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A special meeting of the Board of Representatives of the City of Stamford was held on Tuesday, March 20, 1956 in the Walter Dolan Jr. High School Auditorium, Toms Road, Glenbrook, pursuant to a "Call" from Mr. George V. Connors, President, Board of Representatives. The meeting was called to order by the President at 8:25 P.M.

ROLL CALL was taken by the Clerk. There were 28 present and 12 absent. The absent members were: Vincent Vitti, Clifford Waterbury, Salvatore Giuliani, Robert Lewis, Robert Findlay, Paul Plotkin, Eugene Barry, Stephen Kelly, Thomas Killeen, Edward Czapka, Anthony Kolich and Alanson Fredericks.

The following is the "Call" sent to all members of the Board:

BOARD OF REPRESENTATIVES
Stamford, Conn.

March 14, 1956

I George V. Connors, President of the Board of Representatives of the City of Stamford, pursuant to Section 202 of the Charter, hereby call a SPECIAL MEETING of the members of the Board of Representatives on

TUESDAY, MARCH 20, 1956

at 8:00 P.M.

in the DOLAN JR. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM
TOMS ROAD, GLENBROOK

for the purpose of acting upon the Rent Control Ordinance, as proposed by Mayor Quigley.

In attendance at this meeting will be representatives of the landlords and tenants groups, as well as authorities on housing in Stamford.

You have received a copy of this Ordinance in the mail. It will be thoroughly discussed and presented for adoption at this meeting. I would therefore suggest that you analyze it carefully and be prepared with your recommendations at that time.

GEORGE V. CONNORS,
President,
Board of Representatives

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the above Call of a Special Meeting was sent by mail to all members of the Board of Representatives on Wednesday, March 14, 1956.

GEORGE V. CONNORS,
President,
Board of Representatives

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The President turned the Chair over to Mr. Clement L. Raiteri, Jr., Chairman, Legislative & Rules Committee, whose committee is considering the proposed Ordinance on rent controls. The purpose of this meeting is to hear both sides of the question in order that the Board may evaluate the question before it.

Mr. Raiteri explained the reason for calling the meeting and presented the following report of his committee:

REPORT OF LEGISLATIVE & RULES COMMITTEE
MEETING MARCH 12, 1956

A meeting of the Legislative and Rules Committee was held Monday evening, March 12, 1956, for the specific purpose of considering the Mayor's proposal for an Ordinance creating a Fair Rent Board.

The meeting was convened at 8:45 P.M. in the Office of the Board of Representatives in City Hall by Chairman Raiteri with all members of the Committee present.

Assistant Corporation Counsel DiSesa was also present.

The proposed Ordinance was discussed at length. It was concluded that there was insufficient information available to determine the necessity for such an Ordinance. It was decided to recommend that a special meeting of the full Board of Representatives be called for Tuesday evening, March 20th, to consider the matter and that certain key people who are informed on housing in Stamford be asked to attend to provide such information to the Board. Those to be invited are: Mr. Mark Harris of the Housing Authority, Mr. Murray Meld of the Community Council, Mr. George Laturney of the Welfare Department, and Mr. Frank LiVolsi who headed up the housing investigation conducted by the previous Board of Representatives. Each member of the Board was to be furnished a copy of the proposed Ordinance and be requested to come to the special meeting prepared to comment.

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

E. B. Baker, Clerk

MR. RAITERI: "There was one other thing that was left out of our Minutes, Mr. DiSesa's opinion. According to Section 204 of the City Charter, the Corporation Counsel is under the opinion that the Board has the legal authority to adopt this Ordinance, subject to possible Court action in the future. Because of the great number of people who have been invited and requested to appear, we must limit the time of the speakers. Now, we have two really principal speakers. One is Mr. Leonard Merrell, who is against rent control and in favor of rent control is Mr. Gabriel Morrell. They have done a lot of work along these lines and because of that, they will be allowed a little more time than the other speakers. All speakers will be allowed ten minutes and in case they feel that it is repetitious or something that the other speakers have said, we have asked them to cut their discussion a little shorter. After they have completed their speech on whether they are

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are in favor or against rent controls, then the members of the Board will be allowed to ask them questions.

"There is one other thing I want to mention - the members of the Board, when they ask their questions will direct them to the speaker and Mr. Nolan will repeat the question into the microphone so that everyone in the audience can hear what the question is and at the same time we are recording the entire meeting so that our Secretary will be able to take complete Minutes.

