

Ward 7 Comments Received

From: Kris Knoll <kmk@usfamily.net>
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2022 7:40 AM
To: CouncilHearing (CI-StPaul) <CouncilHearing@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Cc: #CI-StPaul_Ward7 <Ward7@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Ordinance 22-37

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

In May I moved back to the Twin Cities from out-of-state and selected St Paul section 42 housing due to the 3% rent cap. This, I thought, would be an affordable place for me to live out my senior years.

Now I've learned that the mayor and city council are considering contradicting the will of the voters who voted in the 3% rent increase limit last fall.

I'm 75 years old. I worked for over 55 years and managed to qualify for a moderate social security income and a small fixed pension. On a fixed income, rent increases beyond 3% will have me priced out of decent housing. Social Security increases do not keep up with inflation; my pension payments do not increase at all.

Tenants who live in affordable housing are disproportionately low-wealth, BIPOC, disabled, queer, immigrant, elderly, and families with young children — these are the people who need renter protections the most! How are we to live? On the streets with a suitcase, freezing in the winters?

In addition, **I do NOT support Ordinance 22-37's 20-year blanket new construction exemption.** It unjustly impacts the elderly and disabled neighbors who rent their homes. ADA-compliant units can be incredibly difficult for renters to find, and are more likely to be found in newer housing because of new requirements and policies. Exempting new construction means we are taking away the right to stable rent from disabled renters who already experience disproportionate housing instability.

This proposed end-run around the will of the people feels like the ultimate "bait-and-switch" scam.

Please, stand up and protect the people of St. Paul who depend on reasonable rents to survive.

Thank you,
Kristine Knoll
720 7th St E, Apt 306
St. Paul 55106

-----Original Message-----

From: adamnelson0620@everyactionadvocacy.com
<adamnelson0620@everyactionadvocacy.com>

Sent: Tuesday, August 9, 2022 8:04 AM
To: #CI-StPaul_Ward7 <Ward7@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Regarding proposed Rent Stabilization Ordinance changes

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

Dear Council Member Jane L. Prince,

Whether we are white, black or brown, all in Saint Paul deserve predictable housing costs no matter one's race, ward and class.

I appreciate the following aspects of the draft ordinance to make changes to the rent stabilization policy:

- * The commitment to keeping the rent increase limit to 3%.
- * Attempts to provide additional protections for some renters that didn't exist in the original rent stabilization policy such as just cause.

I have concerns about the following proposed changes to the rent stabilization policy:

- * Having a 20 year new construction exemption instead of 15 years as proposed by the Mayor and the rent stabilization task force means thousands of more renters are left out of the policy. If we are to have a new construction exemption, it should be 15 years or less.
- * Having a LIHTC and affordable housing exemption is way too broad and would leave out thousands of renters, especially the ones most in need of predictable rent increases.
- * Landlords having unlimited banked/deferred rent increases through partial vacancy decontrol needs additional review and tweaking to ensure as much rental stability as possible.
- * The timeline of when tenants would be notified of a landlord seeking an exemption to the 3% rent increase limit should be moved up earlier so tenants have more time to address the request made.
- * No protections for renters who live in buildings exempted from rent stabilization, as proposed by the draft ordinance, which could leave those renters vulnerable to predatory and discriminatory practices by landlords.
- * Additional clarity is needed about the proposed protections just cause would provide
- * The impact of having older buildings, that are converted to apartments, exempted from the policy for 20 years and the effect this could have on maintaining NOAH properties (naturally occurring affordable housing). Exempting new construction creates an incentive for landlords to remove units from coverage to exemption. This will create a massive incentive to tear down naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH), which we know is a critical piece of our housing supply for lower income households and BIPOC renters.

What is your reaction to the draft ordinance and the concerns I laid out above? How are you thinking about potential amendments to the rent stabilization policy?

I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you!

Sincerely,
Adam Nelson
693 4th St E Saint Paul, MN 55106-5107
adamnelson0620@gmail.com

From: Jeb Rach <jeb@rachstanton.org>
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2022 9:38 PM
To: #CI-StPaul_Ward7 <Ward7@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Rent Stabilization Ordinance Comment

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

Councilmember Prince,

As a renter in Ward 7, I have felt first-hand the benefits of the rent stabilization ordinance that Saint Paul voters passed last year. I received a roughly-11% increase in 2021, which was reduced this year to 3% thanks to the ordinance's provisions. During a year when many other expenses have risen greatly, having one piece of our family's budget be as stable as possible has been a wonderful benefit.

With revisions under consideration, I'd like to express a few appreciations and concerns regarding the proposed changes:

I'm appreciative that:

- The 3% rent increase limit is intending to stay within the ordinance.
- Attempts to add some tenant protections, such as just cause, into the rent stabilization policy. Tenant protections are particularly crucial in enabling all of our city's residents to have stable housing.

However, I have a number of concerns:

- A 20-year construction exemption (instead of 15 years) leaves thousands of residents out of the policy. If a new construction exemption is needed, it should be 15 years or less.
- An affordable housing and LIHTC exemption will leave thousands of residents out of the policy, particularly residents most in need of predictable and stable rent increases.
- Letting landlords have unlimited banking of deferred increases through partial vacancy decontrol needs tweaking to ensure as much rental stability as possible
- The lead time for landlords to provide notice of a greater-than-3% increase must be increased so tenants have more time to address the request.
- Limiting tenant protections to just those covered by the ordinance leaves huge gaps, including many of our most vulnerable residents. This must be broadened to include all tenants within the city.
- Additional clarity is needed regarding the just cause protections.
- We need to ensure policies are in place to ensure landlords do not tear down or convert current NOAH (naturally occurring affordable housing) properties and build new simply to exempt their properties from the rent stabilization ordinance.

What is your reaction to the draft ordinance and concerns above? What are your thoughts about potential amendments to the rent stabilization policy?

Looking forward to hearing from you!

Jeb Rach

167 McKnight Rd N Apt 306

Saint Paul MN 55119

From: Chelsea Stanton <chelsea.kay.stanton@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, August 23, 2022 7:28 AM

To: #CI-StPaul_Ward7 <Ward7@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Rent Stabilization Ordinance Comment

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

Councilmember Prince,

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- We need to ensure policies are in place to ensure landlords do not tear down or convert current NOAH (naturally occurring affordable housing) properties and build new simply to exempt their properties from the rent stabilization ordinance.

What is your reaction to the draft ordinance and concerns above? What are your thoughts about potential amendments to the rent stabilization policy?

Looking forward to hearing from you!

