

ORIGINAL

CITY OF UNION CITY
HUDSON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

REGULAR MEETING

TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDED

PROCEEDINGS

Via Zoom Video Conference
City Hall
Union City, New Jersey

Thursday, April 16, 2020
Commencing at 7:04 p.m.

M E M B E R S P R E S E N T:

LUCIO P. FERNANDEZ, COMMISSIONER, (Remotely)
MARYURY A. MARTINETTI, COMMISSIONER, (Remotely)
CELIN J. VALDIVIA, COMMISSIONER, (Remotely)
WENDY A. GRULLON, COMMISSIONER, (Remotely)
BRIAN P. STACK, MAYOR, (Remotely)

M E M B E R S A B S E N T:

A L S O P R E S E N T:

ERIN M. KNOEDLER, CITY CLERK

SCARINCI HOLLENBECK
BY: ANGELO AUTERI, ESQ., (Remotely)
Corporation Counsel

NEIL D. MAROTTA, ESQ., (Remotely)
Attorney for Union City Rent Stabilization Board

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1 CITY CLERK: This is a Regular Public
2 Meeting of the Union City Board of Commissioners
3 being held on Thursday, April 16th, 2020, at seven
4 p.m., via Zoom Video Conference. Instructions
5 and passwords were available on the City's
6 website www.ucnj.com.

7 Please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.
8 The flag is behind me.

9
10 (Whereupon the Pledge of Allegiance was
11 said by all.)

12
13 CITY CLERK: Thank you very much.

14 This meeting has been called in accordance
15 with the Open Public Meetings Act and also in
16 accordance with Governor Murphy's Executive Order
17 number 107.

18 Adequate notice of the meeting has been
19 provided to The Jersey Journal, The Record, and
20 The Hudson Reporter, and has been posted on the
21 bulletin board at City Hall and made available to
22 the -- to the public in the Office of the
23 Municipal Clerk.

24
25 **ROLL CALL:**

1

2

CITY CLERK: Commissioner Fernandez?

3

COMMISSIONER FERNANDEZ: Here.

4

CITY CLERK: Commissioner Grullon?

5

COMMISSIONER GRULLON: Here.

6

CITY CLERK: Commissioner Valdivia?

7

COMMISSIONER VALDIVIA: Here.

8

CITY CLERK: Commissioner Martinetti?

9

COMMISSIONER MARTINETTI: Here.

10

CITY CLERK: Mayor Stack?

11

MAYOR STACK: Here.

12

CITY CLERK: Thank you.

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At this time I would -- on behalf of the Mayor and Commissioners, I would like to have a moment of silence for those residents who have lost loved ones due to this terrible virus.

We also want to remember Union City Police Officer Alex Ruperto, who passed away today.

We thank him for his service and he will be missed dearly.

(Whereupon, there was a moment of silence.)

CITY CLERK: Thank you.

MAYOR STACK: I would just like, Erin, if I

1 could, just a statement.

2 I would just like to thank the members of
3 the public that are on tonight.

4 I would also like to -- to thank the
5 Commissioners for all participating. This is
6 really -- this is our first time in -- in 20
7 years that I know of that we've done a meeting
8 this way.

9 While I'd rather be there in person and see
10 the public in person and do the business of the
11 City, during these times of social distancing
12 this is something's that's necessary.

13 Having said that, I just would also -- to
14 tie in with the moment of silence that we just
15 took, on behalf of those 89 residents that passed
16 away in the City and along with the Police
17 Officer that passed away today, my heart goes out
18 to all of those families. I've been in contact
19 with not all but most. I'm trying to reach every
20 family to offer any assistance we can offer.

21 I think it's -- it's fair to say none of us
22 have ever dealt with anything to this magnitude
23 or anything even like this. It's a big shock to
24 all of us. I feel like we're living in a
25 nightmare every day. We're trying to do our best

1 collectively to run the City on a daily basis
2 even under the circumstances.

3 And I just wanted to thank all the members
4 of the public that have come forward that have
5 offered support to their neighbors. It's
6 something I -- I constantly encourage. To stay
7 in contact with your neighbor by phone, by video
8 conferencing, email, text messaging -- just to
9 keep in contact.

10 And make sure we're checking on the elderly
11 neighbors in our neighborhood. That's something
12 that's important.

13 If anyone knows of anyone who needs food,
14 who needs assistance, please call me on my cell
15 phone -- email me, call me on my cell phone seven
16 days a week. We'll have food delivered to them.
17 If they need med-- you know, anything; supplies,
18 whatever they may need, just don't hesitate to
19 reach out.

20 I know 90 percent of the City knows my cell
21 phone number is 201-376-1942. Don't hesitate to
22 reach out.

23 And I just wanted to thank the
24 Commissioners once again.

25 And thank you for the opportunity to make

1 this statement.

2 CITY CLERK: Thank you, Mayor.

3

4 (Whereupon, the Board discussed and took
5 action on the following item:

6 **APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES - REGULAR**
7 **MEETING - MARCH 24, 2020.)**

8

9 CITY CLERK: The first item is the Approval
10 of the Previous Minutes from the meeting of March
11 24th, 2020.

12 May I have a motion to approve?

13 MAYOR STACK: Motion.

14 COMMISSIONER MARTINETTI: Motion.

15 CITY CLERK: I'm sorry. Motion by
16 Commissioner Martinetti.

17 Second?

18 COMMISSIONER FERNANDEZ: Second.

19 CITY CLERK: Second by Commissioner
20 Fernandez.

21 Commissioner Fernandez?

22 COMMISSIONER FERNANDEZ: Yes.

23 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Grullon?

24 COMMISSIONER GRULLON: Yes.

25 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Valdivia?

1 COMMISSIONER VALDIVIA: Yes.

2 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Martinetti?

3 COMMISSIONER MARTINETTI: Yes.

4 CITY CLERK: Mayor Stack?

5 MAYOR STACK: Yes.

6 CITY CLERK: Thank you.

7

8 (Whereupon, the Board discussed and took
9 action on the following item:

10 **ORDINANCE(S) FOR INTRODUCTION:**

11 1. ORDINANCE TO PREVENT EVICTIONS FOR NON-
12 PAYMENT OF RENT RESULTING FROM THE CORONAVIRUS
13 EMERGENCY.)

