

MOTION

A major fire broke out January 29 on the 6th and 7th floors of a 25-story residential building on the Westside. The swift and heroic action of the Los Angeles Fire Department prevented a major, fatal inferno at the Barrington Plaza Apartments, which lacked a sprinkler system, despite a serious fire there less than seven years ago.

The Barrington Plaza is one of 55 residential high-rises built between 1943 and 1974 that are exempt from the city's sprinkler requirements. That exemption is dangerous, threatening the lives of residents and of the first responders seeking to save or rescue them.

In 2013, a fire erupted on the 11th floor of the same building, displacing up to 150 residents and injuring two people. At that time, smoke alarms failed to alert residents of an emergency, stairwells filled with smoke, and exit doors to the roof were locked. A resident found his 2-year-old daughter and father-in-law passed out in a smoke-filled stairwell.

Even after that fire, the City did not mandate sprinklers in older residential high-rises. In the January 29 fire, 8 people were injured, including a 3-month old baby. Residents caught in the blaze fled to the roof, and one resident climbed outside onto a ledge, requiring rescue by ladder. The spread of the fire could have been halted by a fire sprinkler system, preventing further damage to building, injury to tenants, and risk to our firefighters.

Previous efforts to mandate sprinkler installation in older residential high rises have failed, even as the City has required earthquake retrofitting of many smaller condos and apartment buildings.

In 2018, the Los Angeles Fire Commission submitted a report (CF #04-1672-S1) to the Council that supported a proposed fire retrofit ordinance motion, requiring all previously exempt non-sprinklered residential high-rise buildings to conform to current fire code requirements for retrofitted high-rise buildings. The report included a Non-Sprinklered Residential High-Rise Action Plan that could be used as a roadmap by the City.


I THEREFORE MOVE that City Attorney, with the assistance of the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD), and the Department of Building and Safety, draft an ordinance to require the retrofit of all previously exempt non-sprinklered residential high-rise buildings to conform to current fire code requirements for retrofitted high-rise buildings in the City of Los Angeles.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'O' followed by a series of loops and a final upward stroke.

I FURTHER MOVE that the LAFD, with the assistance of City Attorney and Department of Building and Safety, recommend additional actions outlined in the Fire Commission's report (CF #04-1672-S1) to be required by the City that would require changes to city laws and regulations.

I FURTHER MOVE that the CLA and CAO report back on the feasibility of utilizing federal HUD or FHA loans, multifamily housing revenue bonds, state or local funds and financial tools to assist building owners in the costs of these upgrades, similar to any offered to building owners required to retrofit buildings to meet current seismic safety standards.

PRESENTED BY:


MIKE BONIN
Councilmember, 11th District


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Councilmember, 5th District


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Councilmember, 3rd District

ORIGINAL

SECONDED BY: 