Chelsea Stanton (spouse of Jeb Rach)
167 McKnight Rd N Apt 306
Saint Paul, MN 55119
From: David Ackos <davidackos@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, August 22, 2022 3:25 PM

To: *CI-StPaul_Contact-Council <Contact-Council@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Cc: Noecker, Rebecca (CI-StPaul) <Rebecca.Noecker@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Sidney Stuart <sidney@eastsidefreedomlibrary.org>; Ismail Khadar <ismail@eastsidefreedomlibrary.org>; #CI-StPaul_Ward6 <Ward6@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward7 <Ward7@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Protecting Rent Stabilization - My Comment against Ord 22-37

Dear City Councilpeople and Staff,

My name is David Ackos. I'm a proud St. Paul Resident and voter, and I'm a renter and community organizer for my day job.

I am writing to stand in support of the rent stabilization bill as it was passed and written. Therefore, I do not support ordinance 22-37 as it currently stands.

I appreciate that the current ordinance clarifies utility costs and protects renters from retaliation. I also appreciate that there is a notification requirement. However, the notification requirement falls short, as residents deserve to be notified as soon as an exception is being applied for.

I appreciate the proposals inclusion of some minor just cause protections. However, I believe residents and voters need clear, overarching just cause protections that are more similar to the un-replaced SAFE tenants ordinance.

I do not appreciate, and strongly oppose, exemptions for new construction, exemptions for affordable housing, and any form of vacancy de-control.

It is a terrible mistake to exempt affordable housing. East Side renters have shown us that affordable and subsidized housing often have the worst conditions and greatest rent increases. Dominion, a private owner of thousands of subsidized St Paul Rentals, already is trying to raise rent 7.9% across the board, flaunting the directive of us voters.

Whether in subsidized or naturally occurring affordable housing, low income residents & voters need stability and predictability just as much as the rest of us, if not more.

Another segment I take issue with is vacancy de-control. Vacancy de-control, partial or not, is a mistake that was purposefully avoided by residents and voters when we passed rent stabilization. Any degree of vacancy decontrol creates an incentive to terrorize and kick out residents after keeping their rent low for a while. No deferral of rent increases makes sense, as this incentivizes preferential treatment for tenants landlords like, and eliminates the predictability benefit for long term residents, and those looking for new housing.

Additionally, this exemption for new construction is absurd and unjust. New construction can be priced at any point, and if teaser prices are needed to fill a building, owners should offer discounts and price breaks on an honest, listed rate, like a free month or the like. There is nothing preventing that in the current law. Three years of new construction exemption might make sense. 5 years might be acceptable, though I think that's a major carve-out and really pushing it. 20 is a slap in the face to 30,000 voters and residents who passed this law. It shows us you value investors profits more than our lives.

The new construction exemption will exempt most ADA compliant units, as these are primarily found in new builds. In that way, it will make reliable housing unavailable to disabled people. Newly built units do not have major costs like renovations, and if they did, there are already ways to raise rent for those reasons. Don't make this blanket exception.

This law was passed because we the people agree that stability and the right to a safe, high-quality home at a fair price is the right of everyone. We are highly dismayed the mayor put together a commission stacked with propertied "experts" to suggest carve-outs, and we NEED city council to stand with the will of the people and protect our law and our values from these carve-outs. Earn our trust by acting on our behalf. Replace SAFE Tenants ordinance, and fight to protect our wins. Direct the city attorney to fight to protect our wins. Don't back down, or we'll need to find people who are actually willing to champion us.

In closing, I am lucky to be a homeowner in St. Paul. I was a renter for many years before that. I ONLY was able to access homeownership, which by the way, gives me a huge amount of stability for a monthly price lower than many low income renters I work with have to pay for 2 bedroom apartments, because of my parents and Madeleine's parents generational wealth in the form of homeownership and college degrees. My parents and my wife's parents accessed this generational wealth at a time when our neighbors of color were having their wealth siphoned from them. Even a fairly cheap home like mine, is not accessible to my neighbors and fellow voters. We know what caused this wealth gap. We know the racial wealth gap, along with our housing situation, has gotten worse the past 20 years. Rent stabilization, in its strongest form, is one small step to start giving our neighbors and fellow voters a chance at stability. A chance at shared ownership in their community, and a chance at freedom from one of the worst and most prevalent forms of exploitation today. Don't allow the proposed carveouts. Stand up for your voters and residents.

Thank you so much for your consideration and time.

David Ackos,
Homeowner, Former Renter, and Community Organizer

--

David Lauer Ackos

They/them

davidackos@gmail.com | +1 651-328-3396

Gaius Nelson
206 Wheeler Street South
Saint Paul, MN 55105

August 23, 2022

Dear Council President Amy Brendmoen and Council Members,

Don't Blame Rent Stabilization

Rent Stabilization is not the major factor that developers claim it to be in the current construction slow down. The slow down would have occurred in any case.

It is a convenient story to tell when many other factors have contributed including:

- Inflation
- Interest Rates
- Supply Chain Issues
- Staffing Shortages
- Uncertainty in the Economy

A slow down in new construction starts is occurring in much of the country due to these overarching factors. Our architecture firm has experienced this in many locations outside of Saint Paul where projects are delayed or slowed by a combination of factors.

According to Bloomberg News on August 16, 2022:

The government's report showed single-family housing starts decreased 10.1% to an annualized 916,000 rate, the slowest since June 2020. Permits for one-family dwellings dropped 4.3% to a two-year low.

In Minneapolis the number of permits for major housing developments fell from 48 in 2020 to 23 in 2021 (a 52% reduction) – hitting a five-year low for land use applications (Star Tribune August 10, 2022).

It appears that landlords and the development community have overreacted to the new rent stabilization requirements without knowing the true long-term effects.

Don't blame this slow down on Rent Stabilization.

Consumer Price Index vs. Personal Consumption Expenditures

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a poor measure to use in determining allowable increases in rents. The CPI index is heavily weighted to housing costs - comprising 42.2% of the index.

This heavy weighting in housing helps create a self-perpetuating cycle of escalating costs for housing during periods of rapidly increasing rental housing cost – based largely upon the rapidly escalating cost for housing.

If an inflation index is to be used, the Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) price index is a more appropriate measure. In 2012 the PCE became the primary inflation index used by the Federal Reserve in making policy decisions. This is a more comprehensive index that also accounts for consumer behavior. Housing comprises 32.9% of the PCE, reducing the impact of housing cost on the overall index.

The fact that a major portion of both of these indices is based upon housing cost means that these broad based indices do not reflect the actual increased costs to a landlord. It is inappropriate that allowable cost increases are based upon rental income – not operational expenses. Increased costs should be required to be analyzed on an individual basis, in relation to their overall contribution to the expense of property management.

New Construction Exemption to Require Developer Participation

The only method to create more “affordable” housing is to create more “affordable” housing. A new construction exemption should not be considered without a significant tradeoff from those receiving this benefit. Inclusion of a new construction exemption provides the opportunity to create an incentive for private sector developers to help alleviate a problem they have helped create.