14

15 CITY CLERK: The next item is an Ordinance
16 for Introduction.

17 Adoption on first reading authorizes the
18 Municipal Clerk to advertise the Ordinance with
19 the notice of Public Hearing and adoption
20 consideration, which will be held on Tuesday,
21 April 28th, 2020.

22 This is an Ordinance to Prevent Evictions
23 for Non-Payment of Rent Resulting from the
24 Coronavirus Emergency.

25 MAYOR STACK: So -- so just before I -- I

1 talk about the Ordinance a little bit -- and Erin
2 mentioned we'll have a Public Hearing for the
3 public to comment on it on the -- on the 28th.

4 I'm hoping that this Ordinance that we're
5 doing is not needed. As -- in my other role as a
6 State Senator I introduce legislation, which
7 passed the Senate 38-0, for a hundred million
8 dollars in funding for tenants in New Jersey, to
9 assist them. Any of them that were out of work;
10 any of them that had been sick -- effected by the
11 -- the COVID-19, which we're still in the middle
12 of. We're nowhere near the end of this.

13 Hopefully we'll have that funding. It goes
14 to the Assembly next and then it will go to the
15 Governor for his signature.

16 We're also looking at additional moneys
17 we've been trying to secure for businesses in the
18 City. Really go out there and help them.

19 Also I -- also I'm introducing an Ordinance
20 to help people with their mortgages -- to help
21 the homeowners with their mortgages. Anywhere
22 from 50 to a hundred million dollars. I'm
23 introducing in the Senate -- that's for -- I
24 believe it was this week into next week we should
25 have that -- (indiscernible).

1 So we're trying to address every which way
2 possible to help both the --

3 I'm sorry.

4 -- to help both the tenants and the
5 landlords alike -- the property owners.

6 The last thing we want to do is cause
7 anyone a hardship. But we have to be cognizant
8 of the fact that there are some landlords in the
9 City that own numerous buildings.

10 These are multi-family -- these are not
11 your one, two, three and four-family houses --
12 that we experience the problems with, that are
13 already out there harassing tenants; where they
14 have a 40 unit building and telling them that
15 they have to pay the rent, when the Governor has
16 put out an order, in an Executive Order, on a 90-
17 day -- on a 60-day rule after the pandemic ends.

18 So this Ordinance would be necessary only
19 in the event that we don't get the funding. I
20 feel pretty confident there's going to be funding
21 coming down.

22 Just as we funded small businesses in New
23 Jersey, some of those funds are out right now.
24 I'm looking to replenish them. I've spoken with
25 the Governor's office.

1 What this Ordinance would do -- and I'm
2 just reading off some notes I made. It would
3 prevent displacement and homelessness. It would
4 promote stability and health and safety of all
5 residents of our community, including our
6 business community, reduce transmission of
7 COVID-19.

8 Residential eviction moratorium for --
9 there wouldn't be any evictions for no reason,
10 including nonpayment of rent, except when the
11 tenant poses an imminent threat to the health and
12 safety of the occupants of the building or to the
13 property owner of the building.

14 There would be no late fee that would be
15 tied into this. There would be no
16 discrimination, obviously, against tenants or
17 anybody living in the structure due to loss of
18 employment, reduction in hours.

19 It's a pretty substantial Ordinance, which
20 we'll go into much more detail. I just wanted to
21 give an overview. We'll go into much more detail
22 at the hearing.

23 That would be on the -- on the 28th, Erin,
24 you said?

25 CITY CLERK: Yes, Mayor.

1 MAYOR STACK: Yes, that will be on the
2 28th.

3 So this would be a very comprehensive
4 Ordinance. As I said I'm hoping that we don't
5 have to use this Ordinance. I'm hoping to have
6 the Ordinance on the books. I'm hoping to get a
7 lot of different programs, as we always do. I
8 would never go ahead and ask any property owner,
9 listen you're going to be out of three months
10 rent but you're not going to -- you're not going
11 to get paid the rent. We've never done it.

12 That's not the way any of us operate as
13 Commissioners or any of the City attorneys or the
14 Tenant Advocate's office. What we're looking to
15 do is to get a little bit of time to get these
16 programs up and running so we can get the tenants
17 the rent money that they can go directly to the
18 landlord.

19 And the programs that I introduced in the
20 Senate, the payment would be given directly to
21 the landlord when the tenant qualifies; which I'm
22 happy to speak about on the 28th; I'll go into
23 much more detail.

24 Or if anybody who's on this right now, any
25 member of the public has any questions, I

1 encourage them leave a message for me tonight on
2 my cell phone. I'll get back to you early in the
3 morning tomorrow and I can go into much more
4 detail. Erin would be more than happy to get you
5 a copy of the Ordinance also and just to some of
6 what I spoke about.

7 And -- and understanding both sides of the
8 equation, is something I spoke with Lucio, Wendy,
9 Margie, Celin. We also sent a letter to all the
10 taxpayers that we were holding off on collecting
11 tax payments until June 30th.

12 So it would have been done on May 10th --
13 it would have been due on May 10th; we're holding
14 off until June 30th knowing people are going to
15 have a hard time paying their property taxes.

16 This is something you don't see a lot of
17 communities do. So we get it from all ends.

18 We're just asking everyone understand right
19 now our number one priority is to get through the
20 pandemic. Our number one priority is to get
21 people healthy. The loss of life that we had of
22 89 residents so far has been devastating to me on
23 a personal level. It's something I take very
24 personal. I love everybody in the community.

25 And we're just trying to find a lot of

1 different ways to come up with solutions that
2 come 90 days, come 120 days, we don't have mass
3 evictions or people losing their homes. So
4 that's why we're doing the tax payments we're
5 delaying until June 30th. That's why I introduced
6 a bill in the Senate, separately from my role as
7 the Mayor. That's why we introduced a hundred
8 million dollar legislation to tenants in the
9 Senate.

