

Sarah Godinez

From: Ling and Nakano [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, April 27, 2023 8:20 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: 2 May City Council Meeting

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The Monrovia Library Board would like to endorse CC-11 of the May 2nd Monrovia City Council agenda. In commemoration of National Library Week, the Monrovia Library Board would like to thank the Monrovia Library staff for all their work and creativity in the 52 weeks of each year.

- President John Carlson, Vice President Mark Harvis, Susie Ling and Jeffrey Ramos.

Sarah Godinez

From: Gayle M. Montgomery [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, May 2, 2023 7:40 AM
To: City Clerk
Subject: 05/02/23, RCM-2 discussion by Tina Cherry

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Good evening, Council. It is my understanding that, on the night of Tuesday, May 2, Community Services Director Tina Cherry will be presenting RCM-2, Review of City's Plan to Address Homelessness. This communication is targeted as a foundational piece to that discussion. There are no supporting documents on the agenda to indicate specifically what Tina will cover. I understand the partnerships that have been put in place to assist residents who may be on the precipice of being unhomed. It is a good program to which I have referred others in need, and I support it. However, there is an ever-pressing need to address the foundational step that is missing: the surging volume of rental increases in Monrovia that are greater than what most current residents can bare. If something is not done, the volume of people who will be on the streets will burgeon once more on a scale far greater than we have previously seen. Something must be done to deescalate this inflationary factor, or we will again have very large encampments.

The program Tina will address will assist people to find housing and make some temporary provisos. But the cost of rentals has surged when the market price of housing soared, and wages simply did not. While a new owner needs to be compensated for the costs they paid, the market prices have dropped, and many prospective tenants are still recovering from Covid job loss and the overall crisis inflationary state of goods and services. An existing tenant has some barrier against skyrocketing rental costs via the Tenant Protection Act of 2019 which sets the barriers of rental increases at 5% per annum plus the specific cost of living in that area, to a maximum ceiling of 10%, and landlords are, in fact, raising rates annually to this amount. In our case, there has been a rental increase every single year, like clockwork for the six plus years we have lived in our current home. This last one was in the high 9% mark.

The problem exists that there is now no obvious way to retain Monrovia tenancy should one have to move. Comparable rental rates are close to if not spot on somewhere between \$800 and a thousand more plus to move from one property to another in town. I continue to get rental alerts I set up years ago. Monrovia rentals are averaging \$3-5K a month. According to the 2020 Census, 53% of Monrovia residents are renters. Wages have not matched these increases, and we are squeezing out those who put in sweat equity to make Monrovia a better place even though they did not own real property. The cost of these increases will accommodate a higher end worker to the detriment of those who have long lived here and cause a cultural shift from the small-town values. These raised rates are having an impact on our schools, and we are losing students because families can no longer afford to live here if they rent. We have lived here since 1989 except for two years between 2002-2004. It was suggested Monrovia renters are short-term. That was neither my experience nor the experience of renters I surveyed when that came up. We have many long-term renters.

Landlords, knowing they are barred by law from spiking rents of existing tenants and learning they can make more by booting existing renters and replacing with new tenants at a higher base rate, are incentivized to evict though they must have cause under the law I previously referenced. Unfortunately, too many are ignorant of the law and their right. A large volume of our recent leadership makes their living in the real estate industry and appear inclined to favor owners over renters even though owners continue to be in the minority. RHNA was supposed to improve the housing market. There were three classifications under which they were to build, high,

medium, and low. With the state measures in place that stop the City from putting a lot of requirements on the builders, with little exception, only the high-end units have been built, thereby driving the cost of rentals up which has shown to have a direct influence on older unit rates.

It is often unfair to compare small town Monrovia to the empire known as Pasadena.

However, it must be mentioned that Pasadena recently effectuated its own rent control program and has commissioners in place to police it. It also bears noting that rent control issues keep bubbling up as potential ballot measures at a State level because the crisis of homelessness is far too real. It must also be said that, from my perspective, Monrovia has been derelict in its minimum wage requirements. Monrovia favors businesses and only enforces the absolute minimum wage as determined by law and does not have a supplemental increase like other Cities do. Those who work in the City proper have a minimum wage that is considerably less than those who work in the County area of town. Doesn't help to improve the ability to meet the high cost of rents.

I hope this note finds each of you well. While I admittedly have little faith the Council will act on this unless directed by State law, consider this a canary in the coal mine communication. To be honest, as one who has worked on homeless issues over a number of years hands on, I must remind you how venomous City dialogue gets when we have pockets of homelessness and the impacts it has on crime, public health and safety, as well as the beauty of the town. People caterwaul like crazy when "those people" are in eyesight, and Council is then cajoled to "do something." The good plan Tina will review tonight was borne out of that.

I will not be in attendance tonight, but this subject must be raised as the threat of increased homelessness is very real and potentially more than our partner agencies can accommodate. A wise Council would review this carefully seeking understanding as to what their constituents face and not just dismiss because their personal practices are not the same as the rest of the market. I will not be on tonight's call but can be available by phone or Facebook should there be questions or concerns. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Gayle M Montgomery
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