



City of Santa Barbara
RENTAL HOUSING MEDIATION BOARD
MINUTES
MARCH 11, 2021

5:30 P.M.

This Meeting was Conducted Electronically

BOARD MEMBERS:

Leesa Beck, *Chair*
Michelle Roberson, *Vice Chair*
Janet Eastman, *Secretary*
Natalia Alarcon
Richard Axilrod
Cory Baker
Jeana Dressel
Justin Dullum
Rigoberto Gutierrez
Daniel Herlinger
Marilyn Loperfido
David McDermott
Bruce Wollenberg

CITY COUNCIL LIAISON: Alejandra Gutierrez

STAFF:

Andrea Bifano, Senior Rental Housing Mediation Specialist
Alba Marshall, Rental Housing Mediation Specialist

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Beck called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL / ATTENDANCE

Members present: Chair Beck, Vice Chair Roberson, Secretary Eastman, Board Members; Alarcon, Baker, Dullum, Gutierrez, Herlinger, Loperfido, McDermott, Wollenberg

Members absent: Board Member Axilrod and Dressel

Staff present: Bifano and Marshall

GENERAL BUSINESS

A. Public Comment:

No public comment

B. Approval of Minutes:

Motion: Approve the minutes of the Rental Housing Mediation Board (RHMB) meeting of **December 10, 2020**, as submitted.

Action: Eastman, Roberson 9/2/2. (Board Members Alarcon, McDermott, abstained.) (Board Member Dressel, absent.) Motion carried.

C. City Council Advisory Group Annual Appointments

1. Introduction of Newly Appointed Board Mediator Member:

- David McDermott

- The Rental Housing Mediation Board welcomed Former Board Mediator Member and former Assistant City Attorney for the City of Santa Barbara.

2. Council Liaison Appointments:

- Alejandra Gutierrez, Primary
- Mayor Cathy Murillo, Alternate

1. **OFFICER RECOGNITION**

Recognition of Former Officers Presented by Mayor Cathy Murillo:

- Daniel “Dan” R. Herlinger, Chair
 - Former Chair Herlinger was recognized by Mayor Cathy Murillo for his outstanding work, and was awarded and presented with a signed Certificate of Recognition for his Exemplary Service and Special Recognition for Excellence as Chair for the past 3 years: 2018, 2019 and 2020. He was also honored by the Board with an engraved gavel. He previously served in the position of Vice Chair in 2016 and 2017. During his term as Chair, he provided tremendous support and leadership to the Board and assistance to Ms. Bifano, which included:
 - Presiding over Board meetings;
 - Reviewing and finalizing Agenda;
 - Leading and/or participating in various Ad-Hoc Subcommittees;
 - Reviewing the Human Service Grant contract along with executing it;
 - Participating in Grant Funding presentations;
 - Providing Public Comment to Mayor and Council during City Council Meetings on the behalf of the Rental Housing Mediation Board/Program;
 - Participating in Community Outreach; and
 - Providing active participation in Mediations.

On behalf of the Board, Ms. Bifano thanked former Chair Herlinger for serving 3 years as Chair, and a total of 5 years as an RHMB Officer. She stated that his work was invaluable and greatly appreciated. He will continue to serve on the Board as a Mediator Member.

- Bruce Wollenberg, Vice Chair
 - Former Vice Chair Wollenberg was recognized by Mayor Cathy Murillo for his outstanding work, and was awarded and presented with a signed Certificate of Recognition for his Exemplary Service and Special Recognition for Excellence as Vice Chair for the past 3 years: 2018, 2019 and 2020. Further, he previously served as an Officer in the position of Secretary in 2016 and 2017. As Vice Chair, he stood in as “Chair” when needed along with the related duties, and participated in: Various Ad Hoc Subcommittees, Community Outreach, and Board Mediations.

On behalf of the Board Ms. Bifano thanked former Vice Chair Wollenberg for serving 3 years as Vice Chair and a total of 5 years as an RHMB Officer. She stated his work was greatly valued and appreciated, and that his work as a Pastor by profession, brought many related mediation skills to the Board. He will continue to serve on the Board as a Mediator Member.

