

Affordable Housing, Human Rights, Model Zoning and High Rise Living



Westchester County Government Celebrates April as National Fair Housing Month

In recognition of the month of April as National Fair Housing Month, Westchester County Government is highlighting the work of the Human Rights Commission (HRC) towards implementing and enforcing the County's Fair Housing Law across Westchester. Fair Housing is a right for every person in every city, town and village, and the County's Fair Housing Law prohibits discrimination based on 17 protected categories. These categories include but are not limited to: race, color, religion, national origin, disability, sex, sexual orientation, familial status, source of income, citizenship status and status as a domestic violence victim.

But the law is not just about finding and stopping discrimination.

In 1967 the centers of major cities across the U.S., notably in nearby Newark, were burned to the ground in uprisings by Black residents. President Lyndon Johnson appointed Otto Kerner, a white, business-oriented Midwestern governor and WWII vet, to head up a commission to figure out why. The Kerner Commission spoke directly and forthrightly when issuing its report on February 29, 1968, laying the blame squarely on government-created racial segregation:

"What happened? Why did it happen? What can be done to prevent it from happening again?

To respond to these questions, we have undertaken a broad range of studies and investigations. We have visited the riot cities; we have heard many witnesses; we have sought the counsel of experts across the country.

This is our basic conclusion: Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal."

The most immediate result of the report, and of the additional destruction after the death of Dr. King, was passage of the long-languishing Fair Housing Act, on April 11, 1968. The new law imposed upon the federal government the legal and moral duty to undo a disgraceful past by affirmatively furthering fair housing and to impose on other levels of government receiving federal funds to do so as well and break the back of the old order of housing segregation.

## Model Ordinance Provisions



Westchester County has developed <u>Model Ordinance Provisions</u> for local governments to adopt as a way to encourage new fair and affordable housing. A key requirement of the <u>Housing Settlement</u>, the Model Ordinance Provisions were developed with input from local officials as a tool for Westchester municipalities to facilitate the land-use approvals and construction of fair and affordable housing.

As part of the Housing Settlement, the County has a written Discretionary Funding Policy, which requires cities, towns and villages seeking money controlled by the County, or otherwise subject to the County's discretion for allocation, to be in substantial compliance with the major substantive provisions of the Model Zoning Ordinance. In recent on-the-record committee meetings with our Planning Commissioner, I have personally confirmed that holding the municipalities accountable for AFFH is still our County policy, and I personally pledge that I will fight to keep that the truth in implementation and not just as a matter of nice-sounding liberal rhetoric. IT'S THE LAW!

The Model Ordinance Provisions suggest that all future housing developments include no less than 10 percent of the units as fair and affordable units. Other elements include limiting the sales and rent prices and the income of the households eligible to apply for those units for a minimum 50-year period and encouraging more extensive marketing of the available housing opportunities.

And, here are a few new affordable housing opportunities rising up to reveal an impressive new skyline in New Rochelle..



Our friends at New Rochelle Business Improvement Development report that the new residential buildings found Downtown have some wonderful amenities – including a set number of affordable housing units. If you are interested in perhaps relocating to one, it's important you keep an eye on the upcoming application deadlines.

<u>The Housing Action Council</u> reports that April 20 is the deadline to enter into the lottery for the allotted units at **3Thirty3**, the new apartment building at the corner of Huguenot St and Centre Ave. <u>Click here</u> for more information.

<u>The Modera</u> expects to open the application for its units soon, while there is a wait list for the **360 Huguenot**, **The Huguenot**, the **Stella**, and the <u>Printhouse Apartments</u>.