10 So, we're just trying to blend all this
11 together.

12 And I -- I would be remiss if I didn't
13 thank all of those involved. Mary Jo Whateley,
14 the Tenant Advocate, did a tremendous job on
15 this. Angelo, our Corporation Counsel, did a
16 great job on this. Neil Marotta did a great job.
17 John Salierno. Kennedy Ng, from the Rent Control
18 Office.

19 Who am I -- who am I missing here?

20 MR. MAROTTA: Barry?

21 MAYOR STACK: I'm sorry?

22 MR. MAROTTA: Barry?

23 MAYOR STACK: Barry Sarkisian was a -- was
24 a major part of this.

25 And I just want to thank everyone for

1 really putting our heads together and trying to
2 understand both sides of it.

3 So thank you very much for -- for allowing
4 that.

5 CITY CLERK: Thank you, Mayor.

6 May I have a motion to introduce?

7 MAYOR STACK: Motion.

8 CITY CLERK: Motion by Mayor Stack.

9 Second?

10 COMMISSIONER GRULLON: Second.

11 CITY CLERK: Second by Commissioner
12 Grullon.

13 Commissioner Fernandez?

14 COMMISSIONER FERNANDEZ: Yes.

15 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Grullon?

16 COMMISSIONER GRULLON: Yes.

17 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Valdivia?

18 COMMISSIONER VALDIVIA: Yes.

19 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Martinetti?

20 COMMISSIONER MARTINETTI: Yes.

21 CITY CLERK: Mayor Stack?

22 MAYOR STACK: Yes.

23 CITY CLERK: Thank you.

24

25 (Whereupon, the Board discussed and took

1 action on the following items in total:

2 **CONSENT AGENDA:**

- 3 (1) Resolution Approving the Payment of Claims
4 (2) Resolution Approving the Payment of
5 Concurring Claims
6 (3) Resolution Approving the Escrow Refunds
7 (4) Resolution Approving the City Payroll for
8 March 28th through April 10, 2020
9 (5) Resolution Approving the Library Payroll
10 for March 28th through April 10, 2020
11 (6) Resolution Authorizing the Refund of
12 Premium Monies Collected at the Tax Sale
13 (7) Resolution Cancelling Second Quarter Taxes
14 for New Condominiums
15 (8) Resolution Authorizing Refund of Redemption
16 Monies to Outside Lienholders
17 (9) Resolution Authorizing the Adjustment of
18 Estimated Taxes for the 2nd Quarter
19 (10) Resolution Lowering Interest Rate on 2nd
20 Quarter
21 (11) Resolution Authorizing the Tax Collector to
22 Hold an Accelerated Tax Sale
23 (12) Resolution Authorizing Tax Sale Fees
24 (13) Resolution Authorizing Electronic Tax Sale
25 (14) Resolution Approving Contract with AMCO

1 Enterprises, Inc. for City Hall HVAC Project
2 (15) Resolution Authorizing a Special Emergency
3 Appropriation for the Preparation of the Tax Map
4 (16) Resolution Authorizing a Contract with
5 RealAuction.Com, LLC for Electronic Tax Lien
6 Certificate Sale Service
7 (17) Resolution Designating 2nd to 3rd Streets on
8 New York Avenue as Roger Schmidt (sic) Way.)
9

10 CITY CLERK: There are 17 items on the
11 Consent Agenda.

12 The first is a Resolution Approving the
13 Payment of Claims.

14 The second is a Resolution Approving the
15 Payment of Concurring Claims.

16 The third is a Resolution Approving Escrow
17 Refunds.

18 The fourth is a Resolution Approving the
19 City --

20 The fifth is a Resolution Approving the
21 Library Payroll for the Period of March 28th
22 through April 10th, 2020.

23 The sixth is a Resolution Authorizing a
24 Refund of Premium Monies Collected at the Tax
25 Sale.

1 The seventh is a Resolution Cancelling
2 Second Quarter Taxes for New Condominiums.

3 The eighth is a Resolution Authorizing
4 Refund of Redemption Monies to Outside
5 Lienholders.

6 The ninth is a Resolution Authorizing the
7 Adjustment of Estimated Taxes for the Second
8 Quarter.

9 The tenth is a Resolution Lowering Interest
10 Rate on Second Quarter.

11 The eleventh is a Resolution Authorizing
12 the Tax Collector to Hold an Accelerated Tax
13 Sale.

14 The twelfth is a Resolution Authorizing Tax
15 Sale Fees.

16 The thirteenth is a Resolution Authorizing
17 Electronic Tax Sale.

18 The fourteenth is a Resolution Approving a
19 Contract with AMCO Enterprises, Incorporated for
20 City Hall HVAC Project.

21 The fifteenth is a Resolution Authorizing a
22 Special Emergency Appropriation for the
23 Preparation of the Tax Map.

24 The sixteenth is a Resolution Authorizing a
25 Contract with RealAuction.Com, LLC for Electronic

1 Tax Lien Certificate Sale Service.

2 The seventeenth is a Resolution Designating
3 2nd to 3rd Streets on New York Avenue as Roger
4 Schmitt Way.

5 Mayor, would you like to take public
6 comment on Consent?

7 MAYOR STACK: Sure.

8 Just before we do, we're really only doing
9 really what's necessary in municipal government
10 to get done at this time. There could have been
11 a lot more on the agenda. And I thank the Clerk;
12 we're holding off on stuff until we can get
13 through the pandemic.

14 Number 17, naming 2nd and 3rd Street on New
15 York Avenue, Roger Schmitt Way; Roger was a
16 longtime teacher in the community --
17 (indiscernible) -- school. A wonderful
18 individual who passed away late last week over
19 the weekend. And we wanted to name this street
20 after him.

21 We'll have a public ceremony once -- once
22 it's appropriate and the social distancing in the
23 future is relaxed in some way. We'll have some
24 type of an event down there just to recognize his
25 contributions.

1 Him and his family have lived in the same
2 house and he was in the school system, I'd have
3 to say, for over 40 years. Just a wonderful
4 individual.

5 Having said that, does anyone have any
6 comment on the Consent Agenda -- of the 17 items
7 that were just read in by the Clerk?

