

**CITY OF NORWALK
FAIR RENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES - NOVEMBER 5, 2025
VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL CONFERENCE**

ATTENDEES: John Church, Chair, Lunise Constant, Brenda Penn-Williams, Tatiana Santiago, J. Hanson Guest, Peter Halladay

STAFF: Carlos Duque, Russell Liskov.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Norwalk Fair Rent Commission was called to order by Chair John Church at 7:35 p.m. on Wednesday, November 5, 2025.

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Church noted for the record the presence of Commissioners and confirmed a quorum.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting: October 8, 2025

Attorney Liskov suggested a correction to item number two, noting it should read Odine's Bistro Pub, though Mr. Church clarified it as gastropub. Mr. Church also noted a correction on page 2 regarding Wolf Pit.

****MR. HANSON GUEST MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 8, 2025, REGULAR MEETING.**

****MR. HOLLIDAY SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AS AMENDED.**

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No public participation.

V. REPORTS

A. Chair's Report

Mr. Church delivered his report, reflecting on his over 20 years of service on the Norwalk Fair Rent Commission since 2004, when Mr. Dick Booth and Mr. Martin Bernard alternated as chair. He expressed pride in the Commission's non-partisan nature, emphasizing that members from various political parties and backgrounds have consistently prioritized the best interests of Norwalk tenants and landlords without bringing partisan leanings to discussions.

In light of the recent election, he acknowledged that all members likely held strong political opinions on the results but requested that such thoughts be kept private during the meeting to maintain the Commission's collaborative spirit. He highlighted that key election issues, including affordable housing, fair rents, and apartment construction, directly relate to the Commission's work on rental increases.

Mr. Church stressed the importance of using the Commission's platform to serve residents in cases before it and to share observations and potential solutions with political leaders, including the new mayor and Common Council members. He commended staff member Mr. Duque's efforts in City Hall and noted the Commission's role as concerned Norwalk citizens in addressing these ongoing hot button topics.

B. Coordinator's Report

Mr. Duque provided his report, updating the Commission on ongoing work to develop data and trends reporting for rental issues in the City of Norwalk. He noted that compiling the information is extensive but that a suitable formula would enable monthly reporting. Mr. Duque discussed considering reporting by calendar year, fiscal year, or a rolling 12- or 13-month period to allow comparisons, such as last July versus the current July, and indicated he would continue refining this approach.

With colder weather arriving, Mr. Duque reported an increase in calls from tenants concerned about heating, confirming that landlords are required to provide heat and directing such inquiries to the health department and housing inspectors, who have been responsive. He mentioned attending the Norwalk Housing Authority's annual landlord meeting a few weeks prior, where he presented on fair housing and fair rent alongside the Housing Authority's presentation on landlord responsibilities. During the event, Mr. Duque advised landlords that correspondence involving his name likely indicated a tenant complaint and emphasized the need to maintain units in compliance with local building codes.

Mr. Duque also identified a recent trend of landlords withholding portions of security deposits, noting that some may rely on the lengthy small claims process to deter tenants from pursuing refunds. He has seen repeated issues at certain addresses and has provided tenants with guidance, documents, and information on filing small claims suits, though follow-through is at the tenants' discretion. Mr. Duque stated he is monitoring these patterns closely.

VI. REVIEW, DISCUSSION, AND MOTIONS ON OPEN CASES

Attorney Liskov reviewed the open cases, providing updates on progress and recommending actions.

A. 1862-25

Attorney Liskov reported on case 1862-25 at 41 Wolf Pit Road, Apartment 4K, where the landlord seeks to increase the rent from \$2,294 per month to \$2,480 per month. He described it as the Commission's oldest complaint and noted ongoing challenges, including progress setbacks due to illnesses that postponed scheduled hearings. After consulting with staff member Mr. Duque, Mr. Liskov recommended scheduling a hearing in December, as it would likely

encourage settlement, and anticipated a lengthy proceeding given the volume of evidence. He requested no action at this meeting to allow time for the hearing.

Mr. Church confirmed the case was already positioned for a hearing, with prior postponements due to illness.

