



TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD FAIR RENT COMMISSION

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

West Hartford Police Department Training Room

103 Raymond Road West Hartford, CT

October 22, 2024 at 6:30 pm

I. Meeting Opening

- A. Call to Order: Vice-Chair Berklas calls the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.
- B. Roll Call: Vice-Chair Berklas conducts roll call.
Present: Commissioners Nichole Berklas, Venica Blythe, Ashley Rigby, and Bruce Wittchen. Absent: Commissioners Alexis Safo-Agyeman, Nastajha Ortiz and Kyle Zelazny.
A quorum of members present.
- C. Approval of Minutes from October 10, 2024 Meeting
Motion made to approve minutes by: Bruce Wittchen
Motion seconded by: Ashley Rigby
Vote: Motion passes unanimously

II. New Business

- A. Vice-Chair Berklas discusses the procedure for this evening's meeting and that this is a continuation of two matters from the Commission's October 10, 2024 meeting.
- B. At 6:32 pm, Vice-Chair Berklas calls for the parties in the matter of *Raut v. Westwood Apartments Owner, LLC*. Both parties are present. Vice-Chair Berklas summarizes the proceedings held on October 10, 2024, and notifies the parties that the purpose of this continuation is to go over the additional exhibits requested by the Commission. Parties are sworn in. Vice-Chair Berklas goes over the exhibits submitted by the Parties. Commissioners ask questions. Commissioner Rigby makes a motion that the rental charge is so excessive as to be harsh and unconscionable. Commissioner Wittchen seconds. Unanimous. Further discussion by Commission as to what is the appropriate order. Vice-Chair makes a motion that the proposed rent be \$1,295 inclusive of the \$20 trash fair. Commissioner Rigby seconds. Unanimous.

- D. At 7:05 pm, Vice-Chair Berklas calls for the parties in *Olesnevich v. Property Privacy Services, et al.* Both parties are present. Vice-Chair Berklas goes over procedural guidelines. Parties are sworn in. Vice-Chair Berklas calls the representative of West Hartford-Bloomfield Health District (WHBHD) to testify. Vice-Chair Berklas goes over the evidence of the WHBHD and asks questions of the WHBHD representative. Parties have no question for the WHBHD representative. Commissioners ask questions of the WHBHD representative. Vice-Chair Berklas goes through the exhibits of the Complainant. Complainant counsel puts on its case and submits exhibits D7, D8 and D9. Recess 7:38 pm to allow Respondent to review Complainant's newly introduced exhibits. Reconvene at 7:40 pm. Complainant puts on his case. Commissioners ask questions of the Complainant. 8:15 pm- Vice-Chair Berklas goes over Respondent's exhibits. Respondent puts on his case. Complainant's counsel asks questions of the Respondent through the Vice-Chair. 8:45 pm - Commissioners ask questions of Respondent. Vice-Chair Berklas offers the parties the opportunity to make closing statements. Closing statements. Commissioners discuss deliberations. Vice-Chair Berklas makes a motion that the rental increase is so excessive as to be harsh and unconscionable in light of the ongoing health and safety issues at the property and in light of the Complainant's limited income. Seconded by Commissioner Wittchen. Unanimous. Vice-Chair makes a motion that the ongoing rental income be set at \$1,600 monthly. Seconded by Commissioner Rigby. Unanimous.
- E. Discussion of next hearing date. The Commission does not have any pending complaints, discussion of next hearing dates is stayed.
- F. Action items - *Pagan v. Westwood Condominiums, LLC*. At the October 10, 2024 status update on this matter, Complainant testified that the additional fee had not been removed from her rental portal. Commission ruled to issue the Respondent a fine for noncompliance with the cease and desist order. The Chair signed and dated the order. However, Respondent removed the additional fee prior to the order being issued. Commissioner Rigby makes a motion to vacate the Commission's October 10, 2024 decision and to vacate the Chair's order as a result of the decision. Seconded by Commissioner Blythe. Unanimous.

III. Adjournment

- A. Meeting adjourned at 9:14 pm.