"The first speaker is Mr. Robert Demms, Executive Director of the City Housing Authority."

Mr. Robert Demms addressed the members of the Board. He said that within the next three years there would be a loss of approximately 1,178 dwelling units caused by the highway, the Urban Redevelopment and the temporary public housing which must be taken down, and that in these units there are approximately 688 families who will be eligible for public housing - in other words, they are the moderately low income families. He explained that moderate income under the State law means \$5,000 or less. He said the Housing Authority is completing a project that should reach completion sometime during this summer, which will give 216 units, making a net loss of 962 units. He said they now have on hand 2,099 applications. He went on to explain the different type of applications they handle. He said the Housing Authority has averaged since January an average of 15 new applications per week.

There followed several questions by members of the Board.

The next speaker to address the Board was Mr. Mark Harris, Executive Director of the Urban Redevelopment Commission. He stated that the information he would give would be limited particularly to redevelopment. He said: "The Urban Redevelopment Commission has already relocated, out of its first project area - the East Meadow area - 45 out of approximately 60 families that were there a year ago. That is approximately 75% of the total number of families in the area. Subsequent redevelopment projects will be on a much more substantial scale than that one. In terms of the number of units to be demolished or to be rehabilitated. The West Main Street project, which is now about to enter a planning stage and can therefore be expected to reach a development stage in perhaps two years, will involve the relocation of approximately 400 families. However, it should be made perfectly clear that while the East Meadow project did not involve any new residential construction on that site, the West Main Street project will involve construction of perhaps as many as 1,000 units in the same area." He stated that the area involved is approximately 20 acres and is now underdeveloped in terms of potential density and will be developed to a density of approximately 50 families to the acre which is now the RMF residential zoning density. He said that in the event a subsequent project in the center surrounding the Pacific Street area, is proposed, it will take place at a later date than the West Main Street project. He said that the development of the center will not be likely to have any appreciable affect on the housing market for at least 4 years. He said their experience has been that there are no vacancies in the low, moderate rental units in Stamford, although there is a fairly substantial turnover. He said their experience has been there have been landlords who have withheld housing from the market because they were unable to obtain a fair and equitable rent adjustment for repairs that had to be made to particular units.

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A question and answer period followed.

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The next speaker to address the Board was Mr. Murray Meld, Executive Secretary of the Stamford Community Council. He said he had not been authorized by the Community Council to speak with particular reference to the proposed rent control Ordinance, because they had not had an opportunity to study the proposal. However, he said he would try to give facts that would help the Board to come to a decision. He presented the Chairman, Mr. Raiteri, with a copy of a study made by the Community Council in reference to housing. He said, based on a study which had been done two years previously, in this area, that Stamford has approximately 25,000 housing units, about 1/2 of which are rentals. He said "We have a vacancy ratio of 1/2 of 1%. Real estate men consider 3% a normal figure. In addition, you can say that 11% of our rental units come within the Census Bureau's designation of dilapidated or sub-standard housing. That is, they have no private baths or are in conditions necessitating substantial repairs. In addition, the Census Bureau's figures in 1950, and I'll warrant these are much worse today, that 500 units were overcrowded, a figure of 1.5 persons per room - not per bedroom, but counting all rooms, kitchen, dining room etc." He spoke of the survey made last August when the Housing Committee of the Board of Representatives made their survey of the housing situation of those affected by the Thruway, in which they found over 400 families, mostly rental units, were affected. He said the normal rate of supply and demand would not work in Stamford, because it was all demand and little supply. He said that rent control is related to the availability or the shortage of housing, it is related to the planning and zoning situation in Stamford, it is related to the renting of sub-standard units at high prices - that perhaps Stamford needs a relocation authority in regard to the Thruway victims and other public works.

There followed questions by the members of the Board.

The next speaker to address the Board was Mr. George Laturney, City Welfare Director. He said there was an immediate need for housing in the City of Stamford and they were faced with the problem of finding quarters for some 170 families being evicted because of the Thruway. He stated that he had visited some 118 families, consisting of 207 adults with 165 children. This problem will have to be solved within the next 60 days.

MRS. BANKOWSKI: "How long has this information about the Thruway been available?"

Answer: "About two years to two and one half years, maybe longer."

MR. LONGO: "Some of those people were not notified two years ago that they had to get out."

Answer: "That is true. With the uncertainty, some of them were not notified."

