



San Francisco SRO Task Force

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Members:

Rosemary Bosque, J.D.
Department of Building
Inspection- Chair

Bruce Burge
SRO Operator

Angela Chu
Chinatown SRO Collaborative

Vacant
Tenant Representative

Vacant
Non-profit SRO
Operator/Manager

Vacant
SRO Families United
Collaborative

Yvonne Mere, J.D.
City Attorney's Office

Johnson Ojo
DPH Environmental Health
Services

Sam Patel
SRO Operator

Vacant
Tenant Representative

Wolfgang Stuwe
DPH Housing & Urban Health

Pratibha Tekkey
Central City SRO
Collaborative

Joshua Vining
Mission SRO Collaborative

Scott Walton
Human Services Agency

SRO TASK FORCE

Meeting Minutes February 20, 2014

9:00 AM – 10:30 AM

1650 Mission Street, Room 431

Members Present: Rosemary Bosque (DBI); Bruce Burge (SRO Operator); Angela Chu (Chinatown SRO Collaborative); Yvonne Mere (City Attorney); Dr. Johnson Ojo (DPH); Sam Patel (SRO Operator); Wolfgang Stuwe (Environmental Health; DPH); Pratibha Tekkey (Central City SRO Collaborative); Josh Vining (Mission SRO Collaborative); Scott Walton (HSA).

Guests: Johanna Coble (DBI); Nicolett Alexander (SRO Tenant), Dan Jordon (SRO Tenant); and Charles Pitts (SRO Tenant);

Minutes: Theresa Muehlbauer (DBI-HIS)

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:09.

2. Roll Call/ Determination of Quorum

There was a quorum.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes for January 16, 2014

Rosemary Bosque mentioned the minutes were not yet ready for approval due to some necessary fact finding, and would be available for the next meeting.

No Public Comment for Agenda Item #3.

4. Administrative Announcements

Rosemary Bosque thanked the Task Force members who submitted the applications for reappointment. She asked if the Board of Supervisors Rules Committee responded to their applications, and indicated that Ms. Tekkey's application would probably be scheduled for a subsequent Rules Committee meeting.

Rosemary said the staff has made contact with the San Francisco Fire Department (SFFD) about giving a presentation to the Task Force related to; (1) out-of-service elevators, and (2) providing assistance to disabled persons needing to exit the building when the elevator is not operational. She is hoping that a representative from SFFD is available for the next meeting.

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Rosemary Bosque mentioned that she added heat issues (in SRO's) to the February 20, 2014 Agenda to inform the Task Force about current occupant heat complaints.

Bruce Burge asked if the new members could introduce themselves.

Rosemary Bosque said the new members did not yet represent part of the quorum since they are awaiting final action from the Rules Committee.

Dan Jordan and Nicolet Alexander introduced themselves as the new SRO Tenant Representatives.

The remaining members of the Task Force present introduced themselves.

Public Comment for Agenda Item No. 4:

Charles Pitts asked how SRO heat complaints were documented and inquired regarding related regulations. He also wanted more information about the different types of heating systems found in SROs.

5. Safety Issues in SRO's

Rosemary Bosque mentioned that elevator operations were discussed at last month's Task Force meeting. She said that installing new elevators in older buildings is highly problematic due to existing spatial and structural constraints.

Scott Walton said the SRO's within the Human Services Agency (HSA) programs have monthly maintenance service contracts. He further stated that the elevator repair service companies respond to other service calls as well, and recommend partial replacements of elevator components as needed. He also mentioned SRO operators are required to give notice to the tenants if an elevator is being taken out of service for repair or improvements.

Scott stated that modernization of elevators is a costly and extensive process regulated by state codes, and that the modernization could result in a possible loss of guest rooms.

Sam Patel said he was working with an SRO owner trying to replace part of an elevator. He indicated the first step was to upgrade the electrical system, and that pursuant to PG&E availability this could take 6-8 months. He further indicated that there were direct current (DC), and alternating current (AC) electrical services, and that PG&E was reluctant to support DC systems since they were being phased out.

