



Mayor Warns of Possible SMRR Takeover

By Mayor Kevin McKeown

SMRR's platform is clear: Protect renters, create more affordable housing, and don't sacrifice quality of life to unneeded over-development. With the adoption of a new renter-protective slow-growth zoning code that is progressive without being excessive, the SMRR City Council majority has certainly been there for you this year.

Now we must ask you to take some time on November 1st to be there for us.

As an open, democratic organization, SMRR is subject to hostile takeover by those who feel they can't win control of our city any other way. They know that if they can hijack the SMRR name behind the scenes in this off-year, they have a better chance of electing their own Council candidates next year.

SMRR's continuing and consistent success has encouraged these efforts, and we can't let SMRR's achievements lull our historic membership into complacency. We need you on November 1st.

What if SMRR stopped making renter protection a priority? There are those who actively oppose affordable housing – what if they took over SMRR? What if SMRR became a front for pro-growth interests, favoring developer profits over neighborhoods? Are you willing to risk any of that?

Last year, outside interests were so prevalent at the SMRR endorsement convention that our ability to support Council candidates was stolen from us. Special interest bullet voting fragmented our organization.

This fulfilling and satisfying year as your Mayor has been almost enough to make me forget that in 2014 no one, including me, was able to achieve the City Council endorsement threshold at our SMRR convention. There were too many competing factions beholden to their own agendas, not to the SMRR platform.

I'm grateful for your support, and for being elected to a fifth term as a SMRR Councilmember, but we can't afford to cede control of SMRR to those who don't have our renter, housing, and quality of life interests at heart. The best defense against a hostile takeover is reenergized participation by our long-time base – you.

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You have the crucial deciding vote in the future of SMRR and the future of Santa Monica, but only if you turn out to cast that vote. On November 1st, we will be electing the steering committee that will guide SMRR and advise our elected officials for the next two years.

Whether you're relatively new to SMRR, or have been with us the whole 36 years, your housing stability and continued quality of life depend on SMRR's remaining the one, the only organization in Santa Monica committed to renters' rights and affordable housing and protecting neighborhoods against over-development.

Other forces are gathering to put our tenant security and neighborhood quality of life at risk. The threat is real, but the power is yours.

Once again, I'm asking you to join us on November 1st and cast your vote to keep SMRR your organization, and your protection. Please, mark your calendar. Please, commit now to attend our SMRR membership meeting.

We need you – and we all need SMRR.