****MR. HANSON GUEST MOVED TO TAKE NO ACTION ON CASE 1862-25 AT THIS TIME.**

****MS. PENN-WILLIAMS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

B. 1869-25

Attorney Liskov updated on case 1869-25 at 2512 Live Oak Grove, where the landlord proposes increasing the rent from \$3,500 per month to \$3,950 per month for a three-bedroom apartment. He reported productive negotiations with both parties, including document exchanges, though the tenant initially lacked a lease copy, which the landlord provided that day after a hospital stay. Attorney Liskov expressed confidence in resolving the case next month and requested no action this month.

Mr. Church commented on the significant \$450 monthly increase.

****MR. HANSON GUEST MOVED TO TAKE NO ACTION ON CASE 1869-25 AT THIS TIME.**

****MR. HOLLIDAY SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

C. 1871-25

Attorney Liskov provided an update on case 1871-25 at 2512 Willard Road, where the landlord seeks to raise the rent from \$2,318 per month to \$2,434 per month. He noted ongoing negotiations with the landlord, property manager, and tenant, including a missed call with the tenant. Attorney Liskov anticipated resolution next month and requested no action this month.

****MR. HANSON GUEST MOVED TO TAKE NO ACTION ON CASE 1871-25 AT THIS TIME.**

****MS. PENN-WILLIAMS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

D. 1872-25

Attorney Liskov reported on case 1872-25 at 46 Prospect Avenue, Apartment 4C, where the landlord proposed increasing the rent from \$2,000 per month to \$2,400 per month for a two-bedroom apartment. He stated that negotiations resulted in an agreement, and the tenant withdrew the complaint, with the withdrawal document included in the meeting packets. Attorney Liskov requested a vote to close the case.

****MR. HANSON GUEST MOVED TO CLOSE CASE 1872-25.**

****MS. PENN-WILLIAMS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. CASE 1872-25 WAS CLOSED.**

VII. PRESENTATION OF NEW CASES

Attorney Liskov reported that there were no new cases for presentation this month, noting that all parties were cooperating.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Nominating Committee Update

Mr. Duque and Attorney Liskov provided an update on the nominating committee. Mr. Duque referenced the attached correspondence from Corporation Counsel, which clarified that alternates cannot serve or be elected as chair or vice chair; only regular members are eligible. If a regular member resigns to become an alternate, an alternate could be appointed as a regular solely to fill an officer position for one meeting as needed, but not to hold the title permanently.

Mr. Duque noted the absence of nominating committee members Ms. Fran and Commissioner Ms. Johnny Mae Weldon. Mr. Church inquired if anyone had questions and then outlined options: the nominating committee could reconvene to propose a new slate; discussions could occur to request appointments of certain individuals as regular members from the new mayoral administration, potentially shifting current regulars to alternates; or nominations could be taken from the floor for an immediate vote.

Mr. Church invited Mr. Hanson guest, chair of the nominating committee, to share his views. Ms. Penn-Williams suggested waiting for Ms. Fran and Ms. Sissy before deciding. Mr. Hanson Guest agreed and proposed another nominating committee meeting. Mr. Church concurred that voting would be inappropriate without the full committee and without prior knowledge of Corporation Counsel's opinion, recommending the committee reconvene to reconsider options and present a slate, potentially for the December or January meeting. He offered to continue serving as chair in the interim, with no objections from those present.

Mr. Duque confirmed he would schedule another nominating committee meeting.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Duque raised the scheduling of the December meeting and hearing for the open case. He reported consulting with residents involved in the hearing, who requested moving the meeting from December 3 to December 10 to accommodate availability. Attorney Liskov noted the hearing would be lengthy and in person.

Mr. Church confirmed his availability on December 10 and suggested combining the regular meeting and hearing, potentially tabling other agenda items to January if the hearing overruns. The Commission discussed starting at 6:00 p.m. or 6:30 p.m., with Ms. Penn-Williams favoring 6:00 p.m. and others noting travel considerations. Mr. Church agreed to poll members and aim for 6:00 p.m. if quorum allows, teasing Ms. Penn-Williams about punctuality. Ms. Penn-Williams objected to two separate meetings on the 3rd and 10th, and the Commission agreed to

hold a single meeting on December 10 at the earlier time if feasible. Staff member Mr. Duque offered to send an email poll.

X. ADJOURNMENT

****MS. PENN-WILLIAMS MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.**

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

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 P.M.

**Respectfully Submitted,
Courtney Baldwin,
Recording Secretary**