

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY FAIR HOUSING TASK FORCE

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Draft Meeting Minutes

February 22, 2018

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

1. **Call to Order and Determination of a Quorum.** Fred Hanss, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM. **There was NOT a quorum.**

Members Present: Dianna Dufresne; Michelle Durham; Fred Hanss; Bill Jones; Matilda Larson; Mike McQuade; John Tenbusch; Courtney Toms.

Members Absent: Terry Feuka; Lashawanda Griffin; Brian LaVair; Andrea Montgomery; Jim O'Neill; Colleen Ryor; Amy Simmons.

Others Present: By phone: Sally Santangelo, CNY Fair Housing; Jennifer Stevenson, SLC BOR.

2. **Adoption of the Agenda.** The agenda was adopted (B. Jones/J. O'Neill).
3. **Approval of Meeting Minutes.** Tenbusch reviewed the Minutes of the May 25th, August 24th, and November 16th meetings for the record. All sets of minutes were unanimously adopted (M. Durham/B. Jones).

4. Reports.

a. *Review draft "Assessment of Fair Housing" as revised.* Sally Santangelo reported that her staff had revised several maps as discussed at the November FHTF meeting. She noted that she and her staff had also made several changes to the Goals and Priorities section. Planning staff will incorporate those changes.

b. *Review revised Goals and Priorities.* Tenbusch reminded the Task Force that they had begun to review the Goals and Priorities section of the "Assessment of Fair Housing" at their meeting in November 2017; they reviewed the first two Goals.

Tenbusch reported that an ad hoc working group met on December 18th; in attendance were Michelle Durham; Fred Hanss; Matilda Larson; Leigh Rodriguez (Village of Canton); John Tenbusch; Courtnie Toms. These volunteers reviewed the other four

Goals. The Task Force briefly reviewed the Goals and Priorities section again, making the following comments:

- Goal 1: Make Code Violations Easier to Enforce via a Municipal Ticketing Process or Similar Mechanisms to Strengthen Code Enforcement.
 - Santangelo asked about the reference to the East Syracuse Problem Tenant's Law.
 - o F. Hanss stated that the intent of the reference was to make a connection between multiple police reports of unruly behavior on the part of tenants and the involvement of Code Enforcement staff.
 - o Santangelo noted that exceptions must be made under this law for victims of domestic abuse, or other situations where the tenant is not at fault/the cause of police reports.
- Goal 2: Improve Living Conditions via Inspections on Apartments and Other Rentals.
 - It was suggested that the Contributing Factors item be reworked to emphasize that the improved inspections need to occur in communities without rental inspection/registration programs.
- Goal 3: Increase Fair Housing Education for Local Government Officials
 - It was suggested that the section Project Partners be expanded to include Code Enforcement Officers, Local Planning Boards and Zoning Boards of Appeal.
- Goal 4: Increase Fair Housing Outreach for Tenants and Service Providers.
 - No changes were proposed for this Goal.
- Goal 5: Make Applying for and Obtaining Funding for Home Improvements Easier.
 - The intent was expressed that a single application for assistance might be accepted and used by a variety of agencies.
 - o F. Hanss reported that the Village of Potsdam uses an application similar to one developed by the Housing Council.
 - o M. Durham reported that the Housing Council has MOUs with SLC CDP and HWAP. While the Housing Council does not use the same application, their client intake data are transferrable to the other agencies.
 - M. Larson proposed that we add an action item for local governments and service agencies to continue pursuing federal and state funds to increase homeownership and improve housing conditions in the County.
 - Tenbusch proposed working with other agencies to expand the pool(s) of funding available for target populations.
 - o He suggested that local LMI housing agencies have a discussion with a regional agency such as the Development Authority of the North Country. He opined that DANC might have the regional size and influence to put together tax-credit packages, or access other financial tools that are unavailable to smaller non-profits.

- There was general discussion concerning tax-credit projects.
- It was suggested that a new Goal be formulated to state: “Pursue Additional Funding Streams for Housing”
- Goal 6: Create a Preference of Housing Choice (Section 8) Waiver List for Victims of Domestic Violence, and for Veterans.
 - It was suggested that the Project Partners item be expanded to include Renewal House.

5. Old Business.

- a. *Approval of “Assessment of Fair Housing” project.* On a motion from M. Larson (B. Jones), the Task Force decided to:
 - Accept the revised draft of the “Assessment of Fair Housing in St. Lawrence County”.
 - Approve payment to CNY Fair Housing for their work on the “Assessment of Fair Housing in St. Lawrence County”.
 - Present the “Assessment of Fair Housing in St. Lawrence County” to the Board of Legislators and recommend that it be adopted by the County.
- b. *Event to Commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Fair Housing Act.* Jones, Larson and Tenbusch reported that they had met, in person and by telephone, and were beginning to get some traction on the concept of holding a series of movies and/or presentations to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the passage of the Fair Housing Act.
 - Jones has discussed the concept with the Associated Colleges of the St. Lawrence Valley; this outreach might provide entrée at local campuses.
 - Jones has begun to make arrangements for a presentation at SUNY Canton to be held at the Miller Campus Center on March 14th from 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM.
 - Invited speakers include several older persons who can speak about the history of the civil-rights era in St. Lawrence County.
 - Jones will contact the County Historian, and Canton Historian, and several others in order to round out a panel of speakers.
 - Jones is working with several Native scholars from the Buffalo NY area to prepare materials for another presentation about civil rights from a Native perspective.

6. New Business. None.

7. **Announcements:** M. Larson announced that the Village of Canton is beginning to review a project involving adaptive re-use of a building to house recovering drug- and alcohol users. Larson reported that she had investigated whether these people represented a protected class under Fair Housing law. S. Santangelo of CNY Fair Housing had reported that they were, indeed, protected class. F. Hanss stated that, based on his experience in similar circumstances, he agreed.

8. Next Meeting Date.

Thursday, May 24th 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 10:10 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John L. Leubrecht". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Planner II