



Social Services Commission
Sandra Peterkin, Chair
Maira Colangelo
Kathleen Lombardo
Daniel McCabe
Caroline Temlock Teichman

SOCIAL SERVICES COMMISSION

888 Washington Blvd.
Stamford, CT 06901

Minutes for April 15, 2014 Meeting

ATTENDEES:

Commission Members

Sandra Peterkin, Chair
Kate Lombardo
Daniel McCabe

Public Safety Staff

Ted Jankowski, Director
Kathy Ruther, Secretary

Public

Frank Vartuli

Health Department Staff

Sharona Cowan, Director, Mandated Services

Law Department Staff

Vikki Cooper, Deputy Corporation Counsel

Meeting came to order at 4:20pm and was presided over by Chairman Sandra Peterkin.

Acceptance of Minutes

Minutes from April 15, 2014 meeting were approved with corrections.

Motion - Commissioner Lombardo made motion to accept minutes with typo and misspellings corrected, seconded by Commissioner McCabe, and motion carried (3:00).

Old Business

Sharona Cowan, Director of Mandated Services, Health Department (3:00)

Sharona reports no new Fair Rent complaints since last meeting, and presented the Interim Investigators Report (Attachment A). The Chair notes that no hearings will be scheduled for next meeting.

Ted Jankowski, Director, Public Safety, Health & Welfare (13:01)

Ted reviewed new Social Services Coordinator position status. Copy of letter is now on web site packet (Attachment B). The position was approved by the Board of Finance; had yet to be reviewed by the Fiscal Committee of the Board of Representatives.

New Business:

Status of Commissioners (14:05)

Commissioner Colangelo has been named to a new Board; she remains active on this Board until June 30, 2014 or until she is replaced, whichever occurs first. Martin Levine oversees the replacement process.

Commissioner Temlock Teichman is new, replacing Steven Kolenberg, and will be attending next meeting.

Hearings (17:45)

Commission discussed concerns over parties not being represented during hearings. Topics included joining by conference call, sending an agent/representative, or submitted written testimony. Commission is concerned with receiving all information, and opportunity to ask questions, because their decision is legally binding.

Commission Activities (30:50)

Chair Peterkin discussed opportunities for Commission to be involved in other Social Services activities in addition to conducting hearings.

- Possible public Awareness Campaigns can be discussed next meeting.
- Committees should be formed to accomplish work and make recommendations outside of monthly meeting; committees should only be 2 members.

Vikki Cooper, Deputy Corporation Counsel (44:40)

Vikki joins the meeting briefly to share her opinion on their questions regarding Fair Rent Hearings and appearing in person.

- If a hardship to travel exists, telephone conference call would be acceptable.
- The Commission should decide on a case-by-case basis as to whether or not to extend the courtesy of a conference call to Respondents.
- Cases can be dismissed if an Applicant/Complainant doesn't show, repeatedly, at the Commission's discretion, provided the Commission make it part of the record.
- If Landlord sends an Agent to represent them, they should provide authorization in advance that that person is empowered to speak on their behalf.
- If Landlord does not appear or send Agent, Commission should still deliberate and analyze merits of case – Tenant does not automatically win case if Landlord is not represented.
- Commission does not have to provide an immediate decision if they feel they do not have all the information pertaining to the case.
- Members of the public, or participants in the hearings, may record if they would like. All meetings are recorded and posted on City web site.
- Unresponsive Landlords – process should move forward despite their lack of response. Certified mail records should be retained.
- Vikki will follow up on subpoena power – does power of Commission span just City of Stamford or throughout the State of CT.

Vikki departs (1:09:15).

Commission Sub-Committees (1:07:50)

Subcommittees will look into how to assist Stamford non-profits groups.

- Ted recommends the Commissioners attend the Health Commission meeting to see if Social Services Commission can assist them with their tasks, or if they can recommend a need where the Social Services Commission can direct their energies. Commissioner Lombardo agrees to attend.
- Sharona recommends canvassing the Social Services agencies to see where the greatest need is, and mentions Survey Monkey as a tool that can be used to do that. In her department, Sharona sees the greatest need is housing.
- Ted also reminds the Commission that their primary responsibility lies with Fair Rent, which is going well.
- Next meeting will address survey, subcommittee should develop draft in advance. Survey to agencies first, then survey to public.
 - ~ Commissioner McCabe will draft survey
 - ~ Commissioner Lombardo will provide contacts and emails
 - ~ Commissioner Peterkin will check agencies in other cities.

Next meeting is scheduled for May 20th.

Motion - Commissioner Lombardo made motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner McCabe (1:34:35).

Meeting adjourned at 5:54pm.

Respectfully submitted:
Kathy Ruther