

THESE MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL
UNTIL APPROVED BY THE
CULVER CITY
STANDING HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
CULVER CITY STANDING HOUSING
AND HOMELESSNESS SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE CITY COUNCIL
CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

May 14, 2025
4:00 p.m.

Call to Order & Roll Call

The special meeting of the Standing Housing and Homelessness Subcommittee of the City Council was called to order at 4:07 p.m. in the Patio Meeting Room at City Hall.

Present: Bubba Fish, Council Member
Yasmine-Imani McMorris, Council Member

Staff Present: Tevis Barnes, Housing & Human Services Director
Mark Muenzer, Planning & Development Director
Troy Evangelho, Advance Planning Manager
Shannon Louis, Rent Stabilization Coordinator
T'Ana Allen, Deputy City Clerk

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Tevis Barnes, Housing and Human Services Director, indicated that since this was the first meeting of the body, Item A-1 would be considered first in order to select a Chair to run the meeting.

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Action Items

Item A-1
(Out of Sequence)

**Discussion and Recommendation on Subcommittee Meeting
Schedule, Format, Selection of the Chair and Vice Chair, and
Other Guidelines**

Discussion ensued between staff and Subcommittee Members regarding selection of the Chair and Vice Chair with full Subcommittee agreement that Members would switch off running the meetings.

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Pledge of Allegiance

The Standing Housing and Homelessness Subcommittee of the City Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

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Public Comment – Items NOT On The Agenda

This was done before Item P-1.

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Order of the Agenda

Item A-1 was taken before and after the Pledge of Allegiance and Public Comment for Items NOT On the Agenda was taken before Item P-1.

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Action Items

Item A-1
(Continued)

**Discussion and Recommendation on Subcommittee Meeting
Schedule, Format, Selection of the Chair and Vice Chair, and
Other Guidelines**

Discussion ensued between staff and Subcommittee Members regarding meeting frequency; allowing hybrid meetings; clarification that the hybrid option is allowed for public participation online and Subcommittee Members must attend in person; agreement to meet on the second Wednesday of every other month at 4:00 p.m. in the Patio Room; and a reminder that Subcommittee Members would share the position of Chair and rotate each meeting.

Chair McMorris invited public comment.

The following member of the public addressed the Subcommittee:

Meg Sullivan expressed appreciation that the meetings were open to the public.

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Public Comment – Items NOT On The Agenda

Chair McMorris invited public comment.

The following members of the public addressed the Subcommittee:

Patrick Godinez discussed the need to prioritize agendaizing a Culver City Housing Trust Fund.

Meg Sullivan discussed No Fault Terminations under the ordinance and asked that units being taken off the market be tracked and added to the Rental Registry each year.

James Richardson was called to speak but was not present.

Member Fish thanked Chair McMorris for creating the Subcommittee; noted the important issue; and he expressed appreciation for everyone at the meeting and for the ACOHH and the Housing and Human Services Department.

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Item P-1

**Receive a Presentation of Livable Communities Initiative by
Martin Tomasz, Co-Founder**

Martin Tomasz, Livable Communities Initiative (LCI), provided background on the organization; discussed creating an environment that allows the street to be part of your home; creating streets that act as commons; elements of livable communities; walkable neighborhoods; transit; the way housing is produced in Los Angeles County; producing housing on a lot by lot basis rather than by gathering lots to produce a large development; benefits; climate goals; expedited housing; the daily influx of workers into Culver City; potential locations for housing in Culver City; height limits; number of units that could be added; and looking at why the market does not fulfill the need.

LCI representatives discussed the status quo vs. the LCI vision; higher density models; policies in other parts of the world; creating a city that everyone wants to be in; efficiencies; use of space; utilization of the entire lot; the feeling that the current model does not work; building types legal in other areas of the world; neighborhood-based housing; policy changes to enable development; single stair code reform; density; open space; setbacks and height; streamlining; self-certification; standard plans; living with less car dependence; parking; lot assembly; the slow pace of development; individual development; the ADU (Accessory Dwelling Unit) model; encouragement for people to improve their properties; land cost; creating rules for community planning; generating housing without lot sales; policy that encourages people to act; intentional choice; neighborhood benefit; financial viability for the parcel holder; encouraging quick production; and mobility.

