

DRAFT MINUTES
FAIR RENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING (HYBRID) OF APRIL 8, 2026

Present: Commissioner/Chair Rakim Grant; Vice Chair Darrell Fennell; Commissioner Robert Rosenthal; Commissioner Linette Gaunichaux; Commissioner Sal Calvo; Commissioner Robert Kronenberger (remote)

Staff: Atty. Philip G. Kent, as outside counsel for the Commission, along with Paralegal Johanna Rivera (remote)

Public: Landlord's counsel Atty. Ian Gottlieb; Landlord's counsel Atty. Cristina Carabetta (remote); tenants Rossana Barnaby (remote), Jamie Lynch (remote), Alicea Dunkley and Kevin Malley (remote)

1. Call to Order:

Commissioner / Chair Grant called the Meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. Parties were sworn in.

2. Public Comment:

The Chair called for public comment with no response.

3. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Gaunichaux made a MOTION to approve the minutes of the March 11, 2026 Regular Meeting. Commissioner Calvo seconded the motion, which passed unanimously without further discussion.

4. Correspondence

None reported.

5. New Business

A. Report in New Complaints / Jurisdictional Review / Pending Matters

Atty. Kent discussed the Crooks v. Better Provisions complaint. Mr. Crooks had moved out. Atty. Kent had recommended to dismiss this matter. Atty. Kent had not heard from Mr. Crooks or the landlord since the last regular meeting.

Commissioner Calvo made a MOTION to dismiss the Crooks v. Better Provisions complaint. Commissioner Gaunichaux seconded the motion, which passed unanimously without further discussion.

Grant: aye; Gaunichaux: aye; Calvo: aye; Kronenberger: aye; Rosenthal: aye Fennell: aye

Commissioner Calvo amended the MOTION to dismiss the Crooks v. Better Provisions complaint pursuant to MFRC Rule 6.1.b. Commissioner Gaunichaux seconded the motion, which passed unanimously without further discussion.

Grant: aye; Gaunichaux: aye; Calvo: aye; Kronenberger: aye; Rosenthal: aye Fennell: aye

Atty. Kent then briefly summarized the new complaint of Lenise Nestir v. Middletown Housing Authority as to excessive rent. Atty. Kent is looking into whether the Commission has jurisdiction over this matter. The notice of complaint has not been mailed to the parties but will be soon.

6. Old Business

The following is a summary only. Please see the hearing recording for more detailed information.

1. Dowdye v. Stoneycrest Towers Stipulated Order

The Chair called the Dowdye v. Stoneycrest Towers matter.

Atty. Kent reported he had conducted an informal settlement conference with tenant Dowdye, along with Atty. Carabetta for the landlord, which resulted in a proposed Stipulated Order. Atty. Kent reported that the parties agreed to set rent starting on April 1, 2026 through March 31, 2027 at \$1,437.00 per month. Atty. Kent presented a signed copy of a Stipulated Order signed by tenant Dowdye and Atty. Carabetta on behalf of Respondents and inquired of Atty. Carabetta as to whether she agreed with the proposed Stipulated Order, which she confirmed. Mr. Dowdye was not present at the meeting.

Commissioner Gaunichaux made a MOTION to accept the Stipulated Order, which Commissioner Calvo seconded. The motion passed unanimously, without further discussion, as follows:

Grant: aye; Gaunichaux: aye; Calvo: aye; Kronenberger: aye; Rosenthal: aye Fennell: aye

2. Humphrey v. Woodbury Realty Stipulated Order

The Chair called the Humphrey v. Woodbury Realty matter.

Atty. Kent reported he had conducted an informal settlement conference with tenant Humphrey, along with Atty. Carabetta for the landlord, which resulted in a proposed Stipulated Order. Atty. Kent reported that the parties agreed to set rent starting on April 1, 2026 through March 31, 2027 at \$1,560.00 per month. Atty. Kent presented a signed copy of a Stipulated Order signed by tenant Humphrey and Atty. Carabetta on behalf of Respondents and inquired of

Atty. Carabetta as to whether she agreed with the proposed Stipulated Order, which she confirmed. Ms. Humphrey was not present at the meeting.

Commissioner Gaunichaux made a MOTION to accept the Stipulated Order, which Commissioner Rosenthal seconded. The motion passed unanimously, without further discussion, as follows:

Grant: aye; Gaunichaux: aye; Calvo: aye; Kronenberger: aye; Rosenthal: aye Fennell: aye

3. Lynch v. CR Summer Hill Stipulated Order

The Chair called the Lynch v. CR Summer Hill matter.

