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# Rent law studied by city

## East Palo Alto council picks task force on rent control

By Chris Kenrick  
Times Tribune staff

EAST PALO ALTO — The City Council Tuesday appointed a nine-member citizens task force to make recommendations on a rent control ordinance for East Palo Alto.

The task force, which consists of four tenants, two landlords, two homeowners and one businessman, is expected to come back with recommendations to the council by Oct. 17.

All but one of the five City Council members have indicated they support some form of rent control. Gertrude Wilks is the only member who opposes it.

East Palo Alto currently is enforcing a temporary freeze on rents, which was imposed by a 4-1 vote of the council July 1.

Adoption of a permanent ordinance would make East Palo Alto the only Peninsula city to have rent control. Sunnyvale voters are scheduled to consider the issue in a November election.

Council member Omowale Satterwhite said he expects the task force to produce "a model set of recommendations that can set a standard (for rent control) for the entire Bay Area."

However, Richard Lyons, an apartment owner, warned the council that adoption of a rent control ordinance in East Palo Alto would discourage people from building new housing in the community.

"It deters investment," Lyons said. "You

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shouldn't be throwing that away."

Those appointed to the East Palo Alto task force were tenants Duane Bay, Renee Glover, David Skidmore and Sharifa L. Wilson, all of East Palo Alto; landlords Anthony Horwath of Atherton

and Robert Saunders of Palo Alto; businessman Brad Davis of East Palo Alto; and homeowners Louise D. Jones and Isabel Rivera, both of East Palo Alto.

In other business Tuesday, the council unanimously approved a 17.5 percent increase in water rates, which will increase the average residential monthly bill from \$7.65 to \$9.

The council also spent more than an hour listening to residents complain

about drug selling on the streets of the community, particularly at the intersection of Euclid Avenue and Bell Street. The intersection is adjacent to the Ravenswood Recreation Center.

The council later accepted a suggestion offered by Councilman Satterwhite and ordered city staff members to study ways the city can combat the drug problem.

Satterwhite made no specific propos-

als, but indicated he would support the expenditure of city funds to augment the police efforts already being made by the San Mateo County Sheriff's Department.

"For the first time, (as a new city) we have the resources and authority to address the problem of visible and abusive crime on our street corners, and I think we should do so," Satterwhite said.

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