roman provided a summary for the new members of the board. The city has a property landlord registration and a renter's registration. City attorney is helping prepare language to collect the appropriate information for renter's registration.

**Old Business:**

Motion to open OB

Vincent Mackiel

Motions

Kevin Kowitski

2<sup>nd</sup> the motion

Mr. Mackiel states that he would like for tenants to receive literature and other educational materials on renter's relief by the landlords upon the time they are registered.

Kevin Kowitski asks, 'Do we have laws and language in place that provide restrictions to the number of people that are permitted in these units?' in regards to overcrowding in units.

Chairperson Hubbermann requests the attorney to look further into this matter. Ms. Hubbermann asks, "Does the city have anything in place as it stands currently to monitor rent decontrol? Would having a renter's registration address that?"

Mrs. Roman replies, 'We do not currently have rent decontrol in the city. That is something we are including in the new language being developed with the help of the attorney. In our current rental registration, landlords put the amount of rent they are charging per unit.' Ms. Roman further explains that while this measure is in place there is no process in place to confirm the information being provided is accurate.

Mr. Mcmanimon, the attorney, replies, 'The property registration section of the code requires they be submitted to a specific department. What we are proposing in our language is for more information in the form and for it to be submitted annually to the municipal clerk, and a copy to the secretary of the RLB.'

**Old Business:**

Motion to close OB

Vincent Mackiel

Motions

Chris Rosario

2<sup>nd</sup> the motion

**New Business:**

Motion to open NB

Vincent Mackiel

Kevin Kowitski

Motions

2<sup>nd</sup> the motion

Mr. Mackiel requests for literature and educational materials on rental assistance be provided to tenants by their landlords upon registering their unit.

Mr. Kowitski asks, 'Do we have statistics on residents that have utilized the relief programs available, or the number of people that are eligible for relief?'

Mrs. Roman replies that she checked with Puerto Rican Association for Human Development (PRAHD), who have funds for rental assistance, and that they have had a low turnout for relief applications. Mrs. Roman will investigate further on Mr. Kowitski's request.

Chairperson Hubberman asks, 'Does anyone have information regarding as to what the specifics are for the relief for landlords facing hardships due to COVID-19'

Mrs. Roman replies, 'NJ Shares has money available for homeowners.' Other than this she has not heard of any other relief available for landlords.

Chairperson Hubberman inquires on PRAHD's availability to provide a synopsis of their programs and services for the board.

Mrs. Roman will reach out to PRAHD's executive director, Kim Ruiz, to coordinate a brief presentation for the next RLB meeting.

**New Business:**

Motion to close NB

Kevin Kowitski

Motions

Vincent Mackiel

2<sup>nd</sup> the motion

**Open to the Public:**

Vincent Mackiel

Motion

Chris Rosario

2<sup>nd</sup> the motion

Move to close OttP:

Vincent Mackiel

Motion

Kevin Kowitski

2<sup>nd</sup> the motion

Having no more business of the RLB:

Motion was made to close the meeting

Vincent Mackiel  
Motion

Kevin Kowitski  
2<sup>nd</sup> the motion

All members were in agreement.  
Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.