



**MINUTES
FAIR RENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING**

JULY 24, 2024

5:30 PM-7:00 PM TOWN HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS

1. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – 5:30pm
2. FIRE EVACUATION ANNOUNCEMENT
3. ROLL CALL: L. Degray, M. Diana, I. Graves, K. Hemmeler, P. Januszewski, W. LeBeau – all members present
4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES –
 - A. 4.24.24 motion by K. Hemmeler, seconded by P. Januszewski – all approved, M. Diana & W. LeBeau abstained.
 - B. 6.26.24 motion by K. Hemmeler, seconded by I. Graves– all approved, M. Diana & W. LeBeau abstained.
5. NEW BUSINESS
 - A. Introduction of new members M. Diana and W. LeBeau

Motion to recess meeting at 5:45pm

Motion to continue meeting at 6:12pm
6. DISCUSSION:

Complainant Bouffard vs. Respondent Foss – 39 Asnuntuck Street

Bouffard: Ms. Buffard is disabled and on a limited income. Last year the increase was \$50, this year it is \$300. There are issues with the apartment: water damage in kitchen that was never re-painted, the floor was replaced, mouse hole in door not addressed, cellar floods, mice ruined her stove/ she had to replace, appliances offered by landlord were refused because of poor condition/ she obtained her own. She doesn't think the property is maintained properly. She pays all utilities.

Foss: Mr. & Mrs. Foss consider Ms. Buffard a great tenant. In 10 years rent was raised 3 times: \$25 in 2018, \$100 in 2022, \$50 in 2023. Landlord says they keep up on all maintenance for building and the rent is still under market. Costs have gone up: taxes & cost of repair staff. Rent increase justified by HUD numbers. Landlord insists the kitchen was repaired. Landscaping is included in the rent. Landlord not aware of the mice and will send over exterminator right away. Landlord insists that the picture of the kitchen is not current.

Bouffard: Apartment has not been painted since she moved there. The picture is currently

what the kitchen looks like. She doesn't go in cellar. She has 2 dogs for emotional support – has doctor's note to support. She admits the mice complaint is new as of tonight. She complained that landlord does not do background checks and that adds to the negative conditions of the neighborhood.

Foss: Landlord says they use Apartment.com for background checks which reports on finances, credit check and crime history. They have a no pet policy but they do make exceptions and have no problem with Ms. Bouffard's dogs.

Investigator: P. Januszewski presented all pictures submitted. He acknowledged no current issues with fire department, health department and building department.

Motion made to close the matter – motion by K. Hemmeler, second by W. LeBeau, motion carries, all in favor

Deliberations: K. Hemmeler comments that the rent increase is excessive, I. Graves & M. Diane agrees. P. Januszewski comments that in 7 years there were very small increases but playing catchup all at once is too much. He also acknowledges that Ms. Bouffard is a single person in a 2 bedroom unit might also be an issue with affordability. Landlord should keep up on repairs. I. Graves says \$300 is a large increase all at once. W. LeBeau \$300 large increase and puts a burden on tenant. L. Degray stated that as of January 2024 the federal government asks landlords to limit increases to seniors and people with disabilities but does not specify what the limits are. There have been no improvements to the apartment and maintenance does need improvement.

The commission has ruled that the rent increase would be \$150 as of August 1st. The tenant needs to inform the landlord within 24 hours of issues. Landlord needs to make arrangements to inspect kitchen walls. Landlord has agreed to send exterminator for the mice. Tenant needs to provide an ESA letter each year for the current 2 dogs and not bring in any new animals.

Decision – K. Hemmeler – motion and W. LeBeau second. Motion carries, all in favor.

7. Next Meeting – August 28, 2024
8. Adjournment 7:30pm

Respectfully Submitted, Kelly Hemmeler, Secretary