

Minutes approved on June 25, 2020

Fair Housing Board Meeting Thursday, February 20th at 4:00pm

I. Meeting Call to Order:

4:07pm. Police Conference and Training Room, Lorain City Hall.

II. Roll Call

Present: E. Jean Wrice, Rhoda Lee, Sylvia Duvall, and Martin Leibas. Absent: Yvonne Johnson, Teresa Yuzon. Please note that all member terms expired in 2018 or earlier. Mayor Bradley will confirm appointment of any new members and reinstate appointment of the four attendees at today's meeting.

III. Introduction of Mayor's Staff

Present: City of Lorain Mayor Jack W. Bradley; Chief of Staff to Mayor Bradley: Melissa Barnhart. Also present: Kellie Glenn, Director of Building, Housing, and Planning for the City of Lorain.

IV. Old Business (none)

V. New Business

a. Introduction of Drew Crawford, Neighborhood

Development Specialist, City of Lorain Office of Building,
Housing and Planning

b. Confirmation of interest for board members

c. FAQ sheet for tenants facing eviction discussion

d. Working with Lake Erie Landlord Tenant Association

e. Training Interest

Drew Crawford introduced himself and the role he serves for the City of Lorain and asked for a brief history of members and the issues they see with housing in Lorain. Rhoda introduced herself, indicating that she has served on the Fair Housing Board under four mayors. She indicated the city still has some significant problems. She wants to work with the Lorain Metropolitan Housing Authority (LMHA) to provide input and have them attend this meeting to speak. The Mayor asked what some issues were. Rhoda indicated issues exist such as eviction, fairness in terms of housing locations, and “vouchers from Cleveland.” Kellie indicated that vouchers cannot be controlled or enforced by geographic means...anyone with a voucher can go to any place they please. Jean indicated that the complaints received informally and formally relate only to Section 8 vouchers. Mayor asked for Jean and other members to assemble a list of complaints and talk with residents to hear their complaints. The city may not have a solution, but we never know.

Rhoda asked if there were any restrictions on abilities? Kellie indicated that under Emergency Home Repair, disability is based on individuals’ incomes. There is a grant specifically for accessibility. Drew indicated that the laws federally and in Ohio provide protection against discrimination. Sylvia indicated that there have been fair housing poster contests in the past, as well as workshops where literature was passed out. Drew also indicated that there was interest in creating a type of landlord and tenant “how to” booklet, and/or a facts sheet. The Mayor asked to have a copies of that sent to the Mayor’s Office when ready, as they would be happy to provide that to anyone who asks and direct them to the proper office. The Mayor indicated that there are staff members who speak Spanish in his office.

Kellie indicated that there are five or six people on staff in the Building, Housing and Planning Office (BHP) that speak Spanish. Kellie also indicated that we contract with the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland/Lorain for assistance. The Mayor asked how much the grant amount is per year. Kellie indicated that it is \$20,000 per year and they are using that money. Kellie also said that recently, there was an advertisement that was about to be published in the local newspaper. Rhoda asked what this example was. The newspaper called Kellie for advice, knowing that this wasn’t quite right. Kellie advised that it would have been illegal for them to publish that advertisement allowing rentals to indicate they would only rent to people with “no prior evictions and no criminal record.” Rhoda then indicated there were issues related to gender. Sylvia said that the board previously was addressing issues of a nursing home advertisement that only had pictures of Caucasian residents. Jean indicated that a building on 7th street is supposed to be for senior citizens, and Sylvia asked how it was designated. Martin asked if this counts as discrimination. Rhoda said that the Kennedy apartments had issues (but it is LMHA controlled). Kellie suggested having LMHA come to the next meeting. Martin and the Mayor also indicated that Sacred Heart Church manages some senior apartments. Rhoda indicated that New Sunrise also works with senior housing. There are also townhouses or houses on Jaeger road. Are they following low income/affordable parameters? Rhoda says she

has the phone number. Mayor Bradley asked if there are tax abatements on this. Perhaps there is some type of legislation that can account for this.

Sylvia asked if these things are true, is this something to bring to the Fair Housing Board? Kellie indicates that it would be good to have a FAQ sheet to indicate if this is a fair housing issue or not.

Drew asked about the Lake Erie Landlord Tenant Association. Mayor Bradley indicated that they will be located at 525 Broadway Avenue in the commons. He suggested inviting them to the meeting.

Sylvia asked who does Fair Housing complaints and who did them before. Generally speaking, Legal Aid Society works with Fair Housing issues if it escalates to that level. Sylvia also asked if we need to provide someone who does these services? Does the Urban League also work with this? Yes, in a way. Paris Smith was just confirmed as the director of the office. Kellie indicated that it would be great to have a satellite office of the Urban League in Lorain.

Sylvia asked about the exact appointments of all board members. Mayor Bradley indicated that all members are expired. Kellie indicated that the staff member (Drew) is supposed to be the secretary and take notes.

The four members who attended represent the following Wards in the City of Lorain: E. Jean Wrice, Ward 2; Rhoda Lee, Ward 3; Sylvia Duvall, Ward 7; Martin Leibas, Ward 6. There is a need for Ward 5 representation for new board members. All four members who attended today will be appointed to serve on the board again, and other members will be added. A letter will be sent to churches asking for candidates to contact his office if anyone is interested.

Drew asked about training for all members. Most members indicate they are definitely interested and overdue for training. Drew will research this and report back to members.

Mayor Bradley indicated/reminded that the meetings are open to the media and the public as these are open law meetings. He asked to ensure that the media is contacted and invited to come to the board meetings. This is to ensure the public is welcome and invited, and to comply with open meeting laws.

VI. Fair Housing Updates (none)

VII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 4:54pm. Next meeting to take place on Thursday, March 19th at 4pm. Drew will send out a notice.