



**NEW CASTLE COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES &
DEPARTMENT OF LAND USE**

HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

February 9, 2022 @ 6:00 p.m.
VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING

MINUTES

- Call to Order
Housing Advisory Board Members in attendance: Renee Spruiel, Bill McCool, Michelle LaMonica-Rouse, Meghann Karasic, Rachel Stucker, Christian Willauer, Kevin Smith.
New Castle County employees in attendance: Joe Day, Stephanie Rizzo, Adam Singer, Jim Smith.
Members of the public in attendance: George Thompson, Donald Farrell.
Meeting called to order at 6:04 PM
Introductions of Board Members
- Approval of Minutes
 - December 8, 2021
Kevin Smith made the motion to approve the minutes. Rachel Stucker seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
- Chairperson's Report
 - Michael Morton has resigned from the Board so there is a vacancy.
 - Affordable Housing Trust Fund applications for new affordable housing is open with \$30M+ available in funding. Deadline is February 24th. Targeting mostly 60% AMI households.
- HAB Business
 - Annual Review of Bylaws
Changes were proposed by Law relating to meeting in person and quorum. Due to COVID and State of Emergency, physical presence is determined in accordance with State Law. Meghann Karasic pointed that the bylaws be voted on twice according to bylaws, suggested the Board vote first during this meeting. No objections to proposed changes. Meghann Karasic moved to approve the proposed changes. Christian Willauer seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
 - Rental Code presentation
Jim Smith and Joe Day from the Department of Land Use made the presentation. Provided the background on the Rental Code. Started during 2004 with a Working Group. Rental Code was adopted in 2005. Random inspections were instituted. Eventually random inspections became an issue and were paused. Tenant Rights Guide created in English and Spanish,

which landlords shall provide to tenants. Registration changed to biennially. Authorized NCC the ability to inspect common areas, such as boiler rooms. Allowed NCC to add rentals to database if not registered for a year. Landlords can receive fees return if appeal is won. In 2021, 38,701 rentals were registered. Inspections are now complaint driven. Shared ideas for strengthening rental code. Discussion occurred about rental properties being taken to sheriff's sale (this is not currently happening, but possible) and using Housing Trust Fund to give tenant the option to purchase. The inspections discussed here in the rental code are only market rate units, not Section 8. Section 8 has their own inspection process. Asked if the list of rentals is public. The entire list is not available; however, rental units are noted on County's Parcelview showing registration and expiration. There is no list of problem landlords. Clarified that NCC is not taking any occupied properties to sheriff's sale. NCC has also abated properties by bringing it into compliance while putting a lien on the property. Ticketing also occurs on properties. If the inspections went back to random, there would be a need to hire more inspectors. The Board discussed gathering their ideas onto a Google Document to bring to the next meeting. Department of Law suggested this may be considered a violation of FOIA.

- Announcements
 - Suggested having some other jurisdictions come and present to the Board on some rental recommendations. Washington DC? Minneapolis? St. Cloud, MN? Baltimore?
- Other
 - Don Farrell, member of the public, is a private landlord and thanked the Board for the presentation. Started a project called, Ask the Landlord. The Department of Land Use shared the Tenants Rights Guide and showed where it can be found on the website.
- Next Meeting
 - March 9, 2022
- Adjournment
 - Michelle Lamonica-Rouse made the motion to adjourn. Christian Willauer seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:50 PM.