Atty. Kent swore in Ms. Lynch. Atty. Kent reported he had conducted several informal settlement conferences with tenant Lynch, along with Atty. Carabetta for the landlord, which resulted in a proposed Stipulated Order. Atty. Kent reported that the parties agreed to set rent starting on May 1, 2026 through March 31, 2027 at \$1,390.00 per month. The parties agreed that Respondents have recently made several repairs in Ms. Lynch's unit. Respondent will also strip and replace the polyurethane coating of the living room floor in the Spring or Summer. Ms. Lynch agreed that she will be responsible for any out of pocket expenses associated with the short amount of time she will be out of her unit during that time. Atty. Kent presented a signed copy of a Stipulated Order signed by Atty. Carabetta, on behalf of Respondents, with which Atty. Carabetta agreed, and inquired of Ms. Lynch as to whether she agreed with the proposed Stipulated Order. Ms. Lynch had not sign the Stipulated Order and stated that it was her intention to go forward and enter into the agreement and send a copy of the signed Stipulated Order on April 9, 2026.

Commissioner Gaunichaux made a conditional MOTION to accept the Stipulated Order, with the condition that tenant Lynch signs the Stipulated Order by end of day on April 9, 2026, and if not, that this matter will be set down for further hearing at the Commission's next regular meeting. Commissioner Fennell seconded. The motion passed unanimously, without further discussion, as follows:

Grant: aye; Gaunichaux: aye; Calvo: aye; Kronenberger: aye; Rosenthal: aye Fennell: aye

4. Dunkley/Malley v. Center Realty LLC Stipulated Order

The Chair called the Dunkley/Malley v. Center Realty LLC matter.

Atty. Kent reported he had conducted an informal settlement conference with tenants Dunkley and Malley, along with Atty. Gottlieb for the landlord, which resulted in a proposed Stipulated Order. Atty. Kent reported that the monthly rent for the month of March 2026 shall be discounted by \$300.00. Tenants Dunkley and Malley have already paid \$950.00, and shall pay \$650.00 by March 31, 2026, via the standard rent portal, which tenants stated that the \$650.00 had been paid. Atty. Gottlieb will confirm. The monthly rent for every other month under the lease shall remain set at \$1,850.00 through October 31, 2026. The parties further agree

that tenants Dunkley and Malley shall withdraw their fair rent complaint and their retaliation claim and Respondents shall rescind a certain notice to quit served in March 2026. Atty. Kent presented a signed copy of a Stipulated Order signed by tenants Dunkley and Malley and Atty. Gottlieb on behalf of Respondents and inquired of tenants Dunkley and Malley and Atty. Gottlieb as to whether they agreed with the proposed Stipulated Order, which all confirmed.

Commissioner Calvo made a conditional MOTION to accept the Stipulated Order, upon confirmation of tenants' \$650.00 payment, which Commissioner Gaunichaux seconded. The motion passed unanimously, without further discussion, as follows:

Grant: aye; Gaunichaux: aye; Calvo: aye; Kronenberger: aye; Rosenthal: aye Fennell: aye

Atty. Gottlieb agreed he would confirm payment and if so would confirm rescission of the notice to quit via email.

5. Hearing / deliberations / decision re Barnaby/Anthony v. Kosel Equity (as to a compliance hearing)

The Chair called the Barnaby/Anthony v. Kosel Equity matter.

Ms. Barnaby stated she had not heard back regarding the conditions of the washing machines and stated that she had not received a copy of the Health Department's report. Atty. Kent emailed Ms. Barnaby a copy of the report. Ms. Barnaby confirmed receipt and reviewed the report. Atty. Gottlieb noted compliance and had no further comment.

Commissioner Rosenthal asked about the flood issue in the Health Department's report. The Chair stated that the flood issue was not brought up in the previous fair rent hearing and the Commission cannot add that issue now.

Commissioner Calvo made a MOTION to find compliance with the Commission's orders. Commissioner Gaunichaux seconded the motion, which passed (5 in favor; 1 abstention) as noted below:

Grant: aye; Gaunichaux: aye; Calvo: aye; Kronenberger: aye; Rosenthal: Abstain; Fennell: aye

Atty. Gottlieb requested that the Commission order Ms. Barnaby to pay the additional \$100.00 of rent for April 2026 due to compliance occurring in March 2026. Ms. Barnaby stated she already paid April's rent. Attorney Gottlieb stated that there is a ten (10) day grace period to pay the rent pursuant to the statute. Commissioner Gaunichaux asked Ms. Barnaby how long she might need to pay the \$100.00. Ms. Barnaby stated she can pay within the next week or so.

Commissioner Kronenberger made a MOTION for Ms. Barnaby to pay the additional \$100.00 in the next ten (10) days on or before April 18, 2026. Commissioner Gaunichaux seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, without further discussion, as follows:

Grant: aye; Gaunichaux: aye; Calvo: aye; Kronenberger: aye; Rosenthal: aye Fennell: aye

7. Executive Session

Chair Grant made a MOTION to enter Executive Session to obtain legal advice. Commissioner Calvo seconded the motion, which passed unanimously without further discussion. Recording paused at 7:48 p.m. Chair Grant made a MOTION to come out of Executive Session. Commissioner Fennell second the motion, which passed unanimously without further discussion. Recording resumed.

8. Adjournment:

Commissioner Kronenberger made a MOTION to adjourn, and Commissioner Calvo seconded the motion, which passed unanimously without further discussion. The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.