8 MR. MAROTTA: Brian, I just want to say on
9 Roger Schmitt, it was a pleasure having him as a
10 teacher.

11 MAYOR STACK: I did also. Yes.

12 MR. MAROTTA: Yes. Yes.

13 MAYOR STACK: Great guy.

14 Any member of the public have any questions
15 at this time?

16 Please state your name and address for the
17 record.

18 Hearing none.

19 CITY CLERK: Seeing none.

20 May I have a motion to close public
21 comment?

22 COMMISSIONER FERNANDEZ: Motion.

23 COMMISSIONER MARTINETTI: Motion.

24 CITY CLERK: Motion by Commissioner
25 Fernandez.

1 Second by --

2 COMMISSIONER VALDIVIA: Second.

3 CITY CLERK: Second by Commissioner
4 Valdivia.

5 Commissioner Fernandez?

6 COMMISSIONER FERNANDEZ: Yes.

7 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Grullon?

8 COMMISSIONER GRULLON: Yes.

9 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Valdivia?

10 COMMISSIONER VALDIVIA: Yes.

11 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Martinetti?

12 COMMISSIONER MARTINETTI: Yes.

13 CITY CLERK: Mayor Stack?

14 MAYOR STACK: Yes.

15 CITY CLERK: Thank you.

16 May I have a motion to approve all items on
17 Consent?

18 COMMISSIONER VALDIVIA: Motion.

19 CITY CLERK: Motion by Commissioner
20 Valdivia.

21 Second?

22 COMMISSIONER FERNANDEZ: Second.

23 CITY CLERK: Second by Commissioner
24 Fernandez.

25 Commissioner Fernandez?

1 COMMISSIONER FERNANDEZ: Yes.

2 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Grullon?

3 COMMISSIONER GRULLON: Yes.

4 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Valdivia?

5 COMMISSIONER VALDIVIA: Yes.

6 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Martinetti?

7 COMMISSIONER MARTINETTI: I'm recusing any
8 payments for Adolfo Lopez.

9 Aye on the rest.

10 CITY CLERK: Thank you.

11 And Mayor Stack?

12 MAYOR STACK: Yes on all.

13 CITY CLERK: Mayor Stack?

14 MAYOR STACK: Yes on all.

15 CITY CLERK: Thank you.

16 Thank you.

17

18 (Whereupon, the Board discussed and took
19 action on the following item:

20 **REGULAR AGENDA:**

21 1. RESOLUTION APPROVING A PAYMENT OF CLAIM TO
22 THE HUDSON COUNTY IMPROVEMENT AUTHORITY.)

23

24 CITY CLERK: The next item is on the
25 Regular Agenda.

1 It's a Resolution Approving a Payment of
2 Claims to the Hudson County Improvement
3 Authority.

4 May I have a motion on item 1?

5 MAYOR STACK: Motion.

6 CITY CLERK: Motion by Mayor Stack.

7 Second?

8 COMMISSIONER GRULLON: Second.

9 COMMISSIONER VALDIVIA: Second.

10 CITY CLERK: Second by Commissioner
11 Grullon.

12 Commissioner Fernandez?

13 COMMISSIONER FERNANDEZ: Yes.

14 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Grullon?

15 COMMISSIONER GRULLON: Yes.

16 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Valdivia?

17 COMMISSIONER VALDIVIA: Yes.

18 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Martinetti is
19 recusing.

20 Mayor Stack?

21 MAYOR STACK: Yes.

22 CITY CLERK: Thank you.

23

24 (Whereupon, the Board discussed and took
25 action on the following item:

1 **ORDINANCES FOR HEARING AND ADOPTION**

2 **CONSIDERATION:**

3 1. ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF UNION CITY, COUNTY
4 OF HUDSON APPROVING A FINANCIAL AGREEMENT WITH
5 RPM DEVELOPMENT URBAN RENEWAL, LLC (720 8TH STREET
6 UNION CITY URBAN RENEWAL ASSOCIATES, L.P.)

7
8 CITY CLERK: The next item, there are two
9 Ordinances on for Public Hearing and Adoption
10 this evening.

11 The first Ordinance is the City of Union
12 City, County of Hudson, Approving a Financial
13 agreement with RPM -- RPM Development Urban
14 Renewal, LLC, 720 8th Street Union City Urban
15 Renewal Associates, L.P.

16 Mayor, at this time would you like to take
17 public comment on this Ordinance?

18 MAYOR STACK: Sure.

19 Just before we do, this is something we've
20 been dealing with the last several years.
21 Hopefully this will be taking the parking lot --
22 maintaining the parking lot on 8th Street to 10th
23 Street, between Summit Avenue and Central Avenue,
24 maintaining the parking lot going a deck above
25 and then putting in a hundred-unit senior citizen

1 building.

2 As everybody knows we have a major
3 affordable housing crisis in the City and this
4 would add a hundred units for senior citizens.

5 So those senior citizens maybe that live in
6 our community or own a home in the community or
7 live -- and they can't afford any longer, would
8 be able to move into this building.

9 It would be on -- it would run on top of
10 the parking lot, which there's no cost for the
11 City for the parking lot because, obviously, we
12 own the parking lot. So it's a win/win.

13 We were able to secure tax credits for this
14 property, which would be wonderful for -- for
15 everyone to get the building built. This would
16 be a reality.

17 So with the massive list that we have in
18 public housing at the Housing Authority, this
19 would be a major boost for the community.

20 Again, it would add a hundred units to
21 senior citizen housing. Bring more senior
22 citizens closer to Summit Avenue to our shopping
23 district where they'll have -- there'll be ease
24 to go shopping. A drug store across the street.
25 Keep the post office in the building; there's a

1 small post office on the property. That would be
2 incorporated into the building.

3 So this would be a win/win for everyone.

4 So I thank the Commissioners for their
5 support in this and the members of the public
6 that have called supporting this. There's been
7 tremendous -- over the last several years. I
8 just hope we can make it a reality.

9 CITY CLERK: Okay, --

10 MAYOR STACK: Anyone -- comment on this
11 Ordinance at this time, please step forward,
12 state your name and address for the record.

