

CALDWELL RENT REVIEW BOARD
Minutes – September 28, 2022

Meeting called to order **7:05PM**

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Ms. Evans, Mr. Galante, Mr. Kostecka, Council President Gates, Mr., McGowan, esq., Board Attorney, and Board Secretaries Kim Conlon and Brittany Heun.

ABSENT: Mr. Valente, Mr. Lattimer

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

Statement of Compliance was read aloud.

Pledge of Allegiance

MINUTES:

January 19, 2022

Minutes of the Rent Review Board meeting accepted and approved.

NEW BUSINESS:

Adequate Return Increase Application – 37 – 39 Bloomfield Avenue

Applicant: Nic Russomano of FourFront Property Group, a co-owner of 37-39 Bloomfield Avenue.
Sworn in by Mr. McGowan,

Tenant: Lindsay Wozniak was sworn in by Mr. McGowan

Mr. Russomano gave a brief description of the reasons why they have chosen to submit this Adequate Return Increase Application for this property, and the reasons that justify their figures.

Mr. Galante asked about the vacant units

Mr. Russomano explained their unique situation with the previous owner. They have made an arrangement for him to stay in his unit until he finds other accommodations. Starting November 1, 2022, he will have to pay rent at a rate of \$2,000 per month on the unit.

Mr. McGowan asked about unit #2 and what they expect to rent that Unit at.

Mr. Russomano said they expect to rent it for \$2,000 - \$2,400.

Ms. Evans remarked that the Rent Control Ordinance does not mention fair market value, so she believes the board should be concerned with the operating costs and income rather than the comps.

Mr. Galante asked if the tenants had any comments on the application.

Ms. Wozniak said that she understands that their current fees are low. She said that if the issues that the tenants have are taken care of, then she would understand the rent increase. Does not want to see any of her neighbors forced to leave due to the rent increase.

Council President Gates asked about the conditions that would need to be improved for the tenants.

Ms. Wozniak mentioned that she has issues with her ceiling, the basement has flooded and tenants have lost personal belonging because of that, she has cracked tiles in the bathroom, issues with bugs, etc..

Council President Gates brought up the Tax Records, which Mr. Rusomano said were not accurate. Some conversation was had over square footage and layout of the units.

Krysta: another tenant of the building was sworn in.

Krysta stated that her apartment has some issues as well, that she would like to see taken care of if her rent is going to be increased. Her issues include splintered flooring, cracked tiles, water damage, as well as the lack of on-site parking.

The Board determined that the vacant apartments should be left out of their calculations at this time. As Mr. Russomano reminded the board, the application does specifically ask for only the occupied units.

Mr. Kostecka made note that Unit 1, would have their rent more than doubled so their situation should be taken into account when making the final designation of rents. It would not be fair to more than double their rent.

Mr. McGowan reiterated to the applicant that it is up to the landlord to prorate the rent amounts, according to the Ordinance. The Board can determine the gross figure, but not assign a figure to each unit.

Mr. Russomano asked if they would be able to make future applications to the Board once their Capital Improvement projects are completed.

Mr. McGowan assured Mr. Russomano, that this application and ruling would not prohibit them from making future applications to the Rent Board.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:

- Ms. Wozniak believes that the applicant will take former rates into consideration when designating the new rates. The calculations and figures make sense to her.

Motion to allow the landlord FourFront property Group LLC to an annual increase of \$63,642 for the year ending 2022, was made by Mr. Galante and seconded by Mr. Kostecka.

Ms. Evans	Yes
Mr. Kostecka	Yes
Mr. Galante	Yes

3-0-0
Motion Passes

OLD BUSINESS:

Council President Gates updated the Board on the process that he began 2 years ago, to have the Rent Control Ordinance updated. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic the Council was hesitant to make changes, while some other towns were freezing rents. I have the Council looking to move forward with these changes. Our previous Borough Attorney passed away at the beginning of the year, so our work was put on hold. I am working with the new Borough Attorney to make the necessary updates to the Ordinance. I will keep you all posted on when that will be going before the Council.

Mr. Galante said that we should dog ear this section for the ordinance review, now that we have actually gone through the process and understand it a bit more.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Kostecka made motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Galante.

Ms. Evans yes
Mr. Galante yes
Mr. Kostecka yes

3-0-0
Motion passed

Meeting was adjourned at 8:16pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brittany Heun
Deputy Clerk