

MINUTES
Public Hearing of the College Park City Council
Tuesday, April 27, 2010 - 7:30 p.m.

Ordinance 10-O-02
An Ordinance Of The Mayor And Council Of The City Of College Park, Maryland,
Amending City Code, Sections 127-4, “Establishment Of Rent Ceiling” And 127-6,
“Calculation Of Rent Ceiling After Initial Registration Year”, To Alter Prospectively The
Calculation For The Rent Ceiling And The Annual Increase Therein For Single Family
Dwellings, Except In Prince George’s County Tax Assessment District 01.

PRESENT: Mayor Fellows; Councilmembers Nagle, Wojahn (arrived at 7:40 p.m.), Catlin, Perry, Stullich, Cook (arrived at 7:36 p.m.), Afzali, and Mitchell.

ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Joe Nagro, City Manager; Suellen Ferguson, City Attorney; Janeen Miller, City Clerk; Bob Ryan, Director of Public Services; Jonathan Sachs, Student Liaison; Becca Lurie, Deputy Student Liaison.

Mayor Fellows called the Public Hearing to order at 7:30 p.m. and invited testimony on Ordinance 10-O-02.

Comments from the audience:

James Buchheister, 2024 Howard Chapel Turn, Crofton, MD, 21114, Owner of 4503 Guilford Road: Has concerns about the clarity of how the rent ceiling is calculated for his specific property, which is a triplex. He also asked about the calculation of the number of bedrooms in the HUD calculation. HUD said you calculate the total number of bedrooms. He has a house with three units for a total of four bedrooms.

Mr. Ryan said it would be a maximum of 1% of the SDAT value which is probably higher than the HUD FMR for 2010. Mr. Ryan said the cap is for a four bedroom single family home so his higher cap would be the 1%.

Mr. Catlin said that the 1% did not change because assessments on triplexes, which are mostly in the Knox Box area, generally went up. Mr. Buchheister said his went down. Mr. Catlin said in his case he would have the option of increasing his rent by the change in the CPI.

(Councilmember Cook arrived.)

Natalia Cuadra-Saez, 3131 Dorchester Hall, President of CHUM (Co-op Housing at the University of Maryland): Rental houses are the most affordable option for housing and having the rent cap is essential. It is easy to overprice rents because of student demand to live near campus. She believes the five person cap is harmful to students and it causes students to

disregard it and overcrowd houses. She has heard from a friend whose landlord has already told her that the rent would go up by \$500 if this passes.

(Councilmember Wojahn arrived.)

Councilmember Perry asked staff if the rent calculation is for the entire building or for each unit in the building. Mr. Ryan replied it is for the entire building but how it is divided per unit is up to the landlord.

Elizabeth Cerezo, 8000 Boteler Lane Apt 313B, College Park: She is on a scholarship that also pays for housing, but not everyone has that luxury. Many students have to make the choice between work and school. Raising the rent cap would hurt many of her friends; they can't afford it and their parents can't afford it. She needs to find a new place to live next year and doesn't know where she will live. It's hard for students especially in this recession.

There being no further testimony, Mayor Fellows adjourned the public hearing at 7:50 p.m. He said that the Council would take action on this Ordinance tonight.

Janeen S. Miller, CMC Date Approved
City Clerk