

**CITY OF NORWALK
FAIR HOUSING ADVISORY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JULY 15, 2024**

ATTENDANCE: Jaylin Sead, Chairman; Rev. Richard Clarke;
Joe Mann; Daisy Franklin; Sheri McCready- Pritchett; Carol
Frank (via phone conference).

STAFF: Attorney Margaret Suib, Fair Housing Officer

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman, Sead called the meeting to order at 3:17pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There was no one present from the public to comment at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- **MARCH 18, 2024 (REGULAR MEETING)**
- **MR. MANN MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR MARCH 18, 2024 (REGULAR MEETING).**
- **REV. CLARKE SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- **THE MOTION PASSED WITH FIVE (5) IN FAVOR (SEAD, CLARKE, MANN, FRANKLIN, AND FRANK) AND TWO (2) ABSTENTIONS (MCCREADY-PRITCHETT AND FRANK).**

OLD BUSINESS

- **RECAP OF FAIR HOUSING MONTH LUNCHEON**

Atty Suib shared that not many people attended the event but considering it being the first event post covid, it went well. She mentioned that the Speaker, Michael Sanatora had engaged in emails sharing his opinions of the fair-share plan that didn't align with the governor's plan which caused the event to be in the headlines.

Mr. Mann added the event went well and planning for the event was great.

Ms. Frank agreed with Mr. Mann. She added she appreciated all the information shared.

NEW BUSINESS

- **UPDATE ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING STUDY**

Chairman, Jaylin Sead said there was a joint meeting with affordable housing and the city council. He believes the council is afraid of targeting the issue of fair housing.

Mr. Mann added they are never one hundred percent on board.

Atty. Suib said affordable housing is one of the greatest needs and no one wants to deal with it.

Mr. Mann added there is a big confusion with workforce and affordable housing.

Atty. Suib replied the term workforce is discriminatory because it leaves the wrong impression, it is not just for teachers and police. The program is for everyone that is unemployed, retired, disabled, and everyone on a low income. She added they started using the 35/65 approach to get away from the prejudice of fair housing. She believes the politicians should use this approach when talking about affordable housing and not the workforce approach.

Chairman, Mr. Sead added when he was door knocking around the areas of district 8, they were anti-apartments but when they changed the conversation to make it relatable they agreed to multi families in the area. He went on to discuss that the affordability is not there for renters or homeowners, which makes people move north, adding more time to commute for work which is not sustainable.

Atty. Suib added there is just not one approach to affordable housing, it cannot just be big apartment buildings. There should be more than one way to solve every part of the problem. They can up zone areas to include houses with two or three units.

Mr. Mann said a lot of constituents are against the rezoning and are loud about it while those who need it are usually quiet.

Atty. Suib believed when they came out with the upzoning idea that they didn't correctly describe it. She added they can take the approach developers use, spot zoning and add a few multi family properties.

Rev. Clarke added he thinks another contribution to the problem are the high real estate taxes, even for non profit organizations can keep their properties.

Atty. Suib replied another reason would be the commercial market decreasing so homeowners are paying higher taxes.

Chairman, Mr. Sead replied the mill rate is low so the state won't give the city more money as they would just ask the city to raise their rate.

Ms. McCready-Pritchett added there are units available on a sliding scale at Union Court but there is a waiting list which is available under section 8, public housing, and market rate.

Atty. Suib added the apartments at Washington are mixed with section 8 and market price.

Chairman, Mr. Sead said there are many outside factors as the dollar value goes down, everything keeps getting expensive and everyone keeps moving north. You would have to pinch pennies to move up on the ladder.

Atty. Suib added since New Yorkers and people keep moving north, the moving up theory is not possible so people stay in their circumstances due to the increasing population.

Chairman, Mr. Sead added it is happening in Bridgeport as well. With many businesses opening, there isn't enough housing for the population so people keep moving north.

Atty. Suib said businesses go where the workforce is. There are businesses that were started in Norwalk and Stamford and currently operate in Shelton and Orange.

Mr. Mann added they need to figure out what to do and do it.

Chairman, Mr. Sead said he manages an emergency service company and only two out of the nine employees live in Norwalk with their parents and everyone else is in Ansonia, Danbury, and Greenwich. He added the city police officers don't even live in Norwalk.

Atty. Suib added there were many programs for homeowners to apply for back in the day.

Chairman, Mr. Sead mentioned Stamford gives you funds to live in the same city as you work, there are programs that give you money based on where you live. He added Bridgeport also has incentives for residents to become homeowners.

Atty Suib shared when you group those funds together it helps a lot.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. MANN MOTIONED TO ADJOURN AT 3:55 PM**

**** MS. FRANKLIN SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Vianca Rivera,
Telesco Secretarial Services.