

APPROVED

STAMFORD SOCIAL SERVICES COMMISSION MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 21, 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 Anne Fountain, Director of Health and Social Services at 4:10 p.m.

II. VOTE TO ELECT NEW CHAIR

Anne Fountain asked the members to decide on to whether to vote for the new chair(s) today with three members or postpone the voting until Steven Kolenberg is sworn in by the Mayor. Anne explained that the role of the chair of this commission would be to oversee, lead and facilitate the meetings. Furthermore, to make sure the duties of the committee are being followed; particularly, Fair Rent issues. Kate Lombardo added that the chair should also interact and ensure the commission runs legally and are not challenged on their decisions. Sandra Peterkin asked Nancy Munoz what her role is on the board. Nancy explained that she works for Ted Jankowski, Director of Public Safety, Health and Welfare and that she would be helping to post agendas, action reports and adding items to the agenda as needed. However, does not have a say in any commission business. Anne Fountain touched on the overall duties of the Social Services commission reading directly from the ordinance. Anne points out that Fair Rent has been a big issue in the past. Sharona receives most Fair Rent concerns and complaints from residents as does the health inspectors. The process begins with the Health Department receiving the complaint and then being turned over to the Social Services Commission. Anne adds that Ted wants to make certain that the commission has the training needed and information to operate. She suggests inviting someone from the State to the next meeting to explain exactly what the commission is expected to do.

The members expressed their interest in understanding more about their role on the Social Services commission. They feel that many functions of Social Services are not readily available or publicized mainly information about affordable housing and food banks. Anne suggests adding any items that need further discussion to next months' agenda. Further, she encourages the group to read Stamford Hospital's "Needs Assessment" that contains resourceful information.

Once Steven Kolenberg joined the group, he was updated on their discussion and the decision to wait until he was present to vote on the new chairs. Consequently, Moira Colangelo made a motion for Kate Lombardo and Sandra Peterkin to co-chair the Social Services commission and the group approved unanimously.

III. REVIEW FAIR RENT ISSUES

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Anne informs the group that the Health Department has Fair Rent issues that need to be addressed. She plans to forward those complaints to the commission for their handling. At this time, they have some names but are not familiar with what their issues entail. Anne explained the Fair Rent complaint process. First Social Services takes down the complaint and forwards it to the commission who then sets a hearing date. At the hearing, a decision should be determined. Kate adds that the commission does not represent the client. The commission members should not go to court with the client. This could lead to the City being sued. Further, the commission should not stick inspectors on the landlords.

Anne tells the group that the Mayor is anxious to get Fair Rent issues resolved. She is aware that Fair Rent hearings are required by the State. Sharona is eager to work with the Social Services Commission on determining the process and handling of Fair Rent complaints. She is not certain if there is a timeline to resolve these complaints since she is not part of the commission. Sharona asks the group what type of information they would require to accompany the complaints and whether they prefer the information submitted weekly or monthly. Anne states she is not part of the Social Services commission but suggests having the Law department join them to explain the voting process as she has done on her other committees. She does not know if Ted has handled the complaints forwarded to him. All the Social Services commission members agree that they do not want to have ownership of any complaints until they fully understand the process and how they should handle them. Anne explains that her department will handle other issues and will forward Fair Rent complaints to the commission. She asks the members if they prefer to have a list of complaints at each monthly meeting. Kate Lombardo informs the commission that the hearings are open to the public except for those issues that go into executive sessions. Steve asks the group whether the commission should make Fair Rent decisions during or after the hearings. Anne responded that she is not clear on the answer. This is the reason why the group should invite the State to explain the process as well as other responsibilities of the committee such as ethic concerns.

IV. ESTABLISH NEXT COMMISSION MEETINGS DATES

Anne asked whether this time works for everyone. Motion made to have the Social Services Commission meetings every third Tuesday of the month.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Anne and Sharona will attempt to invite the State and Mike Toma of the Law Department to the next meeting on Tuesday, June 18.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

No old business to discuss by the members as this is the first meeting in a few years.

VII. ADJOURN

Ann adjourned the meeting at 5:06 p.m.