There ensued some discussion as to the need for the preceding speakers, the Chairman pointing out that this was to furnish the Board with facts and figures in order to formulate an opinion as to whether or not there was an emergency.

The next speaker to address the Board was Mr. Frank LiVolsi, former member of the Board and former Chairman of the Housing Committee.

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Mr. LiVolsi said the City of Stamford has known for some time that the need for housing is acute. He said he was in favor of some sort of rent control, due to the fact that he believed in the law of supply and demand. He said the Housing Committee of which he was Chairman, conducted an investigation of the City Housing Authority and that they were doing as good a job as could be done. He stated that public housing was created to do away with slums, but they never got to that position because of the acute need of housing. He said: "Until you get the supply of apartments that are needed, you will have this problem of too much demand and too little supply. Of all the apartments that are being built, just how many of them are rented by people that have lived in Stamford for any length of time? The ones that come from out of town are the largest percentage of those taking these rentals - that is one thing that is helping to create the present shortage."

MR. RAITERI: "Those in favor and those opposed to rent control will now speak. The first speaker will be Mr. Milton Turkel, the Chairman of the Mayflower Gardens Tenant's Committee."

MR. SNYDER requested a five minute recess.

Mr. Turkel addressed the members of the Board in favor of rent controls being adopted.

Mr. Robert Kerr and Mr. Joseph Blitzer, as representatives from the Stamford Central Labor Union, addressed the Board in favor of rent controls.

Mr. William R. Tappin, as representative of the Magee Avenue Tenants' Association, followed, addressing the Board in favor of rent controls.

Mr. Edward H. Coleman, president of the Stamford branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People also addressed the Board in favor of rent controls.

The Chairman stated that there would be a five minute recess.

The next speaker to address the Board was Mr. Leonard C. Merrell, Chairman of the Property Owners' Association, who spoke against rent controls. He said: "We do not dispute that there is a shortage of housing in the City of Stamford. However, that is not the issue before you at this time. The issue before you is what your Board can best do to alleviate that shortage. I am going to say something that you will probably disagree with, and that is, there is no emergency - a shortage, yes. Because there is a shortage it does not necessarily follow that there is an emergency. An emergency is an unexpected, temporary condition and not one of fifteen years duration. It has already become chronic and permanent and that is not an emergency." He went on to say that a Socialistic approach to the solution was not the answer to the problem. He said: "It is nothing more than common sense that when you have had doctors treating a condition for 15 years and they have not accomplished a solution, that it is high time you adopted a different approach - that is, if you ever want results. However, if controls are lifted and apartment owners take advantage of the situation to overcharge, then, by their own acts, they have created an emergency. We are confident, in that event, our State Legislature will then take appropriate action. In fact, they have so stated in no

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mistakable terms." He said with rent controls off, there will be tenants who will buy or build their own homes "when they can no longer obtain subsidized rentals at less than what it costs to maintain their own homes - that will be the crucial test. When they have to pay as much rent as it is necessary to maintain the property they rent, they will then want to buy their own homes. Now, I ask you, is that bad? In view of the philosophy that everything has to be done by one authority or another under the Socialistic premise, I say it's bad, but if you are going to maintain the free enterprise system and the private property rights system, then it's mighty good. At present we have two fair rent advisory committees, dedicated to the equitable adjustment of rentals. One has been set up by the property owners themselves and the other, by the Real Estate Board. Any committee not enjoying the confidence and respect of the owners would be impotent. Any property owner would be reluctant to go contrary to the judgment of the committee. That is why we did not put tenants on our committee."

Mr. Merrell went on to say that the State declined to continue rent controls and to give the powers of rent control to any city when the State denied the power of local option. He said: "Even when the power is implied, it was specifically revoked."

Mr. Gabriel Morrell was the next and last speaker to address the Board. He spoke as Temporary Chairman of the Stamford Rentpayers' Association, in favor of rent controls.

MR. RAITERI: "Are there any questions?"

MR. MORRELL: "Earlier this evening there were some questions concerning the Republican State Legislative action on the discontinuance of rent controls and if that is still a question, I would like to answer that."

MR. RAITERI: "That is the action of the State Legislature and I don't think it is relevant to this particular situation - we are interested in information for our particular Board. We are all aware of the fact that rent control has been eliminated by State Legislative action and regardless of whether it be Republican action or Democratic action, it makes no difference."

There followed a period of questioning.