Nearly all current housing production that is not subsidized by government programs is out of reach for most renters. Developers naturally provide housing that is most profitable. This happens to be the upper-middle and luxury market. Simply increasing the number of housing units in the city will not reduce the cost of housing for the average renter.

In exchange for a new construction exemption, all projects should be required to provide a certain percentage of units to be rented at below market rates. Providing 5% of units affordable at 60% or 80% of AMI for the duration of the exemption, would provide a significant exemption to developers, while also adding to the stock of housing.

No Justification for Retroactive Exemptions

New construction over the past 10 – 20 years has reaped the benefit of historically low interest rates. In addition, the City provided all businesses and developers a significant windfall through zoning code modifications. Eliminating parking requirements provides a savings of \$10,000 - \$40,000 or more per housing unit constructed, in addition to the increased density offered in many parts of the city. These are significant financial benefits the Saint Paul has provided. There is no justification for retroactive exemptions for existing buildings of any age.

Participation in the above-mentioned incentive program for the provision of affordable housing could be considered for all existing buildings as an additional method to increase affordable housing.

No Net Loss of Affordable Housing Policy

There is a dwindling stock of *Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing* in the City, both rental and owner occupied. In order to retain the current amount of housing that is

affordable to average households, Saint Paul should implement a No Net Loss of Affordable Housing Policy.

When new housing is constructed, it often replaces existing affordable housing stock. An example of this is currently in the news, whereby 16-18 "fairly priced" units (\$1400/mo., 2BR, 2.5 Bath, 1329sf on Realtor.com) will be demolished in order to construct 93 luxury apartments. None of the new units will come close to providing the affordability of the 16-18 units that will be lost.

Potential zoning changes based upon the 1-4 Unit Housing Study will create this same problem. Smaller affordable homes will be the first to be demolished and replaced by more expensive housing, diminishing the existing affordable housing stock further.

The only method to create more "affordable" housing is to create more "affordable" housing. Please do not weaken the progress that has been made in the maintenance of Saint Paul as a city where all residents can afford to live. Saint Paul needs to provide more mechanisms that encourage and incentivize the retention and creation of housing that is affordable to more households.

Respectfully Submitted,



Gaius G. Nelson
Architect
Former Saint Paul Planning Commissioner



UNION PARK DISTRICT COUNCIL

1821 University Avenue, Suite 308, Saint Paul, MN 55104
651.645.6887 | info@unionparkdc.org | www.unionparkdc.org
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August 23rd, 2022

Mitra Jalali, Council Member Ward 4, City of Saint Paul
mitra.jalali@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Russel Balenger, Council Member Ward 1, City of Saint Paul
ward1@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Dear Councilmembers Jalali and Balenger,

On September 1st, 2021, the Union Park District Council Board of Directors voted not to support the rent stabilization initiative due to concerns that we might experience the same effects that have materialized today.

UPDC supports the proposed amendments to the rent stabilization code, except for the 20-year exemption proposed for new construction. We are primarily opposed because of the lack of a clear rationale for selecting that time period for exemption.

We are also concerned that this exemption only addresses the concerns of large corporate developers and ignores the concerns of small, local landlords who are the primary source of naturally occurring affordable housing.

OPTIONAL AFFORDABILITY LANGUAGE

In light of those concerns, should the Council choose to give new developments such an exemption, we request the Council consider leveraging that subsidy with some badly needed affordability requirements

If new developments are granted a 20-year exemption, we would like to see them:

- o set 10% of unit rents at 30% AMI
- o keep those rents at 30% AMI for 30 years
- o contribute 0.005 percent of the project cost to an affordable housing trust fund of the city

Respectfully,

Abdulrahman Wako
Executive Director
Union Park District Council
(651) 279-9441 / wako@unionparkdc.org

From: [Leah Porter](#)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Cc: [#CI-StPaul Ward2](#)
Subject: Testimony on Ordinance 22-37
Date: Tuesday, August 23, 2022 9:04:32 PM

Hello,

My name is Leah Porter and I live in Ward 2 in St. Paul. I'm writing to express my opposition to Ordinance 22-37 as it is currently written. Frankly, I'm appalled that City Council is disregarding the will of voters who voted last fall in favor of the rent stabilization ordinance. City Council is proposing, instead, Ordinance 22-37, which strips down and basically disregards the original intent of the policy passed by voters.

I appreciate that Ordinance 22-37 preserves a few aspects of the rent stabilization policy such as the 3% cap on annual rent increases (for some), but it falls extremely short of the original intent by exempting affordable housing, providing a blanket exemption for new construction, and introducing partial vacancy decontrol. Essentially, Ordinance 22-37 waters down the original rent stabilization policy so much that it renders it nearly useless to those it was intended to protect - low-income, BIPOC, and other marginalized renters.

As a nonprofit consultant, I see every day the impacts of rising housing and food costs on those with limited incomes. Without an important policy like the original rent stabilization ordinance, we're putting many of my neighbors at risk of losing their housing, displacing children, and the cascading effects that occur as a result.

I'm disheartened that as a voter, my vote has appeared to mean nothing in the face of developers and those with deep pockets. I expect more from City Council and those I vote into office. Ordinance 22-37 needs to add back in the original protections for renters and eliminate loopholes for predatory landlords. I do not support it as it is currently written.

Sincerely,
Leah Porter

From: [Krista Doubek](#)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Rent increases
Date: Tuesday, August 23, 2022 8:49:57 PM

To whom it may concern,

I am a resident at 787 Hampden Ave & was recently informed of a 13% rent increase. I'm disabled and live on a fixed income. Moving is not really an option for me & my current unit meets my blindness needs.

Dominion has told us that the increase was out of their control and if we didn't like it we could move out. I have a hiding voucher and finding another complex that both takes my voucher and is accessible would be very difficult.

I voted last year for rent stabilization & what we are seeing now seems to be the exact opposite.

I want to join in with my neighbors to make our voices heard.

Thank you for your time
Krista J Doubek

08/23/2022

Hi Councilmember Russ,

My name is Ahmed Anshur and I'm a leader with ISALAH and live in Ward 1. I'm contacting you to share my thoughts about amendments being advanced to change the rent stabilization policy.

I support rent stabilization because I am a renter. That's why I ask you to support the following amendments:

Amendments to Support:

Re-include certain types of affordable subsidized housing (LIHTC, S8 voucher, etc.) in the rent stabilization policy so renters in affordable housing can benefit from the policy

Rolling 15 year new construction exemption beginning Jan 1 2023 with no look back (exemption would only apply to buildings built starting in 2023 and would last for 15 years)

The revised just cause language that gets rid of the subjective "disorderly conduct" category and adds relocation assistance to tenants displaced by certain landlord-driven actions

If a landlord requests for an exemption to the 3% rent increase limit, a tenant needs to be notified when the request is received by the city (not when the exemption request is approved) to give tenants more time to appeal a final determination

I ask that you vote in favor of these amendments. I look forward to hearing from you about this.