13 CITY CLERK: So the members of the public
14 are on mute right now. So if you would like to
15 speak, if you could just raise your hand and I'll
16 recognize you.

17 Okay, seeing none.

18 May I have a motion to close public
19 comment?

20 COMMISSIONER MARTINETTI: Motion.

21 COMMISSIONER VALDIVIA: Motion.

22 CITY CLERK: Motion by Commissioner
23 Martinetti.

24 Second?

25 COMMISSIONER FERNANDEZ: Second.

1 CITY CLERK: Second by Commissioner
2 Fernandez.

3 Commissioner Fernandez?

4 COMMISSIONER FERNANDEZ: Yes.

5 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Grullon?

6 COMMISSIONER GRULLON: Yes.

7 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Valdivia?

8 COMMISSIONER VALDIVIA: Yes.

9 CITY CLERK: Thank you.

10 Commissioner Martinetti?

11 COMMISSIONER MARTINETTI: Yes.

12 CITY CLERK: And Mayor Stack?

13 MAYOR STACK: Yes.

14 CITY CLERK: Thank you.

15 May I have a motion to adopt the Ordinance?

16 COMMISSIONER VALDIVIA: Motion.

17 CITY CLERK: Motion by Commissioner
18 Valdivia.

19 Second?

20 COMMISSIONER MARTINETTI: Second.

21 CITY CLERK: Second by Commissioner
22 Martinetti.

23 Commissioner Fernandez?

24 COMMISSIONER FERNANDEZ: Yes.

25 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Grullon?

1 COMMISSIONER GRULLON: Yes.

2 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Valdivia?

3 COMMISSIONER VALDIVIA: Yes.

4 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Martinetti?

5 COMMISSIONER MARTINETTI: Yes.

6 CITY CLERK: And Mayor Stack?

7 MAYOR STACK: Yes.

8 CITY CLERK: Thank you.

9

10 (Whereupon, the Board discussed and took
11 action on the following item:

12 **ORDINANCES FOR HEARING AND ADOPTION**

13 **CONSIDERATION:**

14 2. ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 334 TO PLACE A
15 MORATORIUM ON RENT INCREASES.)

16

17 CITY CLERK: The next Ordinance is an
18 Ordinance Amending Chapter 334 to Place a
19 Moratorium on Rent Increases.

20 Mayor, at this time would you like to take
21 public comment?

22 MAYOR STACK: Sure.

23 If -- if Angelo maybe could just briefly
24 explain what exactly -- or Neil, what we're doing
25 here, that would be great.

1 MR. AUTERI: Sure, Mayor, I'll -- I'll
2 start off.

3 And, Neil, if you have anything to add, I'd
4 be happy to hear.

5 MR. MAROTTA: Sure.

6 MR. AUTERI: This Ordinance, which is going
7 to go into effect upon adoption if the Board
8 votes to adopt this here tonight, will place a
9 moratorium on rent increases, for many of the
10 same reasons that you set forth earlier in the
11 meeting there, Mayor.

12 Evictions and having people thrown out of
13 their apartments is only going to serve to spread
14 this infection faster, make it more difficult to
15 contain.

16 So this is something that -- this is an
17 Ordinance that's going to cap those increases.

18 Like I said it will go into effect today,
19 however, it will become effective essentially
20 March 1st. Meaning anyone -- any landlord who's
21 registered and already charged that increased
22 rent, starting March 1st, will -- will essentially
23 get that credit.

24 And this is something Neil Marotta and I --
25 Rent Board Counsel, have discussed a little bit

1 in terms of how to procedurally effectuate this
2 cap. But that's what it will be.

3 It will last until two months after the
4 State of Emergency is over. At which point they
5 -- the landlords can then institute their --
6 their regular yearly increases.

7 MAYOR STACK: Great. I appreciate that.

8 And if -- and if anybody -- I don't know
9 anybody read the newspaper today or heard the
10 news last night, Governor Murphy did something
11 very similar in the State of New Jersey with all
12 of New Jersey Housing Mortgage Finance
13 Properties, which is 36,000 apartments -- that
14 there'd be no rent increase -- that there'd be no
15 grant increase given.

16 I -- I found it amazing that it was only
17 two instances in the City that there was two
18 attempts to raise rent on tenants this month.
19 But that quickly -- that was quickly rectified by
20 Kennedy Ng.

21 I just -- (indiscernible) -- we realize
22 that we -- we're all in this together and we need
23 to -- (indiscernible).

24 Thank you very much.

25 Any-- anyone wishing to comment on this

1 Ordinance at this time, please -- please step
2 forward.

3 CITY CLERK: Okay, Ron, hold on one second;
4 I'll unmute you.

5 MR. SIMONCINI: Good evening, council.

6 My name is Ron Simoncini.

7 I have a long history of working with rent
8 control property owners in New Jersey.

9 The property owners in Union City have
10 formed a group called the Union City Housing
11 Coalition. They are concerned -- and I think
12 rightly so -- with the prospect that some of the
13 action that you're taking now sets a precedent
14 that might be used unwisely in the future by a
15 future council or, perhaps later on in this
16 crisis, to the detriment of property ownership.

17 Having said that, Mayor, all of us -- and
18 -- and I -- I think I'm speaking for the owners
19 of probably about a thousand apartments in Union
20 City, not all of them -- not all the apartments
21 in Union City. Obviously I can't know everybody
22 who owns apartments.

23 But we put together a group of people that
24 I think are very solid operators. None of them
25 are going to raise their rents. They've all

1 pledged not to raise their rents for the next 90
2 days.

3 And if we're taking issue with anything,
4 Mayor and council, it's only that there is a
5 concern about prospective abridging into other
6 rights and places where it would be very
7 difficult to unwind what we also view that's very
8 wise and sensitive maneuvers that you guys are
9 making on behalf of the residents that are
10 completely understandable. And if we have any
11 opposition, --

12 Excuse me.

13 I just want to restate it respectfully that
14 there are legal issues here that we have -- have
15 concerned some of our members. And I'm not an
16 attorney. They have also, obviously, retained an
17 attorney and most of the people are people that
18 you would imagine would have their own attorney.