The speakers having finished, Mr. Connors resumed the Chair.

Mr. Connors called the meeting to order.

MR. MILANO MOVED that the Board adopt the Fair Rent Control Ordinance. Seconded by Mr. Wynn.

MR. SNYDER MOVED for a five minute recess, for a caucus. Seconded by Mr. Iacovo.

MR. GEORGOULIS opposed a caucus.

Vote taken on holding a caucus and CARRIED, 26 in favor and 1 opposed.

The President called the meeting to order at 11:25 P.M.

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Mr. Milano withdrew his previous motion and Mr. Wynn, the seconder, withdrew his seconding of the motion.

There followed some discussion Mr. Connors explaining that the Ordinance would first have to be adopted for publication first, with adoption of the Ordinance itself at a later meeting.

MR. GEORGULIS: "I move that we publish this Ordinance." Seconded by Mr. Hearing and Mr. Raiteri.

Vote taken on publication of ordinance. LOST by a vote of 11 in favor and 16 opposed.

MR. NOLAN called for a Quorum.

MR. HUIZINGA: "I move we adjourn, Mr. Chairman."

MR. NOLAN: "I called for a Quorum - it's on the floor - no one else has been recognized. Mr. Chairman, I still have the floor - I called for a Quorum."

MR. CONNORS: "I tell you, being fair about it and not that I want to argue with you members - the adjournment takes precedence."

MR. NOLAN: "I would like to amend that, Mr. President, by amending that , we adjourn to next Tuesday, March 27th."

MR. RAITERI: "Yes, but I tell you you can't, because we have to publish the Ordinance in the paper first, and if we adjourn to next Tuesday, we will still be faced with the question of publishing the Ordinance."

MR. RAITERI: "Mr. Chairman?"

MR. CONNORS: "Yes, Mr. Raiteri."

MR. RAITERI: "I would like a ruling from the Chair as to whether that vote is a legal vote - the vote of the proposed amendment - the defeat of that vote."

MR. HUIZINGA: "Mr. President....."

Several voices stated that there was no meeting, in view of the motion for adjournment. Mr. Nolan said he had moved to fix the time to when the Board would adjourn.

MR. NOLAN read from Robert's Rules of Order: Themotion is to fix the time to when we adjourn.

MR. HUIZINGA: "All I want is a ruling from you, Mr. President, as to whether the motion for adjournment is in order - that's all."

MR. CONNORS: "I rule that the motion for adjournment takes precedence."

Mr. Kaminski said Mr. Nolan was correct.

MR. NOLAN: "I would like to fix the time to adjourn to the 27th of March."

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Seconded by Mr. Macrides.

RHOADES: "Would you please tell me, Mr. President, what is the purpose of the adjournment of the meeting to the 27th of March?"

MR. CONNORS: "To vote on the publication of the ordinance."

VOICE: "Then, what's the meeting for?"

MR. NOLAN: "We might get a rescinding of the motion, as you all know."

MR. HUIZINGA: "You might get a rescinding of the motion - that's what you want a meeting for?"

MR. GEORGOULIS: "If a member does not believe that this meeting should be held, he can then vote against Mr. Nolan's amendment."

MR. NOLAN: "Correct, correct."

MR. RUSSELL: "There is something I would like to get straight in my mind. This meeting on Tuesday...will this Ordinance be published before then, and are we to vote on it then?"

VOICE: "No, it will have been deferred."

MR. HUIZINGA: "What's on the floor, Mr. President?"

MR. CONNORS: "Mr. Nolan's motion."

MR. HUIZINGA: "Would you mind re-stating it?"

MR. CONNORS: "Would you please re-state that motion, Mrs. Farrell, please?"

MRS. FARRELL: "Mr. Nolan moved that he would like to fix the time to adjourn to the 27th of March, and it was seconded by Mr. Macrides."

VOICE: "Correct - that is correct."

MR. CONNORS: "Will the members in favor of Mr. Nolan's motion, as read, please rise?" Count taken - 9 in favor

MR. CONNORS: "Opposed?" Count taken - 14 opposed. LOST.

MR. BAKER: "Mr. Chairman, I move we adjourn."

MR. McLAUGHLIN: "I second the motion."

MR. CONNORS: "All those in favor that we adjourn, please signify by the usual sign."

CARRIED, 23 in favor and 1 (Mr. Nolan) opposed.

Respectfully submitted

JOHN C. MACRIDES, Clerk
Board of Representatives