Thank you!

Ahmed Anshur

955 Minnehaha Ave W

Saint Paul, MN 55104

To the Members of City Council:

Good afternoon. My name is Rita Speltz. I have lived at Legends at Berry for the past year, in Ward 4. I am here today to speak against Ordinance 22-37. It violates the basic value of affordable housing. I moved into Legends under the impression that it was an affordable rental for seniors. If they succeed in raising our rent by 8%, it will not be affordable for many people, including me. It is not truly a place for seniors only, with many children living there. Thus, on two points, they are guilty of false advertising. My understanding is the hike in rent is to make improvements in their buildings. We, the renters, do not own the building so why should we have to help pay for this? I'd certainly like to see the list.

An attempt to exempt affordable housing from rent stabilization is outrageous. The thinking is that these renters already get a break so why give them more of a discount. Affordable housing is for people who have lower incomes and will be forced to leave their homes if their rent goes up 8%. Then they will be homeless if they cannot find another affordable place to live.

I am such a person. Living on a fixed income, I will definitely have to leave Legends if there is this rent hike. I love my apartment but detest the management at Legends. On top of an already high rent, I have been given many late fees and eviction notices, based on erroneous accusations. My car was stolen out of the parking garage, a place lacking cameras for security. For this we pay \$75 a month.

As much as I love my children, I do not want to have to move in with them. It is essential that my rent does not go up more than 3%. Housing is a basic human need. I was one of 30 + thousand who voted for the rent control law. I am strongly against any attempt by Dominionium and others to alter this law to fit their financial greed.

Thank you.

From: [Yust, Adam \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
To: [Weiner, Greg \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Cc: [#CI-StPaul_Ward3](#); [James Farnsworth](#)
Subject: FW: Support of Ordinance 22-37
Date: Wednesday, August 24, 2022 9:34:14 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Greg,

Can you add this message from the HBA to the public record? Thanks



Adam Yust
Legislative Aide
Office of Councilmember Chris Tolbert
City of Saint Paul
651.266.8631
www.StPaul.gov

From: James Farnsworth <jfarnsworth@highlandba.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 24, 2022 8:46 AM
To: Brendmoen, Amy (CI-StPaul) <amy.brendmoen@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Noecker, Rebecca (CI-StPaul) <Rebecca.Noecker@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Prince, Jane (CI-StPaul) <Jane.Prince@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Tolbert, Chris (CI-StPaul) <chris.tolbert@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Jalali, Mitra (CI-StPaul) <Mitra.Jalali@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Balenger, Russel (CI-StPaul) <Russel.Balenger@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Cc: #CI-StPaul_Ward3 <Ward3@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Support of Ordinance 22-37

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

Good morning Councilmembers,

On behalf of the Highland Business Association Board of Directors and membership, I'm writing in support of the amendments being brought forward today by Councilmember Tolbert and Council President Brendmoen regarding amending Chapter 193A of the Legislative Code pertaining to rent stabilization.

As the longstanding business association in the Highland Park area, we believe these strong and well put together amendments will bring our city's new rent stabilization legislation and associated policies better into alignment with a pro-business and residential development climate, especially in relation to the Highland Bridge project.

Any CM that may be interested has our full permission to submit this short note into the record as

we mistakenly missed the official public hearing deadline.

Best,
James Farnsworth

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James Farnsworth
Executive Director
Highland Business Association

- [612-804-2205](tel:612-804-2205)
- jfarnsworth@highlandba.com
- highlandba.com
790 Cleveland Avenue South
Suite 221
- Saint Paul, MN 55116

From: [Joy Sorensen Navarre](#)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Against Ordinance 22-37
Date: Wednesday, August 24, 2022 9:52:40 AM

Dear Councilmember Noecker and Esteemed Colleagues,

I appreciate your tireless leadership for St Paul. As you approach the Ord 22-37 rent stabilization vote, I urge you to vote 'Against'.

You may remember that I served as the Executive Director of MICAH for 12 years. We (interfaith coalition of congregations) worked with elected officials (city councils and state legislators) and developers to site hundreds of affordable units (at 30% median income!) in dozens of cities across the metro. It is clear to me that developers will always ask loudly and urgently for the most immediately profitable rules. However, they also will work creatively within existing rules to be profitable.

I appreciate the vital work of developers in our city. However, we have to recognize that profit is an incentive separate from the common good. That puts the responsibility on citizens and their leaders (you) to take corrective actions (like our existing rent ordinance) to safeguard the common good.

I organized \$ and people to pass the Ordinance because it is good policy. Please don't let developer interests gut it.

Often it's best to let a new policy play out. Don't let fear of the unknown drive a policy decision. Give it a chance.

Please vote 'Against' for now.

Sincerely,
Joy Sorensen Navarre
West Sider, resident of Ward 2 for 30 years
President, Navigate Student Loans
Member, Cherokee Park United Church in Ward 2
Mother/grandmother of 11 renters in Ward 2
Member of WSCO
Founding board member of Anti-Racism Study Dialog Circles (ASDIC)

Joy Sorensen Navarre
(612) 209-2382 cell

From: [Basgen, Tom \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
To: [Weiner, Greg \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: FW: Ordinance 22-37
Date: Wednesday, August 24, 2022 10:31:11 AM

I don't know if you're still putting public comments on the board but here's another.

Tom Basgen (he/him)

Executive Assistant to Councilmember Mitra Jalali

Saint Paul City Council – Ward 4

15 W Kellogg Blvd. Suite 310D

Office: 651-266-8643

Direct: 612-360-9506

From: Sheigh Freeberg <SFreeberg@here17.org>
Sent: Wednesday, August 24, 2022 10:10 AM
To: #CI-StPaul_Ward4 <Ward4@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Cc: #CI-StPaul_Ward1 <Ward1@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward2 <Ward2@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward3 <Ward3@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward5 <Ward5@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward6 <Ward6@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward7 <Ward7@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Ordinance 22-37

Think Before You Click: This email originated **outside** our organization.

Council Members,

Our Union represents thousands of Hospitality workers that live and work in St. Paul. Our members are predominately women and BIPOC. They are also renters, which is why our Union supports rent stabilization.

It is also why we are in *opposition* to Ordinance 22-37 as it is currently written.

