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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

**Supervisor Jane Kim Introduces Commercial Conversion Pause
To Protect Tenants During Eviction Crisis**

10/29/13 – Supervisor Jane Kim introduced interim planning controls today to prevent property owners from obtaining building permits when there is known residential occupancy in a commercial building. These interim controls are meant to prevent future evictions similar to those being imposed by the owner of 1049 Market Street in the Supervisor's District. The temporary pause on renovation and conversion is timed to allow the City to conduct a survey on the loss of residential units throughout the South of Market, a formerly industrial neighborhood that is experiencing a development boom.

"We must balance the success of the City's revitalization efforts with a commitment to protecting the existing residents in our impacted neighborhoods," said Supervisor Kim. "Passing the Western SoMa Community Plan was a first step toward addressing the tremendous residential need South of Market. There is an existing community of residents now, though, that has relied on the commercial/industrial building stock in SoMa for affordable housing. Acknowledging that landlords have knowingly leased these commercial spaces to residents for years, the City has found a pathway to stabilize tenants who have come to depend on these affordable units."

Upon hearing about the potential evictions of 100 low-income residents, many of whom are local artists living in two buildings at 1049 and 1067 Market Street, Supervisor Kim has been working closely with the tenant community and the Mayor's Office to find a solution that would allow the current tenants to stay in these affordable residential units and continue to contribute to the arts revitalization of the area. Under the Charter, the Department of Building Inspection Director is allowed to waive strict adherence to the code as long as life safety violations are corrected. The Director has chosen to exercise this discretion at 1049 Market Street in order to prevent eviction and to provide the property owner with the opportunity to address the life safety issues, therefore allowing the current tenants to stay in the building.

"I applaud Director Hui, staff of Department of Building Inspection (DBI) and the Building Inspection Commission (BIC) for developing a pathway for the property owner to legalize the units at 1049 Market, as he has repeatedly stated is his desire. It is this sort of creative and rapid response that the City needs to prevent further evictions," said Supervisor Kim. At the BIC meeting held on October 16, 2013, President Angus McCarthy reiterated DBI's position, "We are not in the business of evicting people. We have to do what we can here."

The Planning Department has also stepped in to look into the existing use of the current property. Since the property has not been used as office for more than five years, any change back to office use

would likely be considered a new use subject to all applicable fees and a hearing at the Planning Commission. The pressure is on the property owner to rescind eviction notices to prevent further loss of units as the City faces an affordable housing crisis.

“Renters are being hit with Owner Move-In evictions, Ellis Act evictions and skyrocketing rent, and the Rent Board has seen a 17 percent increase in petitions filed just this year alone, so this is certainly just one problem out of the larger crisis we’re facing,” said Housing Rights Committee (HRC) advocate, Tommi Avicelli-Mecca. “But Supervisor Kim and her office have contributed a valuable tool that the tenant community can use to combat real estate speculation, which we hope to build on in the coming months.”

To understand the scope of the problem beyond 1049 Market Street, the Supervisor has asked the Department of Building Inspection and the Planning Department to conduct a survey to assess the number of commercial buildings with residential dwelling units. Additionally, Supervisor Kim has introduced interim controls with the intent to prevent further evictions while the City gains a better understanding of the potential loss of affordable units.

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