Rosemary Bosque asked if the Task Force members that operate SRO's could characterize the type of elevators typically found in the residential hotels.

Sam Patel said the majority of the elevators in the SROs are drum elevators.

Wolfgang Stuwe said that the elevators with DC electrical service typically need the most repair and replacement, since they tend not to have been upgraded. He further stated that PG&E is really pushing to eliminate the DC power source. Wolfgang indicated that it can take considerable time to find, receive or have manufactured replacement parts, and Modernization can trigger structural reinforcing the elevator shaft. In his experience the whole process from beginning to could take approximately two (2) years.

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Rosemary Bosque asked if this approximate timeframe was for complete replacement or modernization.

Scott Walton said the two (2) year time frame could relate to both replacement or modernization depending on the elevator. Scott further indicated that the elevator may not be out of service the entire time.

Scott Walton stated when elevator replacement or modernization is contemplated there are many factors to consider which include: (1) electrical service, (2) shaft size requirement, (3) possible tenant displacement and loss of rooms, and (4) addressing access issues when elevators are not operational.

Sam Patel said the for-profit SRO operators' experience difficulty in having to move tenants displaced by elevator upgrades, because operators have to pay relocation costs set by city regulation, and tenants are reluctant to move. He stated that the relocation costs are approximately four (4) to eight (8) thousand dollars for temporary placement.

Bruce Burge said the relocation costs for these operators are triggered even when the tenant is relocated in the same SRO.

Rosemary Bosque asked if there were sufficient elevator service vendors available to perform the repairs, modernization, or replacement discussed.

Scott Walton said there are a limited number of elevator service vendors that are skilled, knowledgeable, and creative. He mentioned creative because they are trying to maintain systems that are no longer manufactured, and that current elevator training programs do not focus on the types of elevators typically found within SROs. These vendors can make effective recommendations regarding maintenance needs.

Rosemary Bosque asked about some of observations elevator maintenance vendors have described to the SRO operators regarding elevator unintentional abuse.

Sam Patel said jamming the buttons and doors to hold the elevator, or kicking the doors typically cause the doors to become unaligned, and halt operation.

Scott Walton said if the doors don't align the elevator won't work. It's a safety provision.

Sam Patel said most recommendations are usually for door replacement. He further stated that the typical cost is approximately three (3) to five (5) thousand dollars per door for each floor of replacement installation. New doors seem stronger, although Sam Patel stated that an elevator can be abused when it is used for freight and passengers.

Rosemary Bosque asked how responsive the state Cal/OSH elevator unit was to elevator repair and disruption of elevator service.

Sam Patel said the state typically is supposed to inspect the elevators once a year, and every five years the ropes (cables) need to be replaced. He indicated that the Department of Building Inspection (DBI) not the state issues citations when an SRO elevator is not operational.

Rosemary Bosque mentioned that DBI does check to see if these elevators are in service and are stopping level on all floors. She further indicated that Cal/OSHA has sole jurisdiction on the overall safety of the elevator, and whether the elevator is repaired sufficiently to be put back into service.

Scott Walton said the elevator vendors are the interface with the state. The state maintains replacement schedules and authority of specific issues.

Sam Patel said the elevator service vendors dictate to the SRO operators what the specific regulations are to keep these elevators in working condition.

Rosemary Bosque asked if SRO tenants call the state to report problems.

Sam Patel said he typically did not see the tenants calling the state, in that they call 311 and are referred to DBI.

Scott Walton said he has never had a call from the state regarding this issue.

Rosemary Bosque said it is rare for DBI to see a state Cal/OSH report about an elevator issue.

Wolfgang Stuwe said that state response times are effected by limited resources.

Rosemary Bosque asked if state inspection is directly related to the permit posted in the elevator.

