

APPROVED

**STAMFORD SOCIAL SERVICES COMMISSION MINUTES
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2013
MAYOR'S CONFERENCE ROOM – 10TH FLOOR
STAMFORD GOVERNMENT CENTER
888 WASHINGTON BOULEVARD
STAMFORD, CT 06901**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Kate Lombardo, Co-Chair of the Social Services Commission at 4:12 p.m.

II. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

The August minutes were approved unanimously.

III. SHARONA COWAN, DIRECTOR OF MANDATED SERVICES – TO PROVIDE UPDATE ON FAIR RENT CASES

Sharona updated the group on all open Fair Rent cases. She distributed a document that outlines each of the cases categorized by their assigned numbers. Sharona informed the members that there are four complaints in total. Presently, she is waiting for three responses from the owners as one was not considered a fair rent issue and another complaint has been withdrawn. The group took the opportunity to review each of cases summarized in the handout. Some of the commission members were curious as to the nature of the complaints to determine if there was a pattern. At the commission's request, Sharona will provide a brief description of each case using Norwalk as an example with the understanding that too much detail cannot be given to remain unbiased. Nonetheless, the group questioned whether it would be important to track landlords with ongoing abuse. Anne Fountain recommended that the question be presented to Vikki Cooper, Deputy Corporate Counsel so she can advise the commission from a legal stand point. Furthermore, to understand what the commission will do if they determine that there is a pattern from a landlord. Sharona adds that there are only two issues that arise from Fair Rent cases; unfair or excessive rent. She emphasized the importance to hear each case individually.

IV. PROGRESS OF FACT SHEET BROCHURES

Anne suggested proceeding with caution and ensuring that there is a procedure in place. Moira emphasizes the importance for the group to establish a deadline for the completion of the fact sheet brochure. It was determined that there is information on the internet that may be helpful as it shows what was done by the commission in past; since there is nothing in writing. Sandra suggests that the fact sheet match the internet and contain a message urging residents to visit the website. Kate suggests the deadline to be February 1, 2014; in order to give the new Mayor and his cabinet time to adjust and hear from the commission. Steve agrees with Kate to give the Mayor time. However, Moira suggests getting some deadlines before February to begin the process. To move forward with this

APPROVED

project, Sandra will print out the website information and bring it to next meeting. Moira will also bring the information distributed by Anna Keegan of the City of Norwalk at a previous commission meeting.

V. OLD BUSINESS

a. Kate Lombardo provides a Neighborhood Association list

Kate found Glenbrook, Springdale and Waterside Neighborhood Associations more pro-active involving tenants as well as being community oriented. Other associations made it more difficult to retrieve information by requesting a "log in" to their website. Still others, such as Hycliff near Stillmeadow focus on the beautification of their neighborhood. However, several of the neighborhood associations can be useful to get the word out once the fact sheet is ready with some being more receptive than others.

b. Steve Kolenberg informed the commission on the City of Norwalk's advertising initiatives

Steve visited the City of Norwalk and spoke with Anna Keegan on their advertising initiatives. He found that they reach out to pastors of different denominations and provide workshops for these organizations including their local soup kitchens. The City of Norwalk focuses on community outreach to spread the word. In addition, Norwalk talks to food banks and legislators. Kate emphasizes the importance of having Stamford's literature translated into different languages such as Creole. She tells the group that she knows translators who can provide this service. Kate has over 80 agencies that can be used to spread the word on the commission's initiatives. Anne added that the Health Department has many partnerships that can be instrumental. The Health Department's HIV program is very active within religious organizations. The group's target is to have a procedure in place by February in time for the new Mayor.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Sharona provided the group with incoming mail. This included a letter from Cacace, Tusch and Santagata announcing a new attorney who joined their firm and Intelligence Report magazine. Sandy will peruse and will report to the members if she finds anything relevant.

Kate reveals that the Wall Street Journal reports that employment prices rose ½ percent above the employment. It shows that the economy is growing and jobs are stagnant.

Moira suggests moving the Social Services Commission up a week in December; it is currently scheduled for December 17. The member's will make a decision at the October 15th meeting.

VII. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned by Kate Lombardo at 4:50 p.m.