

**MINUTES
PUBLIC HEARING OF
THE FAIR RENT COMMISSION
Saturday, May 02, 2026 at 1:00 p.m.
Haddam-Killingworth Middle School Auditorium**

FRC Members in Attendance: Leo Bombalicki, John Byrne (Secretary), David Cutillo (Chairman), Ellen Oppenheimer, and Robert Rimmer

FRC Members Absent: None.

Special Guests in Attendance: David Tycz, Esq., Howard McMillian & Tycz, LLC (representing the Town of Killingworth), Wilson Carroll, Esq., Cohen & Wolf, P.C. (representing Sun Communities, Beechwood Properties), Mr. Brandon George, Sun's Division Vice President, Mr. Mike Kane, Sun's Regional Vice President of Operations, and Kimberly Lombard, Sun Communities District Manager

Visitors: Approximately 150

Called to Order: Chairman David Cutillo called the hearing to order at 1:09 p.m.

Roll Call: A roll call was taken of all Commission members in attendance.

Explain Hearing Procedures and Purpose: Chairman Cutillo explained the procedures governing the hearing and outlined the purpose and authority of the Fair Rent Commission pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §§ 7-148c and 7-148d.

Identify Parties Present: All parties required for the hearing were present and duly identified for the record.

Swearing In of Parties: All individuals intending to provide factual testimony were sworn in by Chairman Cutillo prior to offering testimony.

Opening Statements by Tenants/Complainants:

Jackie Vece, in her opening statement, emphasized that this case was about balance. She argued that the law does not permit rising costs alone to justify rent increases; rather, it requires weighing the impact on residents. Ms. Vece stressed that residents are not just renters but homeowners with long-term investments, and for many, especially seniors or those on fixed incomes, moving is not an option. She pointed out that residents have already absorbed extra financial burdens, such as lawn care, snow removal, and utilities, beyond the base rent. Ms. Vece urged the Commission to apply the statute carefully, balancing the cumulative financial burden on residents with the need for a fair and stable outcome for the community.

Opening Statement by Landlord/Property Owner:

Attorney Wilson Carroll, representing Sun Communities Beechwood Properties, argued that the proposed rent increase is justified based on rising operating costs, continued capital reinvestment in the community,

and comparable rent data showing Beachwood among the lowest-cost manufactured housing communities in Connecticut with strong amenities and services. He asserted that executive compensation and profit levels are not statutory factors under CGS §7-148c, and that the complainants' CPI-based alternative would result in only a minimal reduction from the proposed increase. He concluded that the complainants failed to meet their burden of proving the increase is harsh and unconscionable and requested approval of the proposed rent increase.

Presentation of Tenants' Evidence and Testimony:

The following individuals provided tenant evidence and testimony for the record:

- Resident William Joyce, 28 Swain Lake Trail, Killingworth, CT
- Resident Kathy Amoia, 9 Pleasant Trail, Killingworth, CT
- Resident Jen Zakrzewski, 8 Boulder Trail, Killingworth, CT
- Resident Kathy Wizikowski, 14 Swain Lake Trail, Killingworth, CT
- Resident Barbara Shapiro, 19 Boulder Trail, Killingworth, CT
- Resident Sheila Kimbal, 43 Whitewood Road, Killingworth, CT
- Non-Resident Bob Bailey, 52 Evergreen Springs, Brooklyn, CT
- Resident Sheila Ahern, 15 County Club Trail, Killingworth, CT
- Resident Julieann Cataldo, 22 Whitewood Road, Killingworth, CT
- Resident Kimberly Erickson, 20 Woodland Trail, Killingworth, CT
- Non-Resident Rebecca Connors, Rivermead South, East Hartford, CT
- Non-Resident David Lore, residing within a Sun Communities property, Southington, CT;
President, Connecticut Manufactured Homeowners Alliance

At approximately 2:47 p.m., Chairman Cutillo called a 10-minute recess and reminded Commissioners not to discuss the matter during recess.

Questions from Commissioners to Tenants:

The Commission asked questions of the complainants focusing on the financial impact of rent increases, particularly on fixed-income residents and residents with limited ability to relocate manufactured homes. Tenant testimony was also referenced in discussion of statutory factors, including resident income and housing availability.

Presentation of Landlord's Evidence and Testimony:

Attorney Wilson Carroll, on behalf of Sun Communities - Beechwood Properties, presented documentary and testimonial evidence in support of the proposed rent increase. He argued the increase is justified based on rising operating costs, continued capital reinvestment, and comparable rent data indicating Beechwood remains among the lowest-cost manufactured housing communities in Connecticut while maintaining strong amenities, services, and overall community conditions.