Sam Patel indicated that the state typically inspects for their permit posting requirements, but their inspection covers mechanical checks and the issuance of a preliminary order delineating fix-it items. SRO operators receive the state preliminary notice and have their elevator service vendors address the items. The vendor then completes the repairs and sends proof of completion to the state which in turn mails the permit to the SRO operator. This process can take up to six months, and the state can have a backlog due to limited resources.

Public Comment for Agenda Item No. 5:

Charles Pitts said he is looking for an explanation about slow elevators. He would also like some conversation regarding cameras in elevators. He also mentioned he would also like to hear more information about DPH because they rent public housing.

6. Heat Issues in SRO's

Rosemary Bosque said she wanted to update the Task Force regarding the proactive steps DBI takes to ensure that heat is provided in SRO's as required by the Housing Code. She used the DBI heat sweep procedures checklist as a reference.

She indicated that SROs generally have boiler heat systems that are required to have time clocks and set properly as well no remote bypass switches in a the managers unit. DBI Inspectors perform site inspections to ensure the hotel is providing a minimum of 68 degree during Code specified times. She also stated that heat complaints receive a high priority by DBI.

Rosemary further stated that when DBI receives an anonymous complaint regarding heat with no guest room number it more difficult to substantiate a violation if the time clock is set properly. Since the problem may be with an individual radiator, DBI needs the location to properly investigate.

Dan Jordan indicated that he was aware of tenants that had complaints regarding radiators missing from their rooms.

Rosemary Bosque asked if those situations were resolved by DBI.

Dan Jordan stated they were abated by DBI.

Public Comment for Agenda Item No. 6:

Charles Pitts said it is problematic that the hallways are unheated and unregulated. The hallways should be an indicator of what the temperature is in the rooms. He indicated that a former hotel he resided in had a radiator leaking water, and asked if inspections covered this issue.

Rosemary Bosque said she would follow up with him after the meeting.

7. Prioritization of Future Meeting Topics

Rosemary Bosque said that the Task Force has a couple of guest speakers lined up for March and April, and asked if the membership wanted other issues placed on the agenda of future meetings.

Nicolette Alexander asked if this was about any topic.

Rosemary Bosque said yes.

Nicolette Alexander said it would be interesting and helpful to have a discussion about mental health issues in SROs and a discussion about available resources.

Rosemary Bosque states she would contact the Mental Health Association of San Francisco to see if they would be available to give a presentation to the Task Force at a future meeting.

Scott Walton suggested checking Department of Public Health (DPH) resources as well, and researching possible services through the Affordable Care Act.

Nicolette Alexander mentioned she would like to see a variety of mental health issues and potential services discussed associated with exercise programs, social services, and mental health services.

Dan Jordan mentioned he would like to have the Task Force look at hoarding situations, in that these conditions are linked to bed bug and rodent infestation.

Rosemary Bosque informed the Task Force that DBI recently partnered with HAS's Department of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) on a hoarding & cluttering pilot program, and that she would report on it in more detail at a future meeting.

Wolfgang Stuwe asked does this include environmental health.

Dr. Ojo said that DPH is creating a program to deal with this issue and is hiring psychiatrists as well as trying to provide interventions.

Rosemary Bosque asked if someone from that program could give a presentation to the Task Force.

Scott Walton said two proactive areas the Task Force could explore are fire safety and disaster preparedness. Scott further explained that the city has several departments with interconnected disasters preparedness plans. These departments operate a number of exercises to keep a state of readiness maintained. He indicated that the Task Force should look at how SRO preparedness could fit into this.

Public Comment for Agenda Item No. 7:

Charles Pitts stated he would like the Task Force to focus on how to make SRO's safer for children and create adequate space for them. He also indicated he would like to see noise issues inclusive of rattling plumbing supply lines addressed at a future meeting.

8. General Public Comment

No Public Comment for Agenda Item #8.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:08AM