19 So the concern here is not that you -- your
20 intention. The concern here is not that anybody
21 in our group wants to raise rents.

22 The concern here is precedent. We think
23 the hundred million dollar Bill that you
24 shepherded, Mayor, as a Senator was absolutely
25 brilliant. We appreciate the way that you

1 balanced the interests of that Bill. We
2 recognize that that money will probably go to --
3 be able to pay 83,000 months of rent across the
4 State of New Jersey.

5 However, there are 1.5 million apartments
6 in the State of New Jersey. And so the property
7 owners are going to be in a little bit of
8 trouble. Their rent collections are down
9 already, at least 20 percent and perhaps more, in
10 places that are affected like your City is with
11 workers who are the most vulnerable.

12 So these are all times where we're going to
13 have to work together to understand each other.
14 Obviously, there's going to be disagreements
15 between property owners and municipalities. It
16 goes without saying that these people are going
17 to be as respectful as possible if they do take
18 an issue with anything that this council does.

19 And I wanted to reintroduce myself, be
20 here, be recognized, and hope that over the near
21 term and maybe the long term we can work together
22 so that the tenant rights and the property
23 owners' rights lead to better housing in Union
24 City; more fairly applied laws in Union City.

25 And we want to avoid what you want to

1 | avoid, which is these folks who don't -- don't
2 | quite understand the game and would raise rents
3 | at a time like this. That's not what our folks
4 | are going to do.

5 | I appreciate the time and if I can answer
6 | any questions I'd be happy to. And I'm going to
7 | take you up on your offer and call you in the
8 | morning about the specific issues that you
9 | brought up earlier about the Ordinance you'll
10 | hear on the 28th.

11 | MAYOR STACK: And -- and I -- I would --
12 | Am I live, Erin, on that now?

13 | CITY CLERK: Yes.

14 | MAYOR STACK: Okay.

15 | CITY CLERK: Go ahead, Mayor.

16 | MAYOR STACK: And, Ron, I would appreciate
17 | that.

18 | In fact, I was going to say, I wish that
19 | you would have reached out to me prior even to
20 | tonight after we -- on first introduction. I
21 | would have been more than happy to speak to you
22 | on the phone or email me.

23 | You have my cell phone number; it's
24 | 201-376-1942.

25 | I'd be happy to work together with you and

1 any others that are involved.

2 Absolutely.

3 MR. SIMONCINI: Thank you, Mayor.

4 And I appreciate the consideration.

5 And I hope that you recognize that there
6 are some quality operators in your town who --
7 who really do want to do the right thing and who,
8 when they disagree, they'll do it respectfully.

9 MAYOR STACK: Absolutely.

10 And I -- and I do recognize that. I -- I
11 know that there is good landlords out there, both
12 on the larger scale and the medium scale. I do
13 recognize that.

14 And I appreciate that.

15 Reach out for me in the morning on my cell.
16 You're going to get my -- I'll get right back to
17 you some time during the day, Ron.

18 MR. SIMONCINI: Thank you, Mayor.

19 MAYOR STACK: Thank you.

20 CITY CLERK: Anyone else wishing to make
21 public comment on this Ordinance at this time.

22 Okay, seeing none.

23 May I have a motion to close public
24 comment?

25 COMMISSIONER FERNANDEZ: Motion.

1 COMMISSIONER VALDIVIA: Motion.

2 CITY CLERK: Motion by Commissioner
3 Fernandez.

4 Second?

5 COMMISSIONER VALDIVIA: Second.

6 CITY CLERK: Second by Commissioner
7 Valdivia.

8 Commissioner Fernandez?

9 COMMISSIONER FERNANDEZ: Yes.

10 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Grullon?

11 COMMISSIONER GRULLON: Yes.

12 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Valdivia?

13 COMMISSIONER VALDIVIA: Yes.

14 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Martinetti?

15 COMMISSIONER MARTINETTI: Yes.

16 CITY CLERK: Mayor Stack?

17 MAYOR STACK: Yes.

18 CITY CLERK: Thank you.

19 May I have a motion to adopt?

20 COMMISSIONER VALDIVIA: Motion.

21 CITY CLERK: Motion by Commissioner
22 Valdivia.

23 Second?

24 COMMISSIONER GRULLON: Second.

25 CITY CLERK: Second by Commissioner

1 Grullon.

2 Commissioner Fernandez?

3 COMMISSIONER FERNANDEZ: Yes.

4 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Grullon?

5 COMMISSIONER GRULLON: Yes.

6 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Valdivia?

7 COMMISSIONER VALDIVIA: Yes.

8 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Martinetti?

9 COMMISSIONER MARTINETTI: Yes.

10 CITY CLERK: Mayor Stack?

11 MAYOR STACK: Yes.

12 CITY CLERK: Thank you.

13

14 **OPPORTUNITY FOR CITIZENS TO ADDRESS THE BOARD:**

15

16 CITY CLERK: Mayor, at this time we have --
17 we'll take public comment on any item concerning
18 government in the City of Union City.

19 MAYOR STACK: Sure.

20 Just before we do, -- just before we do, I
21 would just like to start off by saying that I --
22 I just wanted to give -- and I've done this in
23 some of our robo calls -- I'd like to give a
24 special thank you to the Union City Police
25 Department for the work that they've been doing

1 in the community during this pandemic.

2 This is something that there's no playbook
3 on that you can go in and say, well, this is the
4 way you handle a pandemic. A special thank you
5 to the Union City Police Department for their
6 work day in/day out, 24/7.

7 Our Emergency Services.

8 Our EMTs have done a phenomenal job. Have
9 done a tremendous job out there putting
10 themselves -- going into peoples' homes, helping
11 people who are very sick. Not only in the COVID
12 crisis but in many different things; heart
13 attacks, strokes, whatever it may be. And a
14 great job they do.

15 Special thank you to North Hudson Regional
16 Fire and Rescue for their continuing to do a
17 great job. I know many of their members have
18 also tested positive.

19 Our Public Works Department.

20 I can't say enough about, under the
21 leadership of Commissioner Wendy Grullon and
22 Kathy Garretson have done a tremendous job. Not
23 only now, they've always done it.

