

**CITY OF NORWALK
FAIR RENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 7, 2025
VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING**

ATTENDANCE: John Church; Chair, Fran Collier-Clemmons; Vice Chair, Johnnie Mae Weldon, Brenda Penn-Williams, J. Hanson Guest, Peter Halladay (7:54 p.m.)

STAFF: Carlos Duque, Russell Liskov, Esq.,

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Church called the meeting to order at 7:38 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Church called the roll as reflected above. A quorum was present.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting: April 2, 2025

Ms. Collier-Clemmons pointed out on page two, section A. **Commission Vote on FRC Case #1851-24**, that Mr. Church's verbatim quote was unclear. Mr. Duque said he would make the necessary changes.

Ms. Collier-Clemmons also noted several instances where her name was missing its hyphen. It was also noted in the adjournment that it should read, **MS. OLIVER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** MS. COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS AMMENDED.**

**** MR. GUEST SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FOUR IN FAVOR AND ONE ABSTENTION (MS.**

WELDON).

IV. REPORTS

A. Chair's Report

Mr. Church presented his report. He pointed out that the local city budget is currently under discussion and that this impacts the commission. He stated that the city budget compensates their staff. Mr. Church wanted to state for the record that, in light of the current political and economic situation, the work that the commission and staff do is critical. He noted that the number of cases they have handled and resolved demonstrates how essential the staff's work is. Mr. Church reiterated that he wanted it on the record that the work of the commission and staff is a vital part of the services the city provides. He went on to say that he hoped the city would continue to fund this work to the capacity that is needed.

B. Coordinator's Report

Mr. Duque presented his report. He discussed the Fair Rent Commission Network created in Connecticut and noted that Norwalk has the longest-running commission in the state. He stated that he has been able to share their successful practices with the network. He noted there will be a meeting of the network on May 16th, where he will be able to exchange ideas and discuss current issues.

Mr. Duque explained that they are not biased in offering information on the rights and responsibilities of both landlords and tenants. He noted a recent trend of people trying to secure housing without viewing the property first. He said he tries to emphasize to people the importance of knowing what they are renting before making a deposit.

Mr. Duque brought up that some large property management firms are requiring tenants to pay rent through a company portal, and that these companies also charge a fee to use the portal. He noted that this topic will be brought before the Fair Rent Commission Network and attorneys from the Connecticut Legal Housing Office at the May 16th meeting.

Mr. Duque also mentioned the Affordable Housing Informational Fair being held on May 22, 2025, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. He noted that various agencies, including Fair Rent, will be present to answer questions the public might have. He stated that affordable housing applications will not be available at this event.

Mr. Halladay joined the meeting at 7:54 p.m.

V. **REVIEW, DISCUSSION, AND MOTIONS ON OPEN CASES**

A. 1831-23

Attorney Liskov reviewed the item and recommended to take no action.

Attorney Liskov asked the commission to order them come in next month and explain why they have not finished their agreement.

**** MS. COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO TAKE NO ACTION ON CASE 1831-23.**

**** MR. HALLADAY SECONDED THE MOTION.**

Mr. Church gave an overview of the case, listing the various postponements involved. Attorney Liskov stated that there is a holdup due to the landlord failing to abide by the stipulations on the record. He assured Mr. Church that they can compel the parties to explain why they have not finalized the agreement. Mr. Duque added that the parties can be compelled to explain, or the commission will make a determination. Mr. Church stated that the parties should appear at the next meeting via Zoom to explain why they have not formalized what they have already agreed to. Attorney Liskov emphasized, “Don’t ask the parties to—require them to.”

Mr. Church said that the other option is to close the case. If the tenant feels something is inappropriate, they can file a new case. Attorney Liskov stated that it is not the tenant holding this up, and filing a new case would be punitive.

Attorney Liskov concluded by saying the parties should be informed that they are required to appear before the commission via Zoom next month to explain why the agreement has not been concluded.

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

B. 1860-24

Attorney Liskov reviewed the item and recommended to close the case.

**** MS. COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO CLOSE CASE 1860-24**

**** MS. WELDON SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY..**

C. 1861-25

Attorney Liskov reviewed the item and recommended to take no action.

Mr. Church noted that, due to the circumstances surrounding the case, he would like to pencil in a hearing date for August.

- ** MS. WELDON MOVED TO TAKE NO ACTION ON CASE 1861-25.**
- ** MR. HALLADAY SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

VI. PRESENTATION OF NEW CASES

A. 1862-25

Attorney Liskov reviewed the item and recommended a vote to hear the case.

- ** MS. COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO HEAR CASE 1862-25.**
- ** MS. PENN-WILLIAMS SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

VII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no one present from the public who wished to participate.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to discuss.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Duque mentioned that summer was approaching and they would be having either a dinner or a brunch. The Commissioners agreed that they would prefer a brunch. Mr. Duque said he would look into the logistics.

Ms. Collier-Clemmons wanted to know why Public Participation was so far down on the agenda.

Mr. Church stated that they prefer to take care of regular business before entering into Public Participation. Ms. Collier-Clemmons said she would like it earlier in the agenda. She noted that in other commissions she serves on, participants are allowed to speak only on items that are on the agenda; placing Public Participation so far down allows them to talk about almost anything. Mr. Church had no objection to moving Public Participation and stated that his preference would be to place it right after the approval of the minutes

X. ADJOURNMENT

- ** MS. COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.**
- ** MR. HALLADAY SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
China Mayhew
Telesco Secretarial Services