Chair McMorris invited public comment.

The following members of the public addressed the Subcommittee:

James Richardson was called to speak but was not present.

Dana Sayles received clarification about top LCI recommendations and that other Southern California cities were studying LCI but had not moved forward yet.

Discussion ensued between LCI representatives, staff, and Subcommittee Members regarding support for Culver City being a leader; infill development; examination of pilot programs

by other cities; interest in building prototype buildings; single-stair requirements; reforms that would allow for more missing middle and affordable housing; pre-approved plans; the high ADU production rate in Culver City; lack of utilization of the standard plans developed by the City; the Washington Corridor; Smiley/Blackwelder; and areas requiring further study.

Meg Sullivan asked about deliveries on mixed-use streets.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Subcommittee Members regarding deliveries in pedestrian districts in other parts of the world; street configurations to address issues; enabling housing production; reduced use of cars; single-stair density; standard plans; an exemption for single-stair being pursued by Santa Monica; staff agreement to come back at the next meeting with an update; limitations to the single-stair concept; three and four story developments; fire rescue through windows; the hope that people can get out of the building before the fire department arrives; tracking reforms being made all over the country; and other cities that have already made changes to single-stair requirements.

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Item P-2

Presentation of Fast-Tracking Affordable Housing by Culver City Planning and Development Department

Mark Muenzer, Planning and Development Director, introduced the item; presented an analysis of westside cities housing per capita; discussed community effort; other cities that are subject to the Builder's Remedy; total number of units vs. number of affordable units; changes to the zoning code; previous land use vs. new land use; by-right residential use; administrative approval of projects; and elimination of Planning Commission and City Council review.

Troy Evangelho, Advance Planning Manager, discussed City General Plan and zoning code updates; improvements that have accelerated new housing coming in; removal of subjective language; measurable objectives; compliance with state law; increased number of units that can be approved administratively; objective design standards; what is expected for quality design; updates to the local density

bonus; state and local density incentives; reducing the number of community meetings; existing state law; various bills and legislation related to housing coming forward; the certified Housing Element; avoidance of the Builder's Remedy; planning for all components of housing; density bonus law; tracking and review of new state housing bills and legislation as it moves forward; fast-tracking affordable housing; ministerial approval for 100% affordable housing projects; removal of CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) analysis; reduced community meetings; removal or reductions to impact fees; recent law that requires fee collection once the project is built and seeking the Certificate of Occupancy (COO); adaptive reuse; and he welcomed comments, ideas, and suggestions to fast-track affordable housing.

Discussion ensued between staff and Subcommittee Members regarding City Council consideration of reducing community meetings from two to one; accommodating larger households; recent approval of two development projects; changes made by the developer as part of the community meeting process; the City discretionary process; addressing neighbor concerns; and easy access to administrative decisions on the City website.

Chair McMorris invited public input.

The following members of the public addressed the Subcommittee:

A member of the public questioned the definition of affordable housing.

Troy Evangelho, Advance Planning Manager, explained that affordable housing is defined by the county based upon Area Median Income (AMI) of the county and he discussed different affordability levels by household size.

Dana Sayles discussed the need for timelines; concern with staff taking more time than is necessary; fee escalation; fee deferral; funding rounds; deadlines and thresholds; existing laws and timeframes; people who are not getting public funds or using state law; being reliable for other sectors; and she wanted to see a fixed point in time established that building permits and fees get locked so projects do not get hit with escalating costs.

Discussion ensued between staff and Subcommittee Members regarding support for clear direction; potential delays to other timelines based on capacity; fees locked in at the beginning that are deferred until the COO; impacts of state legislation; compliance with state legislation; staff workload issues; self-certification; staff dedicated to the soft story retrofit; reduced fees; appreciation for the efforts of staff and recommendations made; opportunity areas; ministerial approvals as a policy option for other than 100% affordable projects; instances where state law does not apply; additional information about self-certification; state level study about adaptive reuse; implementation in Los Angeles and other areas in the U.S.; retrofitting commercial structures for housing; examination of the 25 unit threshold for ministerial review and the potential for raising the level; clarification that the vast majority of projects are now eligible for ministerial approval; direction to staff to return with information about what other cities are doing; and appreciation for the speed of change taking place.