1. **We do NOT support Ordinance 22-37 exemption for affordable housing.** Excluding affordable housing from rent stabilization would remove protections from nearly 20,000 St. Paul renters and further entrench racial inequities in our housing system.
2. **We do NOT support Ordinance 22-37's 20-year blanket new construction exemption.** A new construction exemption incentivizes landlords to tear down critically important, unsubsidized affordable housing to replace it with housing that is exempt from rent stabilization. ADA-compliant units can be incredibly difficult for renters to find and are more likely to be found in newer housing because of new requirements and policies. *Exempting new construction means we are taking away the right to stable rent from*

disabled renters who already experience disproportionate housing instability.

3. **We do NOT support Ordinance 22-37 introduction of partial vacancy decontrol**, which would allow landlords to raise rent well above 3% between tenancies. Vacancy decontrol contributes to the loss of affordable units, incentivizes landlords to evict low-income tenants to increase their rents, and accelerates gentrification.

We do support CM Jalali's amendments, except for the New Construction Exemption.

Thank you,

Sheigh Freeberg

Secretary Treasurer,

UNITE HERE! Local 17

Cell: 651-497-7573

From: [Koziol, Kristin \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
To: [Weiner, Greg \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Fw: Rent control
Date: Wednesday, August 24, 2022 10:43:36 AM

Just in case this wasn't forwarded to you

Kristin Koziol | Executive Assistant to Russel Balenger

Pronouns: she/her

P: 651-266-8613

E: kristin.koziol@ci.stpaul.mn.us

From: Krystil Rose <krose3888@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, August 24, 2022 09:34 AM

To: #CI-StPaul_Ward1 <Ward1@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward2 <Ward2@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward4 <Ward4@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward5 <Ward5@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward6 <Ward6@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward7 <Ward7@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Rent control

Think Before You Click: This email originated **outside** our organization.

Dear Councilmember,

I find it undemocratic and frankly disgraceful that the mayor and city council have decided that they think they know better than the voters, and have decided to make their own adjustments to the rent control measure. You are giving in to greedy big business owners by exempting new buildings for 20 years, how did you arrive at that number by the way? It's twice the original proposal, and 5 more years than what was recommended. How are we going to achieve affordable housing if developers can make more money knocking down an old building, and putting up a huge new complex where they can charge way more than the average income? I am assuming the council that supports this has never struggled to find an apartment they could afford and then had to worry about feeding themselves.

I sincerely hope you do the right thing for the people who live here instead of worrying about big developers

Krystil

From: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
To: [Weiner, Greg \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: FW: Comment for Tomorrow's Hearing on Rent Stabilization
Date: Wednesday, August 24, 2022 10:57:08 AM

This went to junk mail. May need to attach to the rent item today.

Mai Vang
Pronouns: She/Her
City Council Offices – Legislative Hearings
15 W Kellogg Blvd, 310 City Hall
Saint Paul, MN 55102
M: (651) 266-8585 | D: (651) 266-8563
Legislative Hearing Appeals – www.stpaul.gov/legislative-hearings

-----Original Message-----

From: Grant Abbott <Granthabbott@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 23, 2022 11:49 AM
To: CouncilHearing (CI-StPaul) <CouncilHearing@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Comment for Tomorrow's Hearing on Rent Stabilization

I am unable to be at the Rent Stabilization Amendment hearing until later because I will attend Maria Mitchell's swearing in as a Ramsey County judge. Therefore, I offer these remarks.

I want to thank all who worked hard to pass the rent stabilization initiative last fall, and I want to thank the members of Task Force that worked on the proposed amendments. I also want to thank you and all members of the city council for your work on this important but contentious issue. I hope you will find what I have to say helpful.

Most of the discussion on this initiative and the amendments has focused on the transaction between renters and developers and landlords. What is a fair transaction that allows for enough freedom for profit to make sure enough housing is built and retained and for enough stability for renters to retain their housing. I realize that is not an easy issue to resolve, but it needs to be resolved for the sake of all concerned. I suggest there is another concern that I believe is missing from the debate. It is concern for the health of the whole community. Is housing just an economic issue, or is it also an issue of the public health?

If housing becomes too expensive and unstable for people, where are they to go? They become homeless. What is the cost of homelessness to public health? What is the cost to the health of the homeless? What is the cost to the education of homeless children? What is the cost to the police? What is the cost of having to deal with homeless camps? What is the cost to the reputation of cities where homeless camps proliferate? What is the cost of failure to resolve the issue of rent stabilization in a way that improves the health of the city?

Is profit so important that it takes precedence over the health of the whole city? Yet, how do we make sure enough affordable housing is built to reduce the immense costs of homelessness? Plenty of housing is built for those with means, but for those whose income is below thirty percent of the average median income it is insufficient. The issue is not just between profits and people. It is also a question of how we protect the public health of the whole community. Fail to resolve this issue and the health of the whole community is hurt. Too much concern for profit that makes housing unstable harms lives and harms the health of our city. What must be done to protect the public health and prosperity of our city? The decision is yours.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Grant H. Abbott

Retired Executive Director

Saint Paul Area Council of Churches

(now Interfaith Action of Greater Saint Paul)

From: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
To: [Weiner, Greg \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: FW: Rent Control Exemption Hearing for Section 42 Apts
Date: Wednesday, August 24, 2022 11:31:01 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Another one. Thanks.

Mai Vang

Pronouns: She/Her
City Council Offices – Legislative Hearings
15 W Kellogg Blvd, 310 City Hall
Saint Paul, MN 55102
M: (651) 266-8585 | D: (651) 266-8563
Legislative Hearing Appeals – www.stpaul.gov/legislative-hearings



SAINT PAUL
MINNESOTA

From: Jennifer Pawlowicz <jennifer.a.pawlowicz@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 24, 2022 11:24 AM
To: CouncilHearing (CI-StPaul) <CouncilHearing@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Rent Control Exemption Hearing for Section 42 Apts

Here is a little math I did. If Union Flats becomes exempt from rent control and is allowed to charge the max that HUD allowed this year which was 12.8% then they will be allowed to charge 1257 which is what they are renting out the vacated apts at (in violation of rent control but nobody seems to be challenging it).

Ray apts next door currently has 1-bedroom w/balcony apts for 1475/mo. If Union Flats would be allowed to raise rent 12.8% every year and Ray raised theirs 3% then in 2024 rent at Union Flats will be higher than at Ray. If Ray got an exemption to charge 8% every year and UF raised rent by 12.8 percent each year - by 2026 a 1br at Union Flats will be 2032/mo and 2005/mo at Ray. How does that make sense to put Affordable Housing on a track to cost more than Market Rate Apts in two to four years?

Does it make sense to exempt controlled rent from the people who need it the most? The people who can afford and who choose luxury

apartments will have rent control and the people who need it the most will not.