He asserted that under CGS §7-148c, executive compensation and profit levels are not statutory factors. He further contended that the CPI-based alternative would result in only a minimal reduction and does not materially affect the financial impact. He concluded the complainants failed to meet their burden to show the increase is harsh and unconscionable and requested approval.

Attorney Carroll submitted evidentiary materials including:

- Community comparables and rent/service surveys
- Sales data and market comparisons
- Septic and regulatory documentation
- Lease agreements and community rules
- Maintenance logs and code/inspection reports
- Capital improvement documentation
- Profit/loss and expense analysis
- CPI data (Northeast Region, March 2026)

He also noted state approval for septic replacement systems may take approximately four to six months.

Testimony of Mr. Mike Kane and Mr. Brandon George:

Mr. Brandon George, Sun’s Division Vice President, and Mr. Mike Kane, Sun’s Regional Vice President of Operations, testified regarding community operations.

Mr. Kane testified regarding resident maintenance responsibilities, snow removal procedures, pool maintenance, septic system maintenance and replacement processes, retaining wall evaluations, road conditions and repairs, landscaping and yard maintenance requirements, annual inspections, communication procedures, contractor enforcement of maintenance obligations, and staffing practices.

Kimberly Lombard, Sun’s District Manager, was present at the hearing but did not testify.

Questions from Commissioners to Landlord:

Commissioners asked questions regarding operations, maintenance responsibilities, and response procedures. It was stated that the landlord responds to resident issues promptly, typically within an hour via answering service on weekends and immediately during business hours, and does not perform structural repairs on homes. Residents are responsible for certain maintenance, including lawn care, and the landlord may contract services and bill residents if work is not completed.

Septic system questions addressed pumping frequency, which varies based on conditions including seasonal groundwater levels, and system replacement requirements involving consultation with the town health department and Connecticut Department of Public Health approval, which may take approximately four to six months.

The Commission also inquired about staffing and compensation. It was stated the company employs thousands of workers but provided no specific details regarding annual raises or executive bonuses. The Commission further referenced rent comparables and operating cost data under CGS §7-148c.

Closing Statements:

Jackie Vece stated the proposed rent increase is burdensome to fixed-income residents and emphasized limited ability to relocate, arguing it shifts disproportionate financial burden onto tenants and impacts housing stability.

Attorney Wilson Carroll stated the increase is consistent with CPI trends and supported by financial

records showing rising operating costs. He noted Beachwood rents remain among the lowest in Connecticut comparables and argued the complainants failed to demonstrate a “harsh and unconscionable” condition.

Discussion by Commissioners:

The Commission deliberated in public session under CGS §7-148c on whether the proposed rent increase was harsh and unconscionable, considering statutory factors including comparable rents, resident income and financial impact, maintenance and service levels, operating expenses, and reinvestment into the community.

Commissioners expressed differing views, with some finding the increase insufficiently tied to reinvestment or capital need and raising concerns regarding profit margins, while others found the landlord’s evidence of rising costs and comparable rent data persuasive and within a reasonable range.

The Commission considered tenant impact, noting limited ability of residents to relocate manufactured homes and the disproportionate effect on fixed-income households. Colchester Commons was referenced as a resident-owned community, with differing views on comparability to privately owned parks.

Deliberations:

The Commission further deliberated under CGS §7-148c, weighing all statutory factors, including landlord operating costs, market comparables, resident income and financial burden, maintenance and service levels, and reinvestment into the community. The Commission also applied the statutory balancing test to determine whether the proposed increase met the legal standard of being harsh and unconscionable, prior to motions and voting.

Vote on Findings and any Orders/Recommendations:

Motion #1 - Robert Rimmer *Moved* and Ellen Oppenheimer *Seconded* a motion that by the standards and criteria set by Connecticut State Statute CGS 7-148c the proposed increase is “harsh and unconscionable” and the increase of \$27.00 be denied.

L. Bombalicki, J. Byrne, E. Oppenheimer, R. Rimmer - Yes.
D. Cutillo - No.

Motion passed [4-1].

Discuss Timeline for Written Decision:

Motion #2 - Robert Rimmer *Moved* and John Byrne *Seconded* a motion that the committee set a future date for the written decision.

L. Bombalicki, J. Byrne, D. Cutillo, E. Oppenheimer, R. Rimmer - Yes.

Motion unanimously passed [5-0].

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:48 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie Sciascia

Jamie Sciascia
Clerk