



CITY OF BURLINGTON, VERMONT
CITY COUNCIL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT &
NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE
c/o Community & Economic Development Office
City Hall, Room 32 • 149 Church Street • Burlington, VT 05401
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Councilor Brian Pine, Chair, Ward 3
Councilor Sarah Carpenter, Ward 4
Councilor Zoraya Hightower, Ward 1

Committee members: Chair Brian Pine (BP), Sarah Carpenter (SC), Zoraya Hightower (ZH)

City staff: Christine Curtis, CEDO

Other Attendees: Christie Delphia, Burlington Tenants Union; Tom Proctor; Erika Johnson, Vermont Legal Aid; Larry Miller; Devon Ayers, Vermont Legal Aid; Brenda Rozzio; Sandrine Kibuey, Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity(CVOEO); Jess Hyman, CVOEO, Amy Cornell

Wednesday, July 15th 2020

5:30 PM –7:03PM

Virtual Zoom Meeting

Draft Minutes

Meeting Started 5:30PM

1. Review Agenda

MOTION by Councilor Pine, **SECOND** by Councilor Carpenter, to adopt the agenda as presented

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

2. Public Forum

Public forum opened and with no comments presented by the public, forum closed.

3. Just Cause Eviction Discussion continued

The committee continued their previous discussion on just cause eviction with a presentation by Vermont Legal Aid, Erika Johnson and Devon Ayers. Ayers and Johnson presented data and case examples which show that no cause evictions allow discrimination and force tenants into a housing market where further discrimination exists. Their evidence suggests no cause evictions are used by landlords to discriminate

most commonly against familial, disability, and income status, which undermines tenant's rights.

Vermont Legal Aid suggests an effective ordinance which specifically limits the reasons tenants can be evicted to just cause evictions such as material breach of lease and non-payment of rent.

The committee opened the discussion for public comment.

Christie Delphia of the Burlington Tenants Union commented support for removing no cause evictions as they give landlords too much power over tenants' lives and don't allow for the tenants to have any rights.

Tom Proctor presented a few cases of no cause evictions which happened in Burlington.

Brenda Rozzio, Burlington tenant, gave a personal testimony about being evicted for no cause by her landlord. Rozzio said they failed to renegotiate the rent payment after the lease ended after the landlord told Rozzio rent would not increase, which caused the rent to double once the lease lapsed. Due to no cause evictions, Rozzio had no legal recourse and was forced to move out and struggled to find new, affordable housing.

Larry Miller, local landlord, expressed that there was a lack of input from landlords and other views and suggested more groups be invited to the discussion.

Gene Bergman, attorney, gave a personal testimony about having represented many tenants in previous cases where no cause eviction was used by landlords to bypass investigation and evidence required. Bergman suggests that specific ordinance language is not recommended due to the amount of details that would be required. Councilor Carpenter asked Gene Bergman to record and submit their legal language recommendations and suggestions.

Sandrine Kibuey, CVOEO, expressed support for the memo and said they'd like both parties involved to be able to discuss this and come to a resolution to offer tenants protections.

Amy Cornell, Burlington tenant, gave a personal testimony about how an eviction has affected a family close to her for the worse and that forcing families into homelessness causes irreparable mental suffering.

4. Next Steps

The committee discussed the next meeting and agreed to meet on Monday July 27th, at 5:30 with no set end time in order to allow for maximum public inclusion and discussion. It was also agreed upon to invite Eileen Blackwood, city attorney, the Vermont Landlords Association, and any other groups interested in attending.

MOTION by Councilor Hightower, **SECOND** by Councilor Carpenter, to adjourn the meeting at 7:03PM

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.