

**CITY OF NORWALK
FAIR RENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES - OCTOBER 8, 2025
VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL CONFERENCE**

ATTENDEES John Church, Fran Collier-Clemmons, Lunise Constant, J. Hanson Guest, Peter Halladay, Sonja Oliver, Brenda Penn-Williams, Tatiana Santiago, Johnnie Mae Weldon

STAFF: Carlos Duque, Russell Liskov

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Church called the regular meeting of the Fair Rent Commission to order at 7:32 p.m. and confirmed a quorum.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Church presented the minutes from the September 3, 2025, meeting for approval.

1. Mr. Church proposed a change on page 1 to refer to MS. COLLIER-CLEMMONS as Vice Chair.
2. Mr. Church also proposed a correction on page 1 to spell the restaurant name as Odeen's Astro Pub with two E's.
3. Mr. Duque noted a correction on page 2 that wallpit under case B1862-25 should be one word.
4. Ms. Collier-Clemmons questioned the notation of the adjournment time as 7:58 p.m. and suggested changing it to around 8:00 p.m.

****MS. COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 3, 2025, MEETING WITH THE CHANGES AND CORRECTIONS.**

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

****THE MOTION PASSED.**

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No public participation.

IV. REPORTS

A. Chair's Report

Mr. Church thanked all commissioners for their attendance and flexibility, particularly in light of several challenging hearings held over the past year, including one originally scheduled for September that had been postponed to November. He emphasized the responsibility of the commission in hearing cases presented by community members, often without professional representation, and acknowledged the time and effort required.

He also specifically thanked Ms. Collier-Clemmons for leading several hearings and expressed appreciation for everyone's continued support.

B. Staff Report

Mr. Duque reported receiving phone calls and office visits from residents with various questions, including those unrelated to fair rent concerns, and directed them appropriately. He noted addressing landlord-tenant issues, listening to residents including non-English speakers, seniors, and those not tech-savvy, and providing information to ensure they left with assistance.

He also highlighted frequent inquiries from Section 8 voucher holders and regular contact with the Norwalk Housing Authority. 80% of inquiries were from tenants and 20% from landlords and expressed a desire to better educate the public on tenant rights, particularly regarding security deposits, where many faced challenges in recovering funds through small claims court. He mentioned considering a weekly or monthly notice or Spanish-language materials to help residents navigate their rights and address instances of landlords taking advantage.

Mr. Church inquired whether Mr. Duque tracked trends in inquiries, such as the percentage related to security deposits, to inform commission focus areas. Mr. Duque confirmed maintaining a spreadsheet in Smartsheet to log all inquiries, which could generate reports by zip code or type, such as rent increases or security deposits. Ms. Collier-Clemmons suggested including this information in future meeting packets to help the commission address trends. Mr. Church agreed it would provide valuable insight into Mr. Carlos's monthly work.

V. REVIEW/DISCUSSION OF OPEN CASES

Mr. Church introduced Ms. Tatiana Santiago, who shared that she is a Norwalk resident, works in the mortgage industry, is a landlord, and joined the commission to better serve the community. Mr. Church turned the discussion to open cases.

Mr. Liskov reported on the open case regarding 41 Wolfpit Avenue, Apartment 4K, case number 1862-25, where the landlord sought to increase rent from \$2,294 per month to \$2,480 for a two-bedroom apartment. He noted the tenant found the increase excessive, negotiations had been difficult, a hearing had been postponed due to health issues, and a full hearing was likely next month. Mr. Liskov stated he was mediating a potential resolution and recommended no action this month.

****MS. OLIVER MOVED TO TAKE NO ACTION ON CASE 1862-25.**

****MS. COLLIER-CLEMMONS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

VI. NEW CASES

Mr. Liskov presented new cases. The first was case 1869-25, 12 Live Oak Road, a three-bedroom house where the landlord sought to increase rent from \$3,500 per month to \$3,950. He noted the case was filed in August, notices had been sent, and it met commission parameters. Ms. Penn-Williams questioned the capitalization of "Road" and the location, and Mr. Church

clarified it was off Grumman Avenue near Cranberry School. Ms. Penn-Williams and Ms. Weldon noted the high rent amount. Mr. Church confirmed it was a house.

