

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT  
ORDINANCE COMMITTEE  
PUBLIC HEARING  
JUNE 5, 2023**

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

**OTHERS:** Council Member(s): S. Burns, J. Herron, M. Pereira & A. Vizzo-Paniccia; T. Gaudett, Deputy Chief of Staff; James Maye, Associate City Attorney; Sumit Sharma, Acting Health Director

**CALL TO ORDER**

Co-chair Mack called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. A quorum was present.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Co-chair Mack called the public hearing to order at 6:04 p.m. A quorum was present.

**Proposed Amendment to the Municipal Code of Ordinances, amend Chapter 8.81 – Sexually Oriented Business Ordinance. [65-22]**

Council Member Mack asked if there was anyone present who wished to address the Committee on the item. There was no response.

Council Member Mack repeated his question two more times. Hearing no response, he closed the public hearing on Agenda Item 65-22 at 6:05 p.m.

**Proposed Amendments to the Municipal Code of Ordinances, Chapter 10.16 – Parking, amend Section(s): 10.16.010 – Definitions; 10.16.020 – Designation of Traffic Authority and 10.16.040 – Designation of Parking Division. [66-22]**

Council Member Mack asked if there was anyone present who wished to address the Committee on the item. There was no response.

Council Member Mack repeated his question two more times. Hearing no response, he closed the public hearing on Agenda Item 66-22 at 6:06 p.m.

**Proposed Amendments to the Municipal Code of Ordinances, Chapter 2.94 – Fair Rent Commission, amend various sections. [67-22]**

Council Member Mack said that Mr. Lee had signed up to speak.

Mr. John Marshall Lee came forward and said that he was pleased that the City was working on this issue. He then made the following statement:

I seriously question the document you have put in front of the public and the Council tonight. You know that I am a serious critic of the failure by recent mayors, who ignored their duty and responsibility to appoint citizen members to such a group. Th they have failed renters. The former Fair Rental Commission (FRC) died in full public view years ago. Thank you to the Council Members for responding and attempting a resurrection. Did you review the stated purpose for which this new ordinance is crafted and directed compared to what disturbs renters and is shared with you?

In Bridgeport is “rent stabilization“ because of a “severe housing shortage“ in the City as your purpose states? Has the current mayor mentioned this issue for the past seven years? Have any of the current mayoral candidates mentioned such an issue in the 2023 campaign competition struggle? Has the local media focused on such a specific issue? Or has the “affordable housing” broad subject, dealt with frequently by the Connecticut Post and State legislature debate, been ignored, as well as by a series of mayors and reporting from OPED? Was the first effort not specific enough to satisfy CC appetite for data, and still overdue to the State of Connecticut? Do you never hear about disagreement on utility payments, threats of eviction, responsibilities for maintenance that seem neglected, or unimportant to City workers?

At the end of one recent planning meeting, I asked the folks on the panel what seemed a simple question to me: how many renters currently reside in the city? How many units are available to potential renters currently? If the answers to those questions remains unanswered by any relevant City office, how did we arrive at such a “purpose” to deal with “compelling” and “severe housing shortage” alleged? When the City Council has not accepted a Bridgeport report requested by the State last year on “affordable housing“, where is this purpose supported? To whom do you owe primary respect: citizen, tenants as neighbors, property owners, who pay taxes, or the buildings that house your neighbors. This is not about money.

Some rental housing is provided by owner–occupied two or three family homes. These are not subject to review in the offered document, nor are they likely to be the focus of the housing issues. But there are property owners, not necessarily even residence a Bridgeport itself, who accept rental payments as their due for offering residences for a term of months or years. Some such owners have been exempted from the FRC including residence of units offered by the Housing Authority of Bridgeport more recently known as Park City Communities.

But what about the extensive use of Section 8 vouchers in the City as individually awarded, and maintained, or to buildings occupied solely by infirm, elderly, and poor residence with HUD subsidizing the balance of the personal funds for rent? Exemption language is not clear in my reading. Who is responsible to be present to the wants and needs that may not be focused on exorbitant rents, but about more fundamental issues, like intimidation, harassment, and fear of eviction for speaking about safety, equality, and justice matters? What happens to the tenants where tenant organizations are not present currently nor are encouraged by the management to speak up?

How many units are contemplated to be served by the FRC? Where are the properties located? Is the FRC able to listen to folks record their complaints? What redress can they otherwise seek in the City? Are they valuable to the City leadership only at election time? Who enunciates their rights and can indicate where redress can be sought? Time will tell.

Council Member Mack said that Council Member Pereira had signed up to speak.

Council Member Pereira came forward and said that there were still some items on page 2, there were still terms used, such as "Chairman" rather than "Chairperson".

She also expressed concerns about the fact that the Mayor and the Council President can nominate someone to the Board. She asked what would happen if there was one vacancy and the Mayor and the Council President wanted different candidates.

Council Member Pereira then pointed out several spelling errors and a formatting error. Another section appears to indicate that the individual did not have the option of taking their case to Superior Court.

Council Member Mack asked if there was anyone else present who wished to address the Committee on the item. There was no response.

Council Member Mack repeated his question two more times. Hearing no response, he closed the public hearing on Agenda Item 66-22 at 6:14 p.m.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Telesco Secretarial Services

City of Bridgeport  
Ordinance Committee  
Public Hearing  
June 4, 2023