I am a State of Minnesota employee and can barely afford the 1119/mo I pay now at Union Flats - Section 42 Dominium Building. With the 8 percent exemption that will go to 1207. Without rent control 1257 from 1119.

Dominium stated they could have asked for more than 8 percent but they didnt need more so they didnt. However, Dominium is charging 12.8 percent increase - the max HUD allowed - to every unit that has vacated after May 1 and at ALL of their other properties. They also do the minimum to keep these properties up. Residents plan get-togethers to go clean the courtyard of trash and debris because management does clean it. We barely have any streetlights around our huge building so it's so dark to walk my dog after dark then I get to the luxury building at the other end of the block which is clean and has bright street lights.

Dominium had a broken concrete sidewalk they left covered with a rotting piece of wood for months that made it impossible for wheelchairs to use that entrance despite it being labeled as wheelchair accessible. It was repaired two days before a building-wide fire inspection.

Dominium makes billions from their Low Income Tax Credit Housing. Selling 2.5 million dollar tax credits for 25 million. Recently a manager told an elderly person who said they couldnt afford rent "we know you have savings".

Please DO NOT EXEMPT US - the people who fought for and voted in RENT CONTROL.

Jennifer Pawlowicz
787 Hampden Avenue Apt 258
612-999-0267

From: [Elana Dahlager](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul>Contact-Council](#)
Cc: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Ordinance 22-37
Date: Wednesday, August 24, 2022 12:32:24 PM

Dear Councilmembers:

My name is Elana Dahlager. I was born and raised in the Midway, and recently purchased a house in the neighborhood. In the intervening fifteen years, I was a renter and have watched as in St. Paul, and across the country, rents have skyrocketed and become untenable. My husband and I made the decision to purchase a home in large part because our monthly mortgage payment is lower than the rent we were paying for a two-bedroom apartment. I am so privileged to have had the option to purchase. Many of my neighbors and fellow St. Paul residents do not have that option.

I have been beyond disappointed in the way that the city as a whole has handled the rent stabilization mandate, endorsed overwhelmingly by the voters of this city. I eagerly door-knocked for it, only to see its protections be weakened and whittled away, piece by piece.

The proposed amendment to allow for new construction exemptions is completely contra your mandate from voters!

Tenant protections are meant to protect tenants. Landlords and developers may complain, but I need my city government to have the backbone to stand up to them.

We are in the middle of an eviction crisis, rents are still rising, the city is not investing in true public affordable housing, and we are allowing developers to dictate how tenant protections should be enacted? It's unconscionable.

Carving out exemptions for landlords and developers will continue to hurt our most vulnerable neighbors.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,
Elana Dahlager, Esq.

From: [Krysten Lynn Ryba-Tures](#)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Rent Stabilization Comments
Date: Wednesday, August 24, 2022 12:39:39 PM

Saint Paul City Councilmembers:

I'm writing to express my strong support for CM Jalali's amendments to the people's Rent Stabilization (Ord 22-37) regarding new construction exemptions (15 yrs; not retroactive); publicly funded units (no exceptions); tenant notifications (as early as possible); and, funding level of just cause relocation assistance (3X 60% of Area Median Income). These amendments strengthen the ordinance with thoughtful compromise where needed while still centering those most impacted by this ordinance -- renters.

It's disheartening to hear how conflated rent stabilization has become with housing production issues. The latter is a result of macroeconomic, nationwide constraints that precede this ordinance by decades. A far more honest read of the situation is that local developers and financial groups have organized an effective "strike" to protest this transformative policy supported by the people of Saint Paul (willingly, not delusionally, CM Prince). These systems do not transform willfully. These systems do not suddenly prioritize the well-being and dignity of people over profit. Instead of staying principled and solutions-focused, you're blinking - and it is - without question - to the detriment of our BIPOC, low-income neighbors who rent (and, frankly, small landlords who operate NOAH housing and will not benefit from new construction exemptions).

The "moral imperative" (CM Tolbert) you have isn't to pave the path of housing production (at record profits) to accommodate new households. It *should* be to the folks who already call Saint Paul home, who built their lives and livelihoods here already.

This Council's failures to deliver tenant protections, a coherent and comprehensive anti-displacement framework, or even inclusionary zoning policies make it clear that "future" Saint Paulites are valued more than current constituents - something this majority-renter city must remember in the next election cycle.

--

Krysten Lynn Ryba-Tures
543 Hall Ave
Saint Paul, MN 55107

From: [Ilse Griffin](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul](#); [Contact-Council](#); [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Against Ordinance 22-37
Date: Wednesday, August 24, 2022 1:09:19 PM

Hello!

My name is Ilse Griffin, and I live in Merriam Park in Ward 4 (precinct 6). I believe that, across race, income, and ward, everyone in St. Paul should have a home that they can rely on. This has not been the case, making rent stabilization a necessary policy intervention that we won together. As a renter, I am greatly impacted by how this policy is carried out (or not). Many of my friends are also renters in St. Paul. Because I support the stabilization ordinance as passed by St. Paul voters, I am in opposition to Ordinance 22-37 as it is currently written. I'm thankful that Ordinance 22-37 preserves important parts of the rent stabilization policy that voters passed, such as the 3% cap on annual rent increases and reaffirms existing Minnesota state law prohibiting retaliation against renters who file complaints against their landlords for violation of the ordinance. I support Ordinance 22-37 providing further clarity on the relationship between utilities and rent. Unfortunately, the good in Ordinance 22-37 is outweighed by exemptions that rig the rules for predatory landlords. I do NOT support Ordinance 22-37 exemption for affordable housing. I do Not support Ordinance 22-37's 20-year blanket new construction exemption. I do Not support Ordinance 22-37 introduction of partial vacancy decontrol, which would allow landlords to raise rent well above 3% between tenancies.

Thank yoU!

Ilse Griffin

Ilse Griffin (*she/her/hers or they/them/theirs**)

Refugee Program Specialist: Education

MN Council of Churches – Refugee Services

www.mnchurches.org

Desk: | Cell: 612 965 2898

Welcoming persecuted persons from around the world into lives of freedom, hope, and opportunity in Minnesota.

From: [Abdallah Garay](#)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Dominion Hearing Testimony
Date: Wednesday, August 24, 2022 1:51:53 PM

Hello,

My name is Abdallah, and I live in a three bedroom apartment with my wife and three children in 787 Hampden Avenue (Union Flats). The cost of living is drastically rising and it seemed like a 3% rent cap would function as a bulwark against that, instead, the 8% increase Dominion has applied and been approved for is a higher increase than would normally go through year to year and only exacerbates the cost of living issue. After an increase, we are looking at over \$400 increase in what we were expecting to pay when we first moved in when the building opened. I'm not middle-class, lower middle-class, I'm probably working class, so to me, 8% is downright malicious. It basically means that in a couple of years, my family and I will be priced right out of the so-called "affordable housing" market, and then what?