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Item A-2

Discussion of Rental Assistance to Support Tenants Facing Eviction as an Extension of Right to Counsel Programming

Shannon Louis, Rent Stabilization Coordinator, provided a presentation on rental assistance to support tenants facing eviction; discussed the COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program; and programs and policies of nearby jurisdictions.

Chair McMorris invited public input.

The following members of the public addressed the Subcommittee:

Meg Sullivan advocated for emergency rental assistance; discussed exploding homelessness with the shutdown of Community Redevelopment Agencies; the need for a steady predictable stream to help people with emergency situations; the 2023 Columbia study examining the relative value of different approaches; reduced eviction filings and homelessness by providing rental assistance; including rental assistance in the appeal for Right to Counsel when it comes back before the City Council; she proposed a separate track

for rental assistance; discussed risks for housing providers to reduce rent for any substantial amount of time; vacancy decontrol; Costa Hawkins; nuisance governorship; emergency orders in the county; the anti-gouging ordinance; the inability to raise the rent to market rates; the Rent Control Ordinance; maintaining the original rental rate; and incentivizing owners to help out without facing a penalty down the road.

Dana Sayles questioned whether Culver City had a threshold or program cap for grants.

Discussion ensued between staff and Subcommittee Members regarding the cap on the amount of funding for three month catch up grants vs. the one year period; creation of the Rental Assistance Program (RAP) as an eviction prevention; including the RAP as a guide; helping people catch up with their rent; and preventing people from getting an unlawful detainer.

Responding to inquiry from a member of the public, Tevis Barnes, Housing and Human Services Director, discussed the restricted role of the Landlord Tenant Mediation Board.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Subcommittee Members regarding appreciation for the report and for the public comment; the Right to Counsel program; the imbalance of power; access to lawyers; giving money to lawyers that could be better put toward rental assistance; the Bet Tzedek report; a request to include presentations in the staff report; and reserving Right to Counsel for specific cases where there is a dispute.

Further discussion ensued between staff and Subcommittee Members regarding acknowledgement of the rapid expansion and work done by the department; internal recommendations by the Santa Monica Housing and Human Services Department; lack of rent control in Culver City; people who are afraid to speak out; acknowledging the intrinsic imbalance of power between landlords and tenants; building out the toolbox available to community members; continuing with the RAP; keeping people housed; the county focus vs. the city-wide program in Santa Monica; staff recommendation to serve the entire City; utilization of the AMI; dollar amounts; solving problems by paying back rent vs. spending a larger amount money for legal fees; addressing structural issues; housing clinics;

identification of the best tool to support people; providing effective intervention; understanding the dispute; the focus to resolve issues; use of Right to Counsel to address bad actors; data indicating that the vast majority of cases are due to lapsed payments; staff agreement to return with options; catching people before the Unlawful Detainer phase; helping people get caught up; providing an option for those with deeper structural issues; assessing what the needs are; identification of trends; understanding the best course of action; matching people with structural issues with units coming online; providing options for program funding; and potential number of people that could be served.

Disa Lindgren asked about other cities with Right to Counsel programs.

Discussion ensued between staff and Subcommittee Members regarding program funding in other cities; the Rental Registry; and staff agreement to return to the July meeting with findings.

A member of the public discussed outside organizations available to help tenants; asserted that Culver City did not need to finance Right to Counsel; and felt that Culver City should be focusing on vulnerable senior citizens.

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Public Comment - Items NOT on the Agenda (Continued)

None.

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Items from Members/Staff

None.

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Adjournment

There being no further business, at 6:05 p.m., the Standing Housing and Homelessness Subcommittee of the City Council adjourned to July 9, 2025 at 4:00 p.m.

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Jeremy Bocchino
SECRETARY of the Culver City Standing Housing and
Homelessness Subcommittee of the City Council, Culver City,
California

APPROVED

Yasmine-Imani McMorris
COUNCIL MEMBER, Standing Housing and Homelessness
Subcommittee of the City Council, Culver City, California