

MINUTES
Public Hearing of the College Park City Council
Tuesday, June 12, 2007 – 6:45 P.M.

07-O-11:

An Ordinance Of The Mayor And Council Of The City Of College Park, Maryland, Amending City Code, Chapter 15, “Boards, Commissions And Committees”, To Cross-Reference Chapter 127 And To Make Other Minor Changes For Clarification, To Amend Section 15-40, “Composition”, To Delete The Requirement Of Representation On The Rent Stabilization Board From All Election Districts, And To Amend Section 15-51, “Voting”, To Permit The Board To Act By A Majority Of Members Present And Voting; Amending Chapter 110, “Fees And Penalties”, To Increase The Penalties For Certain Violations Of Chapter 127 And To Provide A New Penalty For Failure To Pay The Registration Fee; And Amending Chapter 127, “Rent Stabilization”, Section 127-4, “Establishment Of Rent Ceiling”, And Section 127-6, “Calculation Of Rent Ceiling After Initial Registration Year”, To Alter Prospectively The Calculation For The Rent Ceiling And The Annual Increase Therein, Except In Prince George’s County Tax Assessment District 01, And To Make Certain Other Changes For Clarification And Efficiency Of Enforcement.

PRESENT: Mayor Brayman (arrived at 6:54 p.m.); Councilmembers Milligan, Krouse, Catlin, Perry, Fellows (arrived at 6:53 p.m.), Stulich, Hampton and Cook.

ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Joe Nagro, City Manager; Janeen Miller, City Clerk; Suellen Ferguson, City Attorney; Sara Imhulse, Assistant to the City Manager; Bob Ryan, Director of Public Services; Mary Laura Fitzgerald, Rent Stabilization Program staff; Jeannie Ripley, Code Enforcement Manager; Robert Day, Chairperson, Rent Stabilization Board.

Mayor Pro Tem Catlin opened the Public Hearing at 6:49 p.m. and invited Bob Ryan to give an overview. Mr. Ryan stated that several changes to the ordinance are proposed – some are substantive and others are not. Mr. Ryan outlined the non-substantive changes that are proposed to better organize and clarify the ordinance. Mr. Ryan reviewed the substantive changes. A proposed amendment to §15-40 is made at the request of the Rent Stabilization Board to delete the provision that the Mayor and Council shall ensure there is representation from each of the Council Districts on the Board. Section §15-51 would permit a decision of the Board to be carried by a majority of those persons present and voting. Changes to Chapter 110 would increase the fines for violations of the rent cap provisions and for failure to register. Changes in Chapter 127-4 include the scaling back of the cap from its current 1% of assessed value, to .8% for FY 08, .7% for FY 09, and .6% for FY 10 (and, in the case of duplexes, triplexes, and quadraplexes, from the current 1.5% to 1.2%, 1.1%, and 1%, respectively). These changes are intended to account for the very substantial increases in assessed values for most residential real properties in the City that were not anticipated when the 1% and 1.5% caps of the original ordinance were

adopted. The proposed changes to Section 127-6 are to eliminate confusion about the application of the Consumer Price Index (“CPI”) adjustor and to clarify that property owners have three options for calculating an allowable rent increase. The Board has also proposed an amendment to Section 127-7, concerning the effective date of adjustments.

Mayor Brayman invited public testimony, but stated that questions were requested to be submitted in writing prior to the hearing.

David Dorsch, Calvert Road, Chair of the City’s Landlord’s Forum: Opposes all of these changes. The Ordinance does nothing to increase affordable housing, is discriminatory and very confusing. Representatives on the Rent Stabilization Board are needed from each District. He asked for an explanation of why one assessment district is excluded. Rent Stabilization was designed to be temporary; when will it be removed?

Morgan Gale, President, 7010 Wake Forest Drive: Is in favor of these changes.

John Hawvermale, 1442 Excalibur Lane, Sandy Spring: Questioned how this benefits the property owners when it decreases the rent he is able to charge. Mr. Catlin asked him to submit information showing how this decreases the rent. Had questions about combining the registration fee with the annual license fee. Made general comments about the regional housing market.

Alan Tyler, 7204 Bowdoin Avenue: Discussed former City programs that provided incentives to homeowners to improve their properties. Believes Rent Control penalizes people. Discussed the \$5,000 homeownership grant program.

Mayor Brayman indicated that action on this ordinance is scheduled for later this evening. No further public comment will be heard unless there is substantive change to the ordinance.

There being no further public comment, the hearing was adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

Janeen S. Miller, City Clerk