

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
ORDINANCE COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 27, 2022**

ATTENDANCE: Marcus Brown, Co-chair; Rosalina Roman-Christy, Co-chair;
Aikeem Boyd, Jorge Cruz, Michelle Lyons, Ernest Newton, Maria Valle

OTHERS: Council President A. Nieves, Council Member(s): S. Burns, J. Herron, M. Pereira & T. Mack; Ebony Jackson-Shaheed, Health Department Director; Amy Lehaney, Health & Social Services Deputy Director; Associate City Attorney James Maye; Barbara, Andy Toledo, Elsie Mercado, Gemeem Davis, Call-in User 1; 203-414-0712; 203-880-5666

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Brown called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- **May 24, 2022 (Regular Meeting)**
- **June 6, 2022 (Public Hearing)**
- **June 28, 2022 (Special Meeting)**
- **July 5, 2022 (Public Hearing)**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ MOVED TO CONSOLIDATE AND APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS:**

MAY 24, 2022 (REGULAR MEETING)

JUNE 6, 2022 (PUBLIC HEARING)

JUNE 28, 2022 (SPECIAL MEETING)

JULY 5, 2022 (PUBLIC HEARING)

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

82-21 Proposed Resolution concerning the Budget and Appropriations Amended 2022-2023 Municipal Budget.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VALLE MOVED TO TABLE AGENDA ITEM 82-21 PROPOSED RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS AMENDED 2022-2023 MUNICIPAL BUDGET.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BOYD SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

126-21 Proposed Amendments to the Municipal Code of Ordinances, amend Chapter 2.92 – Fair Housing Commission.

Council Member Newton said that there were many new property owners who have increased rents all over the State. He said that the State had mandated Fair Rent Commission. He said that this had to be completed by October 1st or the City would be in violation of the State.

Council Member Burns agreed. There previously was a Fair Housing Commission that has been inactive and needs to be revitalized.

Council Member Mack joined the meeting at 6:11 p.m.

Council Member Valle asked what the Fair Rent Commission would be attempting to do and what the Commission would do if there was a major increase in a rent. Council Member Mack said that in New Haven, when this happened, the Commission would take the case and look into it. He said that the Fair Housing Commission helps the City with making sure there was equity in the housing. Discussion followed.

Council Member Herron said that Fair Housing had been in New York forever. She wished to know if the Section 8 residents would be treated the same as other renters. She said that landlords don't repair the units and tell the tenants to move out. The tenants go to New Haven where the City moves them into a livable unit. Discussion followed.

Council Member Newton agreed and asked if there could be some type of penalties for delinquent landlords.

Council Member Lyons said her district has student housing and deal with a number of blight issues. She asked how Fair Housing would address something like this. Council Member Newton said that he believed that Fair Housing would most likely be the group that would address that. Council Member Mack said that once the Commissions are formed and operational, they will be addressing blight. Discussion followed.

Council Member Cruz said that he would support these Commissions. He said that this would help the residents rather than having to rely on the Courts.

Council Member Roman-Christy said that when she was working for the City, there was a Fair Housing Officer with staff that was able to deal with the landlords on these issues and take them to court if necessary. She said that during her 26 years in working for the City, it worked well.

Discussion followed about having the Health Department involved and how the ordinances would need to be reviewed in order to update them.

Council President Nieves explained that the prior office had been unfunded and the services were outsourced to non for profit agencies. She indicated where the changes had been made.

Council Member Brown asked Ms. Jackson-Shaheed if she had any comments or questions. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed asked why the Fair Housing was placed under Community Development rather than the Health Department.

Council Member Roman-Christy said that as long as she could remember, it was always under the Housing and Community Development rather than Health Department.

Ms. Jackson-Shaheed asked about where the Fair Housing Commission would be placed in her department for oversight. Council Member Brown reviewed the details with her.

Atty. Maye pointed out that the Fair Housing Commission was focused on discriminatory practices. He said that the Blight issues would not come under Fair Housing since it was not discriminatory issues. With the Fair Rent Commission, the current residents who receive large increase would be the ones who would be work on getting an adjustment in the rent. Repairs would be handled by another department.

Ms. Lehaney asked for some clarification regarding the issues around housing enforcement and how it would fit into the Health Department. Council Member Mack said that they would be setting policy. Discussion followed.

Council Member Pereira asked if Atty. Maye was a City Attorney. Council Member Brown confirmed that Atty. Maye was a City Attorney.

Council Member Pereira said that many landlords were asking for excessive application fees and subsequently not renting the apartment. She said that many landlords were requiring the tenant to cover a portion of the repairs like repairing refrigerator or a light switch in their lease. Atty. Maye said that the Commission would not have any authority over the application fee or the repair requirements. Council Member Pereira said that New Haven was now looking into these issues.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 126-21 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, AMEND CHAPTER 2.92 – FAIR HOUSING COMMISSION.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VALLE MOVED TO SCHEDULE A PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING AGENDA ITEM 126-21 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, AMEND CHAPTER 2.92 – FAIR HOUSING COMMISSION.ON OCTOBER 3RD AT 6 P.M.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

127-21 Proposed Amendments to the Municipal Code of Ordinances, amend Chapter 2.94 – Fair Rent Commission.

Council Member Brown said that he had read the item carefully and he thanked the authors of the resolution for including the tenants on the Commissions.

Council Member Lyons asked for her name to be included on the two resolutions.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED AGENDA ITEM 127-21 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, AMEND CHAPTER 2.94 – FAIR RENT COMMISSION.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAN-CHRISTY MOVED TO SCHEDULE A PUBLIC HEARING ON ITEM AT 6:15 P.M. ON OCTOBER 3 ON AGENDA ITEM 127-21 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, AMEND CHAPTER 2.94 – FAIR RENT COMMISSION.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAN-CHRISTY MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services