

Monroe County Legislature

VICE PRESIDENT
MERCEDES VAZQUEZ SIMMONS AND
LEGISLATOR
RACHEL BARNHART

March 11, 2024

To The Honorable
Monroe County Legislature
39 West Main Street
Rochester, NY 14614

OFFICIAL FILE COPY	
No.	<u>240092</u>
Not to be removed from the Office of the Legislature Of Monroe County	
Committee Assignment	
HUMAN SERVICES	-L

RE: Establishing the Monroe County Committee on Housing

Honorable Legislators:

The purpose of this legislation is to create the Monroe County Committee on Housing to make recommendations to the Legislature on actions Monroe County can take to address regional housing issues including but not limited to homelessness, evictions, age-in-place, workforce housing, and first-time home buying while promoting affordable housing options. Housing has significant consequences on our community, as it can negatively impact public safety, healthcare, education, and workforce development.

There is ample evidence for the need for this Committee:

- Monroe County made more than 10,000 placements in emergency housing in 2023, and expects the need to increase this year;
- New York's public assistance shelter rent allowance has not changed since 2003 and stands at \$343 for a family of three occupying a two-bedroom apartment for Monroe County. The Fair Market Rent, however, is \$1,186 for a two-bedroom unit;
- The Rochester Housing Authority has not opened the Section 8 waitlist for new applications since 2019. The waiting list for one-bedrooms in the units it manages was closed last fall;
- Monroe County has the fourth highest rate of evictions in the state, with 7.6% of renters facing evictions in 2022, leading to more than 8,500 eviction proceedings;
- The Children's Agenda reported that 8% of Rochester students were homeless at some point during the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years, which can lead to poor academic performance and behavioral issues;
- A Children's Agenda poll found that 76% of households with incomes below \$50,000 struggled to find housing they could afford;
- ACT Rochester reported that half of Monroe County households are "rent-burdened," meaning they spend 30% or more of their income on rent;
- Many community populations are projected to continue getting older. Consequently, this means the proportion of residents over the age of 55 will increase in the next 15 to 20 years. Age-in-place housing for senior citizens can meet the special housing needs and interests of this growing population;

- Workforce housing is housing built to serve families that exist between affordable housing and more higher-income housing. Typically, they serve families that earn between 80 and 120 percent of median income of the area market. Workforce Housing can provide the ability of workers to live in the community where they work; and
- A First-Time Home Buyer Metro Affordability Report finds that First-time buyers are typically constrained by tight budgets and credit history issues that make first-time home buying difficult. Low mortgage rates do not always help due to high prices and competition for homes.

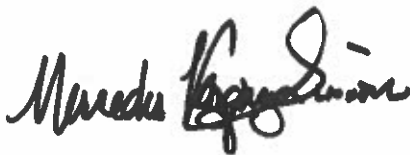
The Monroe County Committee on Housing is designed to be inclusive of multiple perspectives, stakeholders, and disciplines. A key question for members is what more can be done locally to aid individuals and families in need of safe and affordable housing and/or at risk of losing their homes. The creation of the Committee acknowledges that we cannot afford to wait for updated federal and state policies to meet the growing needs in our community.

The Committee shall be comprised of 15 members appointed by the President in accordance with Section C2-4(B)(5) of the Monroe County Code as follows:

- 1) Four (4) members chosen by the County Executive or his designee;
- 2) Two (2) Legislators chosen by the Majority Leader;
- 3) Two (2) Legislators chosen by the Minority leader;
- 4) Six (6) members appointed by the President, including three with past experience with housing issues; and
- 5) The Vice-President of the Legislature shall chair the Committee.

The establishment of the Committee will have no impact on the current Monroe County budget.

Respectfully submitted,



Mercedes Vazquez Simmons
Vice President



Rachel Barnhart
Legislator – District 17

By Legislators Vazquez Simmons and Barnhart

Intro. No. ____

RESOLUTION NO. ____ OF 2024

ESTABLISHING THE MONROE COUNTY COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE COUNTY OF MONROE, as follows:

Section 1. As the Monroe County Legislature recognizes that quality and affordable housing is vital to safe and thriving communities, the Monroe County Legislature authorizes the creation of the Monroe County Committee on Housing.

Section 2. The Monroe County Committee on Housing shall advise the Legislature on measures to reduce homelessness and increase housing affordability. The task force will include, but not be limited to, proposing ways to aid unhoused individuals and families, preventing evictions and constructing additional housing units.

Section 3. The Committee shall be composed of fifteen (15) voting members who are Monroe County residents and who shall be appointed by the President of the Legislature and confirmed by the Legislature in accordance with Section C2-4(B)(5) of the Monroe County Code in the following manner:

- 1) Four (4) members recommended by the County Executive or his designee;
- 2) Two (2) Legislators recommended by the Majority Leader;
- 3) Two (2) Legislators recommended by the Minority Leader;
- 4) Six (6) members recommended by the President of the Legislature, including three with past experience with housing issues; and
- 5) The Vice-President of the Legislature shall chair the Committee.

Section 4. The Monroe County Committee on Housing shall have a minimum of two public hearings.

Section 5. The Monroe County Committee on Housing shall deliver a report to the Legislature with initial recommendations on or about September 1, 2024. Following reports will be delivered to the Legislature as determined by the Chair.

Section 6. Staff to the Legislature President and Majority will prepare all minutes, notes and reports for the Monroe County Committee on Housing.

Section 7. The Committee shall terminate upon the issuance of its recommendation to the Legislature.

Matter of Urgency

File No. 24-_____

ADOPTION: Date: _____

Vote: _____