I have heard the talking point floating around about how we residents should just shut up and take it because they are priced lower than the market. To me that doesn't really make sense, the market is even increasing, saying that you are priced below out doesn't mean anything because today's affordable is tomorrow's unaffordable until we are in the same situation as California or New York. Rent caps are meant to slow that process. Also, regardless of what residents are paying, Dominion is making its money regardless from either Section 8, Section 42, various grants, tax write-offs, you name it. Dominion saw a clear opportunity to make some extra money and they went for it without a single thought as to how this would affect the tenants.

Finally, Dominion communicated to the tenants of Union Flats that the price increase would at least bring much needed upkeep and repairs to the units and building. All we have seen is disrepair and band-aid fixes in a building of 217 units, 200+ paid parking slots at the cost of \$100/slot with only two overworked techs, maybe two custodians and one/two office staff members.

Thanks,

Abdallah

From: [Liz Isaac-Herzog](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul>Contact-Council](#)
Subject: Public Comment re: Ordinance 22-37
Date: Wednesday, August 24, 2022 2:02:18 PM

To the members of the St. Paul City Council:

My name is Liz Isaac-Herzog. I live in Mac-Groveland.

I was, and continue to be, a supporter of the rent stabilization ordinance that was voted into place by over 30,000 residents of our city. I am so proud that we took this significant and historic step toward ensuring equal access to safe, affordable housing for all people – of all races, income levels, and wards – in our community. This feels like the St. Paul where I've chosen to make my home.

As a staff member at an organization that helps low- and moderate-income renters become first-time homeowners, I have heard numerous stories from people in our city about the increasing burden of high rent prices while wages stay stagnant or jobs are lost (in many cases, due to the Covid-19 pandemic). Large families are stuck living in cramped apartments badly in need of maintenance – and still paying more than 30% of their income on rent. More than half of our St. Paul neighbors are renters. If we share the value of St. Paul being a place where all can live and thrive, providing effective protection and support to renters is essential.

I am writing today in opposition to the current version of Ordinance 22-37.

There are several things that I believe this ordinance does well – it keeps the 3% rent cap which is central to the original spirit of the rent stabilization policy, and it protects renters from retaliation if they file complaints against their landlords for violating the ordinance. I am also happy to hear that it provides specificity regarding lease amounts and utilities, preventing landlords from requiring tenants to pay utilities without reducing the rent accordingly (when those utilities were previously included in the monthly rent and paid for by the landlord).

I appreciate Ordinance 22-37's tenant notification piece, but I believe that without a particular

adjustment it cannot be effective. The proposed ordinance requires tenants to be notified when their landlord is granted an exception to the 3% rent cap, but this is too late for tenants to obtain the support they need from housing resources or seek legal help if they believe the rent increase is illegal; thus, this notification requirement (as it currently is written) is useless. Tenants should be notified immediately when their landlord has made the request for exception. This is about making sure that all people are equipped with the knowledge they need (in a timely manner) for making the best decisions for the wellbeing of their families.

I am concerned about and surprised by Ordinance 22-37's exemption for affordable housing. Tenants who live in affordable housing are disproportionately low-wealth, BIPOC, disabled, queer, immigrant, elderly, and families with young children. I think we all agree that these are the renters who need protections the most. Nearly 20,000 renters would lose protections because of this exception.

I do not support Ordinance 22-37's 20-year blanket new construction exemption. I have had countless conversations with disabled St. Paul residents who are unable to find rental properties that meet their accessibility needs. ADA-compliant units are more likely to be found in new housing – exempting all new housing from rent caps means that our disabled neighbors (who are often low-income) are prevented from having dignified, affordable housing.

Finally, I do not support Ordinance 22-37's introduction of partial vacancy decontrol, which would allow landlords to raise rent well above 3% between tenancies. This incentivizes landlords to evict low-income tenants in order to raise rent. I am also disturbed by how gentrification, already an issue in our city, could be accelerated because of this. This should be removed from the ordinance, or a cap should be put on the amount that can be banked.

Thank you for your time,

Liz Isaac-Herzog

Mac-Groveland, Ward 3

From: [Hannah G](#)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: AGAINST Ordinance 22-37
Date: Wednesday, August 24, 2022 2:11:31 PM

I am a renter in Ward 4. I oppose Ordinance 22-37 as it is currently written.

Last November, the will of the people of St. Paul prevailed at the polls. We overwhelmingly voted for a 3% cap on annual rent increases.

I oppose Ordinance 22-37 as it is written to exempt affordable housing and new construction.

Excluding affordable housing from rent stabilization would remove protections from nearly 20,000 St. Paul renters and further entrench racial inequities in our housing system.

People who live in affordable housing are disproportionately low-wealth, BIPOC, disabled, queer, immigrant, elderly, and families with young children - these are the people who need renter protections the most!

I urge you to listen to the will of your constituents and not the few large corporations who are attempting to hold the city hostage. People have votes, corporations do not.

Respectfully,

Hannah Gray
Ward 4
787 Hampden Ave N. #213
St. Paul MN 55114

From: [Heidi Schallberg](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul>Contact-Council](#); [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Comments on Ord 22-37 Rent Stabilization
Date: Wednesday, August 24, 2022 2:33:33 PM

Council Members,

I plan to attend the public hearing in person later today, but in case I am unable to testify that way for any reason, I'm sending my comments ahead as well.

My name is Heidi Schallberg. I lived in Saint Paul as a renter for 9.5 years, with the past 8.5 years in Highland. I appreciate the support and leadership from ISAIAH on this issue.

I support the 3% cap on annual rent increases as approved by voters last fall. This is also a needed opportunity to strengthen protections for renters in this majority people of color city, where almost half of housing units are rented. Council members, you know this is a racial equity issue.

I support all of Council Member Jalali's amendments to the proposed ordinance and ask for you to please do the same.

I especially support the amendment for landlords to provide relocation assistance when residents are evicted due to the demolition, sale, or conversion of a building. This is very personal. I no longer live in Saint Paul, having moved to Minneapolis two months ago to have the opportunity to buy my first home. I moved because I learned through neighborhood gossip that the apartment building I called home for 8.5 years would be torn down for the owner to build a new, larger apartment building, eliminating 17 units of naturally occurring affordable housing. The district council had a presentation about the proposal five months before I learned this through gossip, while those of us who called it home were left in the dark. This is inexcusable. One of my neighbors has called that place home for 28 years, another for 15 years. Yet right now the owner technically only has to give those who call it home 30 days notice to kick them out to tear it down. My neighbors, and any other city residents in similar situations, deserve direct communication, sufficient notice, and financial assistance for being forced to move from their homes. It takes time to save up to be able to move when you have to pay another deposit and first month of higher rent somewhere else, at a minimum. Renters deserve both sufficient time to plan and financial assistance to relocate in these cases. The 90 days of notice should apply in cases where people will be evicted because a building will be demolished or sold, and the ordinance needs to specify this.

