

## TOWN OF BLOOMFIELD

### FAIR RENT COMMISSION

There was a special meeting for the above referenced commission held on Thursday, January 4, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. in a hybrid meeting style. The in-person meeting location was Bloomfield Town Hall – Conference Room 5, 800 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield, CT, and the virtual location was via Zoom.

Commissioners present were: *In-Person:* Joy Chance, Chair, and *via Zoom:* Alan Budkofsky; Robert Ike; and Mark Saunders

Commissioners absent were: Barbara Thornton

Also present were:

*In-Person:*

- **Tenants:** J. Alleyne; and P. Crosdale
- **Town Staff/Contractors:** Lynn Weisel, Recording Secretary

*via Zoom:*

- **Town Staff/Contractors:** Assistant Director of West Hartford-Bloomfield Health District Christopher Hansen
- **Legal Representation:** Attorney Ian Gottlieb, Manor House (joined at 6:22 p.m.); Attorney David Rosenberg

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

### Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Commissioner Ike, seconded by Commissioner Budkofsky, and approved unanimously to approve the meeting minutes from 12/7/23.

### Commission Training with Attorney Crumbie

Commissioner Chance noted that there will be a training for the Commission with Attorney Crumbie. It will probably happen in February, but the date is still to be determined.

### Hearings on Fair Rent Commission Complaints

Ms. Weisel swore-in all parties going to testify—Tenants: J. Alleyne; P. Crosdale; and Town Staff/Contractors: Christopher Hansen.

*Alleyne & Crosdale v. Manor House (Continuation)*

Commissioner Chance gave an update on the case. She confirmed that the items from the Health District had been fixed, and so the Commission was now looking only at the rental increase portion of the complaint. The current lease is \$1500, with a proposed \$150/month increase with the new lease. The rental increase from the previous year was \$200/month. The tenant requested no increase for the proposed lease, and cited the previous year's \$200/month increase.

It was clarified that the Commission continued the case from last month in order to get a report from the Health District and see if the unit concerns could be addressed. Commissioner Chance noted that they wanted this done first before discussing the rental increase amount.

Commissioner Budkofsky inquired if there were expenses that could justify the rental increase. Attorney Rosenberg noted that if the case was continued he could get someone from property management to testify, but that he could generally state that the cost of operating the building has increased. He cited cost of living increases, insurance costs, maintenance costs, and eviction costs. He stated that the rental increase was fair based on market conditions and market values in the area.

A \$50/month increase was suggested by Commissioner Saunders, and Commissioner Ike and Commissioner Budkofsky agreed with this amount. Ms. Crosdale asked why there would be an increase of \$50 when the rent had increased by \$200/month the previous year. She noted that they are good tenants and that they maintain the unit well. Mr. Alleyne stated he did not feel that there was a justification for the increase as there had been no updates to the unit to justify an increase, and that things are only depreciating.

There was a discussion about market rate for the area and the apartment's value. There was a suggestion to continue the case in order for both parties to bring data regarding market rate and value. It was noted that Manor House is advertising units for \$1500/month. Commissioner Chance clarified that Manor House units are not being compared to luxury units in town in regards to market rate comparables.

A \$50/month increase was suggested again. Mr. Alleyne & Ms. Crosdale agreed, and Attorney Gottlieb called his Manor House client, who also agreed to the \$50/increase.

Commissioner Saunders motioned that the rent be increased \$50/month for the lease period of 1/1/24 - 12/31/24 based on Connecticut General Statute § 7-148c, 12 (the amount and frequency of increases in rental charges) and 13 (whether, and the extent to which, the income from an increase in rental charges has been or will be re-invested in improvements to the accommodations). Commissioner Ike seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

### *Hall v. Landlord (New)*

Commissioner Chance gave a brief overview of the case. She highlighted that the tenant is working with the landlord to get the items (leaky roof and mold) in the Fair Rent Commission complaint resolved. The case will remain on the docket until the Commission receives confirmation that all items in the complaint have been fixed.

### **Commissioner Questions, Comments, & Feedback**

There were no additional comments.

### **Adjournment**

It was moved by Commissioner Saunders, seconded by Commissioner Budkofsky, and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:36 p.m.