24 But the streets, keeping the streets clean;
25 being in work every single day, realizing that

1 we're essential employees. The truck drivers in
2 DPW -- from the supervisors, to Kathy, down to
3 the street cleaner, have done a tremendous job.

4 Our Parks Department.

5 Keeping our public buildings still clean.
6 Keeping the bathrooms clean. The building like
7 City Hall is used by us every day, we're there
8 every day.

9 Our senior citizen drivers who are taking
10 senior citizens that may have to still go to a
11 doctor or a special appointment. I had a driver
12 the other day take a person at 4:30 in the
13 morning to Columbia Presbyterian for a special
14 surgery that was necessary. They took them over
15 there.

16 I mean I can't say enough about the job
17 that our employees do. I know I'm probably
18 missing people.

19 And not -- not to cause any embarrassment
20 but Erin Knoedler has been tremendous. And I
21 don't say it because she's on here with us.
22 She's been tremendous.

23 Chief Luster has been outstanding. Every
24 day I'm on the phone with the Chief or Erin
25 probably 20 times a day each.

1 Calling Erin -- everything from a letter to
2 a Commission meeting, to helping me with the
3 press; whatever it may be.

4 The staff of the Commissioners, the staff
5 in my office has done a tremendous job.

6 Angelo Auteri has done a great job.

7 All the attorneys involved.

8 Neil.

9 Everyone involved stepping forward, helping
10 people in the toughest times.

11 I -- I just wanted to recognize that. And
12 I hope I didn't leave anybody out.

13 I don't think I did, right, Erin?

14 CITY CLERK: No, you didn't.

15 You're good.

16 MAYOR STACK: I don't -- I don't think I
17 left anybody out.

18 COMMISSIONER MARTINETTI: You forgot the
19 Building Department.

20 MAYOR STACK: But all -- all of our -- all
21 of our different departments just being there on
22 a constant basis is -- is tremendous. Especially
23 in all types of weather, whatever it may be, and
24 just dealing with the stress of going to work
25 every day in a pandemic. Believe me, I know, I

1 feel it too.

2 And I just want to thank everyone.

3 A special thank you to Union City residents
4 for all that they do day in and day out. We have
5 a wonderful community here. Again it breaks my
6 heart to lose 89 residents.

7 And -- and as I said earlier, we're looking
8 to work together with the property owners, with
9 the large landlords, the small landlords, to make
10 sure we keep people in their home and to get them
11 their rent money. That's our main objective
12 here.

13 I'm not asking anybody to give anything to
14 anybody for free. I'm just asking everybody to
15 please be fair. Like we're fair extending the
16 tax payment until June 30th, we're asking
17 everybody to take part in this and just be fair.
18 And we'll work with you.

19 I've never once have asked a property owner
20 to let somebody live in an apartment for free.
21 They may have had to wait a week or two or three
22 weeks -- and Neil's been involved with me, Mary
23 Jo, Barry. All of them have been involved with
24 that but we always make sure at the end of the
25 day the rent gets paid.

1 But, again, just my heart goes out to those
2 residents who have passed on; to the residents
3 who are infected with the virus. We're trying to
4 do as much testing as possible.

5 I thank the residents on 36, 37th Street,
6 38th Street, 35th Street, for understanding when
7 we put the testing site in the parking lot. It's
8 worked really well. It's run very professional.

9 We're testing, on average, three -- 350
10 people a day, five days a week. I'd like to test
11 more if we can in the future. And we'll work on
12 doing that.

13 The more people we test, the more lives
14 we're going to save. Testing, without question,
15 saves lives.

16 So at this point does any member of the
17 public have any -- any questions or comments that
18 they'd like to make at this time, please step
19 forward.

20 CITY CLERK: Okay.

21 Ron, hold on one second, let me unmute you.

22 Okay, Ron, go ahead.

23 MR. SIMONCINI: Mayor, as you might recall,
24 our firm also represents Hudson Regional
25 Hospital. And some of your residents were

1 patients of ours unfortunately. And I would say,
2 you know, I'm -- I'm there two or three days a
3 week.

4 We have a press briefing every Friday
5 morning -- tomorrow morning 9:30. It's -- it's a
6 profoundly arresting moment to see what's
7 happening there and what these people are
8 suffering through.

9 And I just want to echo your sentiments
10 that you -- unless you've seen it you can't even
11 believe it. It -- it's -- it's not something
12 that you could ever anticipate seeing in the
13 United States.

14 So, again, a -- the hospital obviously has
15 a testing site of its own. We're testing about
16 the same number of people that you are. We were
17 early into the game and -- and it's -- it's a
18 place that, also like yours, is meant to save
19 lives. And I think everybody's in that together.

20 The County of Hudson has been brilliant in
21 how they've arranged this I think. Obviously,
22 each -- you and the mayors of Jersey City and
23 Hoboken and others have also created testing
24 sites that alleviate the incredible strain on the
25 hospitals.

1 And it's -- it's again respected but in a
2 very different way than our -- than our rent
3 control disagreements might be. I don't think
4 we'll ever find anything except for ways to help
5 each other on this health care situation in
6 Hudson County.

7 So I just wanted to let you know that
8 that's another resource that you can rely upon.
9 And if I can help in any way you'll let me know.

10 MAYOR STACK: And I -- and I appreciate
11 that, Ron.

12 Thank you for your comments.

13 It's just sometimes, in our position, we
14 just feel powerless when you have people that are
15 sick and there's not much you can do for them.
16 It's just -- it -- it really -- it really breaks
17 our heart. And thank you for your comments, we
18 -- we do appreciate that.

19 I would like to remind everybody, just to
20 tie in what Ron just said, is anyone who's
21 listening -- and we're constantly getting that
22 message out there, in fact we got it out there
23 again tonight with a robo call, please, stay
24 home, stay safe. I'm asking everyone to please,
25 please stay home, stay safe.

1 If you go outside, we've made it mandatory
2 now, you must wear a mask or you must wear some
3 type of a covering on your nose and your -- and
4 your mouth. So we can help each other. So we
5 can put this virus behind us.