****MS. OLIVER MOVED TO ACCEPT CASE 1869-25.
**MR. HALLADAY SECONDED THE MOTION.
THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mr. Liskov requested a correction to capitalize "Road" and note it as a three-bedroom house rather than apartment.

The next case was 1871-25, 10 Willard Road, Apartment 206, a one-bedroom apartment where the landlord sought to increase rent from \$2,318 per month to \$2,434. Mr. Liskov noted the tenant was a senior Section 8 voucher holder who found the increase excessive, the case was filed late in September, notices had been sent, and it met parameters. Ms. Oliver moved to accept but inquired whether Section 8 controlled allowable increases.

Mr. Duque explained Section 8 sets a limit based on voucher and assessment but allows landlord increases beyond that, with the commission stepping in for complaints. Ms. Penn-Williams clarified Section 8 payments are based on bedrooms, income, and location, with limits like \$3,500 for three bedrooms, and tenants pay up to 30-40% of income, rejecting higher amounts.

Ms. Santiago noted Norwalk's split into sections with specific limits. Ms. Collier-Clemmons sought clarification on whether Section 8 would reject charges over 40% of income. Ms. Oliver questioned involvement if Section 8 allowed the increase.

Mr. Liskov explained the tenant claimed the portion beyond Section 8's allowance was excessive, falling under commission purview. Mr. Duque confirmed Section 8 did not allow the full increase, with the remainder on the tenant, prompting the complaint.

****MS. OLIVER MOVED TO ACCEPT CASE 1871-25.
**MS. WELDON SECONDED THE MOTION.
THE MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MR. HANSON GUEST).

The final case was 1872-25, 46 Prospect Avenue, Apartment 4C, a two-bedroom apartment where the landlord sought to increase rent from \$2,000 per month to \$2,400. Mr. Liskov noted the tenant found it excessive and it met parameters.

****MS. OLIVER MOVED TO ACCEPT CASE 1872-25.
**MR. HALLADAY SECONDED THE MOTION.
THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mr. Duque noted case 1870-25 had been filed but withdrawn as the tenant moved out before acceptance. Ms. Collier-Clemmons suggested including such cases with resolution notes, but Mr. Church explained they were non-justiciable and did not require a vote.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Church introduced the annual nominations for chair and vice chair, turning to the nominating committee. Mr. Guest, as committee chair, presented the slate: himself for Chair; Mr. Halladay and Ms. Collier-Clemmons for Vice Chair, confirmed by Mr. Halladay's acceptance and Ms. Weldon's successful motion to include Ms. Collier-Clemmons. Mr. Guest opened the floor for additional nominations, subject to qualification vetting.

Ms. Penn-Williams sought clarification on the two vice chair candidates and raised concerns about alternates' eligibility, citing Ms. Oliver's prior denial due to party limits and alternate status, and questioning Mr. Guest's own alternate role. Ms. Oliver affirmed she wouldn't change affiliations and had been told alternates couldn't serve. Ms. Penn-Williams echoed the procedural issue, praising Mr. Guest's potential. Mr. Guest assured no offense and agreed on propriety. Ms. Collier-Clemmons offered to share committee discussions, but Mr. Church declined. Mr. Carlos noted no known bylaw bar, while Mr. Liskov opined full members are typically required due to voting limitations.

Mr. Church moved to table the nominations for the committee to revisit, with Mr. Liskov consulting the city attorney, for reconsideration in November. The motion passed unanimously.

****MR. CHURCH MOVED TO TABLE THE NOMINATIONS FOR CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR SO THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE CAN REVISIT THE SLATE IN LIGHT OF THIS DISCUSSION AND RECONSIDER AT THE NOVEMBER MEETING.**

****MS. OLIVER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Penn-Williams announced the Norwalk NAACP's annual Freedom Fund Banquet on Friday, October 17, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at Giovanni's in Darien for \$125 per ticket and hoped commissioners could attend. Mr. Church thanked Ms. Penn-Williams. Mr. Liskov requested Mr. Duque send details to commissioners. Mr. Duque agreed to obtain details from Ms. Penn-Williams and distribute.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

****MS. COLLIER-CLEMMONS MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.**

****MS. OLIVER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Courtney Baldwin
Recording Secretary