

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Cassie McQuater

**Date Submitted:** 05/26/2022 10:42 AM

**Council File No:** 21-0600

**Comments for Public Posting:** Los Angeles City Council, I am Cassie McQuater. I am writing today to express my strong support for the Hillside Villa Tenants' Association. Please take action to authorize the Los Angeles Housing Department to use a reserve fund loan to preserve 124 units of affordable housing in Chinatown. Hillside Villa was built in 1988 with Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) funds, under a covenant guaranteeing all units to be affordable for 30 years. Since the covenant status expired in 2018, Tom Botz, who bought the building in 2000, has been pressuring tenants to "self-evict" by raising the rent. Many of these tenants have been in the building – and in the Chinatown community – for decades. Some are the second generation of their family to live in Hillside Villa. The current rents are up to 300% what tenants were paying under the affordability covenant. For most tenants in the building, the landlord is asking for 100% of their income or more. Tenants under Section 8 have seen drastic increases in both the overall rent and the portion they are responsible for. The motion to use a reserve fund loan to purchase Hillside Villa Apartments to keep it permanently affordable was initially made over a year ago. It has the support of over 30 community groups, State Senator Maria Elena Durazo, and over 400 of LA City residents who have written and called in for public comment. Despite the outpouring of public support for this motion, the Budget and Finance Committee requested a report from LAHD instead of voting in September, 2021. That report, which finally became available two weeks ago, lays out a clear way forward for the city to purchase the building with a reserve fund loan, which can be paid back by transferring ownership to HACLA. In the year that you have been deliberating, Tom Botz has collected hundreds of thousands of dollars in unfair rents through the ERAP and Housing is Key programs, not to mention the money he brags about getting from HACLA "like clockwork." There are no more excuses. Vote yes on this motion. There is no more time to waste while this exploitative landlord takes advantage of his tenants and of City, State, and Federal programs to enrich himself at taxpayer expense. The city council must take action NOW!