6 We're never going to be able to forget the
7 people who passed on in the City or the people
8 who did get infected. But we need to get
9 everyone to cooperate.

10 I realize the weather is getting nicer. I
11 realize it's going to be nice days where we're
12 going to be hitting the 60s and the 70s this
13 month, into May, but if we want to defeat this --
14 this vicious virus, we all need to do our part.
15 We all need to do our part in the sense of -- of
16 the social distancing but better yet stay home.

17 You need groceries, call us. We're more
18 than happy to bring groceries to your house,
19 whatever we can do. But stay home. That's the
20 most important thing I could say.

21 Talk to your children.

22 Talk to everyone.

23 Please, let's stay home.

24 This virus knows -- knows -- doesn't
25 discriminate. It goes from children to senior

1 citizens. It goes across the board.

2 Please.

3 Please, please, please work together.

4 I plead with the community, stay home, let
5 the professionals do our job out there.

6 Let the EMS do their job out there.

7 Let the hospitals do their job.

8 Just stay home and help us so we can defeat
9 this virus.

10 It's something that -- it's an nightmare.
11 Every morning I wake up thinking it's just a bad
12 nightmare. Unfortunately, -- hopefully we can --
13 we can defeat this in -- hopefully in the short
14 term, not the long term.

15 Thank -- thank you very much, everyone.

16 Is there anyone else wishing to comment?
17 I'm sorry.

18 CITY CLERK: Seeing none.

19 May I have a motion to close public
20 comment?

21 COMMISSIONER VALDIVIA: Motion.

22 CITY CLERK: Motion by Commissioner
23 Valdivia.

24 Second?

25 COMMISSIONER FERNANDEZ: Second.

1 A COMMISSIONER: Second.

2 CITY CLERK: Second by Commissioner
3 Fernandez.

4 Commissioner Fernandez?

5 COMMISSIONER FERNANDEZ: Yes.

6 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Grullon?

7 COMMISSIONER GRULLON: Yes.

8 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Valdivia?

9 COMMISSIONER VALDIVIA: Yes.

10 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Martinetti?

11 COMMISSIONER MARTINETTI: Yes.

12 CITY CLERK: Mayor Stack?

13 MAYOR STACK: Yes.

14 CITY CLERK: Thank you.

15

16 **ADJOURNMENT:**

17

18 CITY CLERK: There are no other items on
19 the agenda.

20 May I have a motion to adjourn?

21 MAYOR STACK: Just before we do, Erin.

22 I'd just like to thank everyone for -- this
23 is our first meeting we've ever done this way. I
24 miss sitting with everybody in the same room.
25 I'm old-fashioned in that sense; I still like the

1 meetings in the room. But I realize right now
2 with the social distancing we can't do that.

3 But I just want to thank everyone. I want
4 to thank those that plugged -- and even if you
5 didn't speak this evening, for coming in.

6 Thank you, Ron, for being a part of it. I
7 appreciate that very much.

8 And thank you to each Commissioner.

9 Thank you, Neil.

10 Thank you, Mary Jo, Barry, everybody else
11 who's out there.

12 Thank you very much for all the good work
13 everybody does.

14 Erin, thank you very much.

15 A shout out to the Union City Police and
16 EMS for a great job and the DPW.

17 CITY CLERK: Thank you.

18 May I have a motion to adjourn?

19 COMMISSIONER VALDIVIA: Motion.

20 CITY CLERK: Motion by Commissioner
21 Valdivia.

22 Second?

23 COMMISSIONER FERNANDEZ: Second.

24 CITY CLERK: Second by Commissioner
25 Fernandez.

1 Commissioner Fernandez?

2 COMMISSIONER FERNANDEZ: Yes.

3 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Grullon?

4 COMMISSIONER GRULLON: Yes.

5 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Valdivia?

6 COMMISSIONER VALDIVIA: Yes.

7 CITY CLERK: Commissioner Martinetti?

8 COMMISSIONER MARTINETTI: Yes.

9 CITY CLERK: And Mayor Stack?

10 MAYOR STACK: Yes.

11 CITY CLERK: Thank you so much, everyone.

12 Thank you to the members of the public for
13 participating.

14 We're going to adjourn at 7:36.

15 MAYOR STACK: Safe -- everybody.

16 COMMISSIONER GRULLON: Have a good night,
17 everyone.

18 COMMISSIONER FERNANDEZ: Good night,
19 everybody.

20 MAYOR STACK: Thank you.

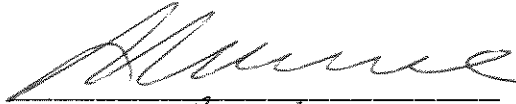
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22 (Whereupon, the proceedings were concluded
23 at 7:36 p.m.)

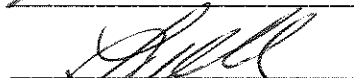
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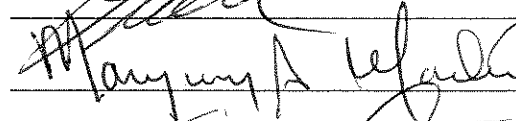
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 Brian P. Stack

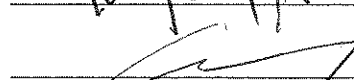
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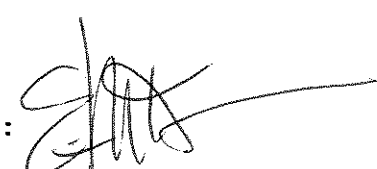
 Wendy A. Grullon

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Board of Commissioners

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Attest: 

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Erin M. Knoedler,

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City Clerk

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1 STATE OF NEW JERSEY:

2 :

3 COUNTY OF ESSEX :

4

5 I, KAREN A. MARINO, assigned transcriber,
6 do hereby affirm that the foregoing is a true and
7 accurate transcript in the matter of REGULAR
8 MEETING of the UNION CITY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS,
9 heard on Thursday, April 16, 2020 and digitally
10 recorded.

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Karen A. Marino

AOC 493

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24 Monitored by: Kevin, Dillon, Jr.

25 Proofread by: Deborah Dillon