

**CITY OF NORWALK
FAIR HOUSING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 21, 2023**

ATTENDANCE: Jalin Sead, Chair; Rev. Richard Clarke, Carol Frank, Joseph Mann, Alexandra Sollazzo

STAFF : Atty. Margaret Suib, Fair Housing Officer

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Sead called the meeting to order 3:00 p.m. A quorum was present

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no one present from the public.

MINUTES

• January 17, 2023

**** MS. FRANK MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 17, 2023**

**** MR. MANN SECONDED.**

The following correction was noted:

Page 1, under **OLD BUSINESS**, Please change “Rev. Yule” to “Rev. Ewell”

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

NEW BUSINESS

• Introductions --

Mr. Sead introduced himself and gave a brief overview of his experience. Mr. Mann, Rev. Clarke, Ms. Sollazzo, and Ms. Frank each introduced themselves and gave a brief summary of their backgrounds and experiences.

**REVIEW OF FHAC AND FHO MISSION UNDER SECOND AMENDED
CONSENT DECREE**

Atty. Suib then gave a brief overview of the Second Amended Consent Decree. She explained that the consent decree was the result of a court case. the City and the Norwalk NAACP came to an agreement, which is encapsulated in the Consent Decree. Failure to come to this agreement could have resulted in the loss of HUD funding for the City.

The position of the Fair Housing Officer was created through the Consent Decree. The position is located under the Redevelopment Agency and the position is supervised by the Redevelopment Agency Director. The Agency acts in an administrative role.

Atty. Suib then spoke about her annual end of the year report. She explained that the report does not necessarily reflect the views of the Commissioners, but are her findings. The Commission then receives her report and it is then filed with the Redevelopment Agency for submission to HUD.

Mr. Mann requested a copy of the most recent report.

Atty. Suib said that usually, Commissioners do not represent any given agency, but this Commission does have individuals representing agencies named in the Consent Decree. One of the two Mayoral appointees is selected as chairman.

Atty. Suib said that the last two housing tests were conducted in 2017 and 2019. She gave a brief overview of how these tests were conducted. She also explained how discrimination cases are bundled together for the Housing attorneys. During the last round of testing in 2019, there were major disparities identified due to unconscious bias. Discussion followed.

Atty. Suib also gave a brief overview of the various Fair Housing events that have been held in the past.

The Consent Decree also includes an optional yearly review of Fair Housing Officer. She also noted that when she leaves the position, the Commission has the right to recommend the next Fair Housing Officer. Atty. Suib said that while the job description does not require a law degree, she would strongly recommend that the Fair Housing Officer be an attorney.

She continued to review the remaining terms of the decree with the Commissioners.

Atty. Suib explained that the Fair Housing Officer's job description was attached to Consent Decree. She said that the City had declined to implement the job description. She said that she would provide the Commissioners with the job description that she was hired under.

Ms. Frank asked for an updated listing of Commissioners.

REPORT ON BUDGET PROCESS TO DATE FOR FY 2023-24

Atty. Suib said that she had prepared the 2023-2024 budget and had the first meeting via Zoom. The BET meeting will be scheduled in the coming weeks.

Atty. Suib said that she thought it would be good to hold an event in April, which is National Fair Housing Month. She said that the City will hang a banner in City Hall. Mr. Mann said that he was the Chair of the Community Health Center and they would help with advertising. Atty. Suib said that she would check with the Mayor about an official proclamation. Discussion followed.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. MANN MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** REV. CLARKE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 4:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes

Telesco Secretarial Services