

Administration & Finance Sub-Committee
May 19, 2014
Meeting Minutes
6:00 PM
Town Hall Meeting Room

I. Call to Order

Chairman DeVivo called the Town Council Administration & Finance Sub-Committee meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

Members Present: Tom DeVivo, Joe Underwood, Tony Fantoli and Christel Donahue

Mark Doyle was excused

II. Citizens & Delegations

John Walker, landlord in Windham, would like to see meetings posted one week ahead of time with a clear agenda. He would also like agendas emailed to all interested parties.

Bob Maine, landlord in Windham, expressed his concerns on the housing code changes and the position it puts landlords in with having to increase rents.

Jeff Viens, landlord in Windham, spoke about the debate over inspection fees and the 20% rule for larger units.

Pam Viens, landlord in Windham, spoke about an October meeting were it was discussed that the Town would bring together small groups to talk about the proposed housing code changes and information would be put on the website regarding the changes. She noted she had contacted Mr. Vertefeuille a few times however there has been no follow through.

Neil Mesick, landlord in Windham, is aware the Town is working with ECSU regarding student issues and he hopes the Town will give WALA the same consideration regarding the proposed housing code changes.

Heather Meehan, owner of Meehan & Daughters Real Estate, noted she owns and manages approximately 100 units in Town. She read from minutes of an October meeting where Mr. Vertefeuille stated he would initiate small group meetings with

landlords and tenants, develop a questionnaire to be sent to area landlords and also provide a webpage for public comment and questioned why nobody from WALA was contacted and asked what progress had been made since that meeting,

Dr. John Lee, landlord in Windham, expressed his thoughts on the difficulty of being a landlord and the need to try to educate tenants.

Bonita Calkins, landlord in Windham, shared an incident regarding an inspection of one of her properties where the inspector required certain things to be fixed at the cost of approximately \$12,000 which she later found did not have to be done. She stated the Town should educate their employees and believes if the Town worked together with the landlords there would be a good and fair housing code.

William Lee, questioned the appeal process and believes the notification of meetings is unreasonable. He also spoke of a violation his father received because a mattress was left in front of one of his properties.

III. Discussion & Possible action with Director of Code Enforcement concerning housing code housing enforcement

Matt Vertefeulle gave a brief report regarding the status of the housing code ordinance. He stated he and the Town Attorney are currently working on the ordinance. He noted they had met with WALA's Attorney and were given a list of items that area landlords would like to address. He also stated the Town was unable to implement a survey through Survey Monkey due to the cost of the survey and current budget restrictions. Mr. Vertefeulle also asked that any questions or comments be made in writing to assure the process of the Public Hearing go smoothly. In addition he reviewed the Draft Ordinance page by page and answered questions from the Committee.

No Action was taken

IV. Citizens & Delegations

Dr. John Lee questioned why the Town was making it so complicated for landlords and stated tenant rents would have to be raised. He also does not believe landlords should be responsible for how tenants choose to live.

Elsa Del Rio, 97 Prospect Street, Willimantic, spoke about the need to work together and come to a resolution that will benefit everyone.

Jeff Viens, landlord in Windham, referred to certain sections of the housing code and believes there are some discrepancies and asked for them to be reviewed again. He also believes some of the changes will cause a burden on the tenants.

Heather Meehan, owner of Meehan & Daughters Real Estate, asked for a list of landlords that were contacted. She noted nobody from WALA was contacted regarding the ordinance although they have been asking to be involved in the process for more than

four years. She also questioned the landlord's rights, what the appeals process entails, how landlords can be part of the appeals board and the revoking of permits.

John Walker, landlord in Windham, commended the Committee for not taking action tonight. He also stated no building inspector or housing code inspector can enter any property without authorization from the owner. He also spoke of a violation he received by certified mail regarding a mattress that had been left adjacent to his property and noted the money spent for the certified mail to be sent to him could have been used in part to implement the Survey Monkey.

William Lee, son of Dr. Lee, thanked the Committee for an informative meeting. He also questioned what type of recourse a landlord has over their tenants.

Bonita Calkins, landlord in Windham, thanked Mr. Vertefeuille for his hard work on the ordinance. She asked that landlords be told what the inspectors look for in an inspection and that landlord's are given proper notice for an inspection.

Peter Fish, landlord in Windham, strives to provide safe and clean properties. He asked that the ordinance address the control a landlord has over the way a tenant chooses to live. He would also like landlords to be notified of all important meetings such as this.

Rosita Vining, landlord in Windham, questioned if a housing code inspector can enter her property without permission. She also gave an example of that happening and had been told the property was uninhabitable.

V. Upcoming Agenda Items

Tour of the Jonathan Trumbull property on Saturday, June 7th at 10:00 AM

VI. Adjournment

Fantoli MOVED, Donahue seconded, to adjourn the Town Council Administration & Finance Sub-Committee meeting at 7:23 P.M. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Submitted by

**Barbara J. McKinney
Clerk of the Council**