- Hector Sanchez, Secretary
 - While not present at the Board meeting, (his Mediator term expired in December 2020) former Board Secretary Sanchez was re-recognized by Mayor Cathy Murillo for his outstanding work. He was awarded with a signed Certificate of Recognition for his four years of service to the Board and his Exemplary Service and Special Recognition for Excellence as Secretary for the past 3 years: 2018, 2019 and 2020.

Chair Beck announced that there was a change in the order of Agenda Items. Agenda Item #4, was moved to Item #2.

2. **NEW STATE & LOCAL LAWS**

A. COVID-19 Tenant Relief Act 2021: Senate Bill 91

Presentation by Mr. Ted Teyber, Senior Housing Programs Specialist from the County of Santa Barbara.

Mr. Teyber provided a PowerPoint Presentation and an overview of the Federal Rental Relief Assistance in the amount of \$27 Million dollars to be allocated by the State Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP), and the County of Santa Barbara, distributed by the United Way of Santa Barbara County.

B. Fully Executed Just Cause Eviction Ordinance and Resolution

- On December 9, 2020, the fully executed City of Santa Barbara's Just Cause Ordinance No. 5979 and Resolution 20-084 went into effect. The Ordinance addresses Just Cause and No Fault Just Cause Evictions, while the Resolution establishes the payment amount of Relocation Assistance for no-fault Just Cause Evictions to be provided by the Landlord to qualifying Tenants, pursuant to Santa Barbara Municipal Code Chapter 26.50 and rescinding Resolution No. 20-082.

3. **HUMAN SERVICES/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT FUNDING**

A. Virtual Site Visit with Representative

On January 26, 2021, Program Staff met with Doedy Orchowski, retired Attorney, and Member of The Community Development and Human Services Committee (CDHSC), for the Human Service annual Grant site visit and interview. The purpose of the visit, In addition to reading the Grant application, was to learn directly from Staff the impact of Program services on the Community, and evaluate the conformance with Program goals and objectives outlined in the grant contract. Due to COVID-19, the meeting was conducted virtually, and went very well.

B. Human Service Grant Funding Award for FY 2021-2022

Due to COVID-19, this year, in lieu of an in-person CDHSC Committee interview, supplemental questions to the grant application were presented by email to applicants. The outcome of the process was a funding recommendation for the Program in the amount of \$21,430. The overall score and amount of recommended funding was slightly higher than last year. Ultimately, City Council will need to approve this recommended funding.

4. Caseload Report and Mediation Training

Chair Beck shared that the scheduled mediation training was postponed due to Board meeting time constraints. Staff reviewed the Second Quarter and Year-to-date Statistical Report.

- A. Statistical Second Quarter and Year-to-Date Reports for FY 2020-2021
- B. Mediator Training (Per California Dispute Resolution Programs Act) – Postponed

5. NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

Chair Beck announced that the next scheduled Board meeting would be held on Thursday, April 8, 2021.

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Ms. Bifano made the following announcements:

Announcement #1: 3rd Additional Rental Housing Mediation Specialist Staff Position

On Tuesday, February 23, 2021 City Council approved a position for a third Full-Time Rental Housing Mediation Specialist. Initially, this position will be funded by the Permanent Local Housing Allocation Grant (PLHA). The PLHA program was enacted as part of the Building Homes and Jobs Act (Senate Bill No. 2) in 2018. Its purpose is to provide a source of funding to local governments for housing-related projects and programs that help address their unmet housing needs, including activities that secure eligible housing and reduce homelessness. The annual PLHA funding amount depends upon revenues generated from local real estate recording fees. Further updates on the position and recruitment will be provided in the future.

Announcement #2: Natalia Alarcon, City Council Member

Board Mediator Member Natalia Alarcon was elected to the Carpinteria City Council on November 4, 2020, and was sworn in on December 14, 2020.

Announcement #3: April is Fair Housing Month

Various events would take place recognizing Fair Housing Month, to be shared at a later date.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00pm.