

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY FAIR HOUSING TASK FORCE

*c/o St. Lawrence County Planning Office
48 Court Street
Canton, NY 13617-1169*

315-379-2292 (Phone)

315-379-2252 (Fax)

fairhousing.stlawco.org



Draft Meeting Minutes

May 24, 2018

Public Safety Complex, Second Floor Conference Room
49½ Court Street, Canton, NY 13617

- 1. Call to Order and Determination of a Quorum.** Matilda Larson called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM.

Members Present: Michelle Durham; Terry Feuka; Bill Jones (by phone); Matilda Larson for John Tenbusch; Mike McQuade; Jim O'Neill and Courtney Toms.

Members Absent: Dianna Dufresne; Fred Hanss; Brian LaVair; Andrea Montgomery; Colleen Ryor and Amy Simmons.

A quorum was not established when Larson called the meeting to order. Larson suggested dispensing with the approval of the agenda and minutes until a quorum was established, and reordering the agenda to conduct a work session to prepare for a fall event.

- 2. New Business: Planning additional Fair Housing workshops.** Larson suggested reviewing the Goals and Action of the Fair Housing Assessment to identify an activity to undertake in the fall. Durham suggested implementation of Goal #1 to conduct a meeting with the County Magistrate's Association and the County Code Enforcement Officers Association to discuss housing code violations and how they are addressed in town court.

Jones joined the meeting by phone and a quorum was established. Larson recommended the event be held in the fall, either before Halloween or before Thanksgiving before the winter season sets in, but was unsure if the event should be held during business or evening hours. Jones suggested staff poll members of the Magistrates Association about their meeting schedule and availability. Larson identified Ogdensburg's Dobisky Center, Potsdam's Municipal Building, and Gouverneur's Community Center as potential venues for the event, and would want to check their availability depending on the event date.

Suggested topics for discussion at the forum include: inviting Whitney Russell from the NYS Department of State's Office of Building Standards and Enforcement to review the State's habitability standards; inviting representatives from Adult Protective Service to discuss their role in assisting tenants who are violating their rental leases; and inviting staff from the

Housing Choice Voucher Program. Cox recommended inviting a trainer who has delivered the “Bridges Out of Poverty” presentation to service agencies so that town justices and code enforcement officers have a better understanding of the decisions made by impoverished people. Cox said this presentation was previously delivered by staff with the Seaway Valley Prevention Council, and the Massena Community Services Coalition. Ogdensburg Justice Gary Alford was identified as a possible presenter due to his involvement with town court proceedings between landlords and tenants. Larson said she would follow up with Diana Dufresne about communicating with the Magistrates Association to determine dates and times for the event.

3. Adoption of the Agenda. The modified meeting agenda was unanimously adopted (O’Neill/McQuade).

4. Approval of Meeting Minutes. The February 22, 2018 meeting minutes were unanimously adopted (O’Neill/Jones).

5. Reports.

a. Events to Commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Fair Housing Act. Larson said six Fair Housing events were coordinated by Planning Office staff in Potsdam, Canton, and Star Lake with attendance ranging from five to twelve persons at each event. Larson also thanked Jones for scheduling an event at SUNY Canton in March to discuss Fair Housing experiences in St. Lawrence County at the time of its passage, but was cancelled due to weather.

6. Old Business.

b. Approval of “Assessment of Fair Housing” project. Larson said the Goals and Actions of the Fair Housing Assessment were finalized, and the Assessment was adopted by the Board of Legislators. Larson said a digital copy of the final document would be uploaded on the County’s website, and forwarded to municipal partners who co-sponsored the preparation of the report.

7. Announcements: Larson said the Planning Office forwarded an announcement to Task Force members and to Assessment stakeholders from Jefferson-Lewis Board of Realtors about a Fair Housing forum that will be held on Tuesday, June 12th from 4:30 to 6:30 pm at the Ramada Inn in Watertown. The forum will focus on reasonable accommodation of service and emotional support animals.

8. Next Meeting Date.

Thursday, August 23rd at 9:00 am
2nd floor conference room
County Public Safety Complex
49½ Court Street in Canton

9. Adjourn. The meeting adjourned by consensus at 9:53 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Matilda Lewis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Matilda" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Lewis".

Planner II