This city needs to put people first, starting with renters. Please support Council Member Jalali's amendments. Thank you.

Heidi Schallberg

From: twentyfourthblackbird@gmail.com
To: [#CI-StPaul_Ward2](#); [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#); [*CI-StPaul_Contact-Council](#)
Subject: Against Ordinance 22-37
Date: Wednesday, August 24, 2022 3:02:24 PM

City Council of St. Paul,

My name is Ian Hedberg. I live in Ward 2 and have volunteered for HENS and ISALAH.

I have this to say regarding Ordinance 22-37:

This is ostensibly a democracy, yet I can't help but notice that despite renters vastly outnumbering and outvoting landlords, the social and legal construct of private property: the notion that one can own land and then have a right to control who can live on it, seems to be held more sacred than the need for shelter.

Renters find that actually, according to a judge, it's illegal for their elected leaders to make laws if the laws restrict landlords in their ability to hurt renters.

To stop rent spikes is a special law the council can't just pass: voters must collect many signatures and then win an election but undercutting it can be done with a simple city council vote.

The laws are rigged to give landlords power over tenants and to give tenants only the illusion of democratic control over their own lives.

Now many landlords are fine with renter protections and rent control; they never had any intention of abusing the power that the notion of private property gives them.

But other people relish controlling, extorting, and preying upon others, and some of those predators are landlords, and like all oppressors who find their ability to hurt others is curtailed, they whine and cry about how they are the real victims here and lie and fight viciously and punish with horrendous cruelty to protect their power.

Case in point: some developers are going on strike, refusing to build, giving up profit, in the hopes of forcing the city to let the landlords they sell spike rents.

I think it's time the city reminds private industry that when industry fails to address the needs of the community for homes, the city is more than capable of building homes itself!

So I would like to cast my voice in unison with many others:

YES landlords should not be able to retaliate against renters who file complaints that the landlord is breaking the law.

YES utility fees should not serve as a loophole to jack up rents.

YES landlords ought to tell renters when they seek to jack up their rent by more than 3% that year.

YES evictions should not be at a landlord's whim but for just cause only.

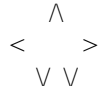
NO exemption for affordable housing: affordable housing needs to be AFFORDABLE. Poor people are most vulnerable to being extorted by predators taking advantage of their situation. There is no moral case to be made that rent hikes are ONLY permissible on the most vulnerable communities.

NO banking of rent increases to be sprung on a vacant home, which encourages greedy landlords to force an eviction.

And finally NO exemption for new construction. I can see a case for, at MOST a three-year exemption to allow new landlords to find the market rate and as a concession to developers, but people should not spend decades living under rent uncertainty. This exemption not only incentivizes destroying buildings just to build new ones so that the renters can be exploited, it also creates a corrosive inequity that will haunt St. Paul for generations: the haves who were able to find homes in old buildings and got stable rents and stable lives, and those who had to live in new buildings with unstable rents and unstable lives.

In conclusion, let's work for the people of St. Paul, not the dreams of a few power-hungry landlords.

Thank you for reading this far. Please have this star as a token of my gratitude:



From: [Ryan Perez](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul>Contact-Council](#)
Subject: Comment regarding Ordinance 22-37
Date: Wednesday, August 24, 2022 4:17:23 PM

Hello,

My name is Ryan Perez, and I am a new Saint Paul renter in Ward 2, writing to register my opposition to Ordinance 22-37. We cannot carve out affordable housing and new developments in a housing system that works for working class Minnesotans.

Best,
Ryan Perez

From: [Therese Forestell-Clark](#)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Rent Stabilization - Opposing Ordinance 22-37
Date: Wednesday, August 24, 2022 5:51:38 PM

I am a resident of St Paul and a renter in St Paul. I believe in the democratic process that put rent stabilization on the ballot and the need to abide by the outcome of the vote. The terms of this Ordinance continues to support the needs of the developer and landlord especially as it applies to new construction, exemptions from the limit via self reporting, and evictions. Having experienced a 62% rent increase, a fight to get a CRP form, and reduced services due to the sale of a building, I believe now is the time to really study housing issues from the perspective of the tenants and homeowners and reduce the influence of the financial and real estate market. If housing is the major wealth builder for the lower and middle class, how can St Paul make that happen? If climate change is a problem why can't utilities use the roofs of these buildings as solar farms? As rent becomes a fee-based system, how is it monitored? How much of rental income is the result of the lack and cost of student housing? How does that affect neighborhood? How come affordable housing is defined by the price of rent and not the quality of the housing or the income of the average renter?

It's time to view the problem from the customer's perspective and necessary to develop policies that provides safe, affordable and adequate.

Start the development of policies based on the intent of the vote.

Therese Forestell-Clark

From: [Maria Bertrand](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul>Contact-Council](#)
Subject: Comments Re: Ordinance 22-37 on 8/24/22
Date: Wednesday, August 24, 2022 6:05:04 PM

Hello,

I meant to testify as caller 608-397-4736 for the Saint Paul City Council public hearing today (August 24, 2022), but I accidentally ended the call. Here are my comments in reference to ordinance 22-37:

Hello. My name is Maria Bertrand, and I am a tenant in St. Paul's Ward 4. I've lived in four apartments since arriving here in 2017. Two of my moves were due to the inability to afford my rent. At my first apartment, I lived in a vibrant neighborhood. I knew the residents of my apartment and regularly stopped to chat with a family next door. In less than a year, my landlord sold my apartment to a large company. I had no say in the matter and was forced out by the fear of rising rent. The next year, I had to move in with a roommate in order to afford living expenses while in graduate school. My income dropped substantially yet my rent didn't decrease to the same degree.

My life was chaotic at the time, and all I wanted was a stable home. A stable home is something all tenants deserve, no matter our race, class, gender, sexuality, or ability, yet the Saint Paul establishment is organizing to maintain the status quo. I've been represented by three different Councilmembers, yet they're overriding the will of the voters rather than doing what's truly best for Saint Paul.

As a single white queer woman from a wealthy background who has a bachelor's and master's degree, my story is one of the luckier ones. Imagine what it's like for St. Paul tenants who are trans, individuals of color, those with disabilities, or who do not have the financial resources that I do. We must protect one of the strongest rent stabilization policies in the country. It's unjust to take away my voice and give my landlord the power to determine my future. Rent stabilization allows me and all renters to settle down, stay in our apartments, and become committed members of our community.

Maria Bertrand, MPH (she/her)