

Dupervil elected to Norwalk Housing Authority board

By Robert Koch

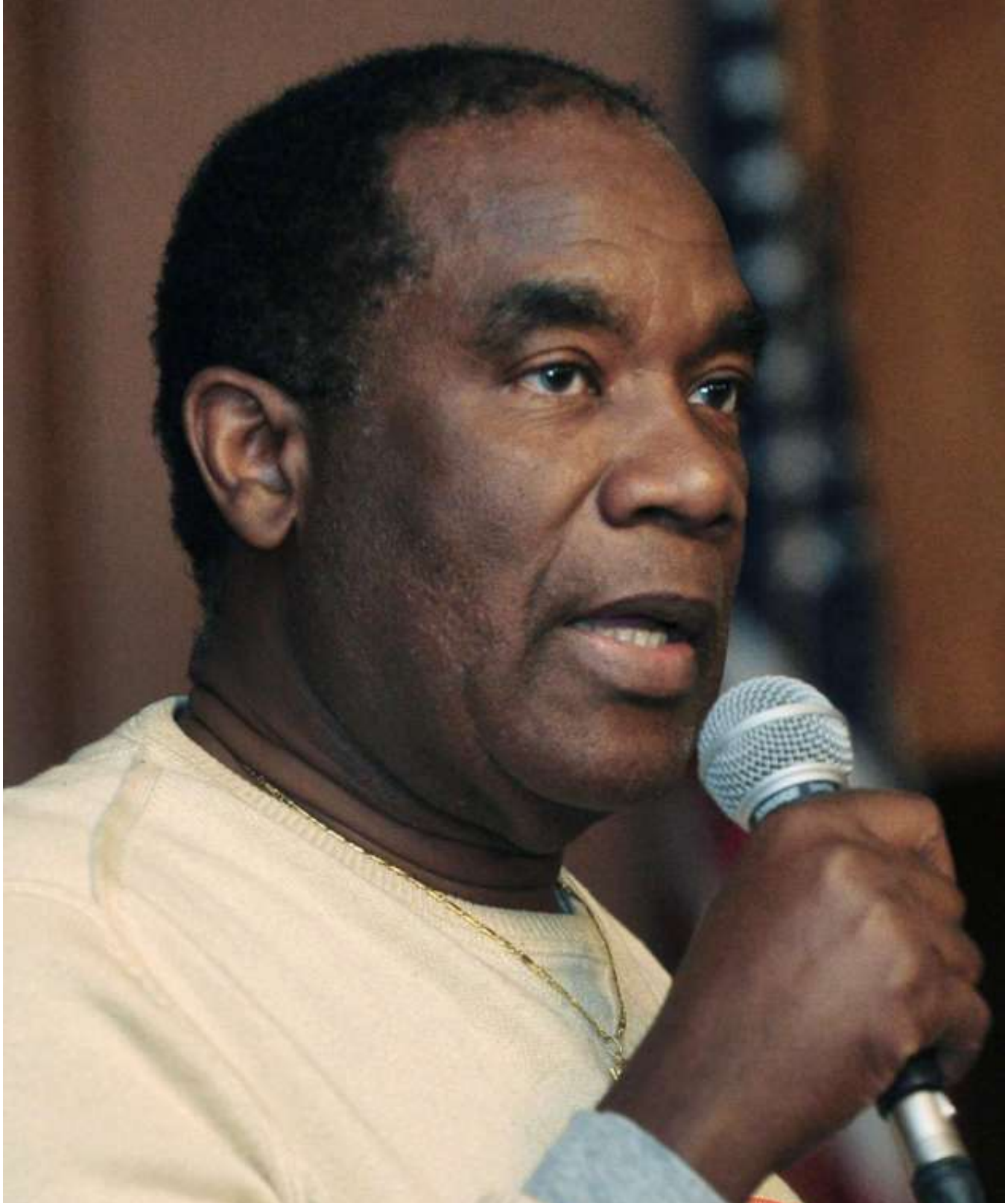




Photo: Erik Trautmann / Hearst Connecticut Media

Rahoul Dupervil speaks out during a Community Conversation for DACA and TPS recipients Friday night, January 26, 2018, in the Community Room at City Hall in Norwalk, Conn. Dupervil defeated Daisy Franklin and Marilyn Dixon to serve as resident commissioner of the Norwalk Housing Authority Board of Commissioners. Dupervil will fill the unexpired term of Deidra Davis who moved out of Norwalk recently.

NORWALK — Rahoul Dupervil, a leader of the local Haitian-American community and longtime member of the city’s Human Relations Commission, has been elected to serve as tenant commissioner on the Norwalk Housing Authority Board of Commissioners.

Balloting was held from noon to 8 p.m. Tuesday at City Hall and the South Norwalk Branch Library with assistance from the Norwalk League of Women Voters. Turnout was low among the roughly 4,000 public-housing authority tenants eligible to vote.

Dupervil received 20 votes, defeating fellow write-in candidate Marilyn Dixon (one vote) and declared candidate Daisy Franklin (11 votes), according to NHA officials.

“I want this job because I’m the guy who’s really passionate about tenant housing,” Dupervil, a resident of the Housing Authority complex at 20 West Ave., said Wednesday. “If there’s anything I can do to make the tenants more satisfied of the service that’s provided to them, that’s what I’m going to be there for.”

He cited residents’ complaints about towing at Roodner Court and other Housing Authority complexes as one reason he ran.

Franklin, Human Relations Commission vice chairwoman and National Low Income Housing Coalition board member, said Wednesday that she wishes Dupervil well on the board and plans to run again.

“I represent the residents on a national level and I have represented them on a state level, and I had hoped to represent them on a local level,” said Franklin, a former Roodner Court resident who now lives in public housing on South Main Street. “I more than likely will try to run next year.”

Dupervil will fill the unexpired term of resident commissioner Deidra Davis, who stepped down last year upon moving out of Norwalk. Her term runs through May 31. Dupervil said he’ll likely seek reelection at that time.

Born in Haiti, Dupervil is a founder of the United Haitian American Society, which for several years offered passport renewal services at City Hall. He has sat on the Human Relations Commission since 2002, chairing and vice-chairing it at times.

Five years ago, NHA residents petitioned successfully to have the tenant commissioner become an elected position. Under a new state law at the time, residents gained the right to elect their tenant commissioner rather than have the post appointed by the mayor.

Dupervil will join mayoral appointees Cesar Ramirez (chairman) Jeffrey Ingraham (vice chairman), Sheri Brown and Brenda-Penn Williams on the five-member board that oversees the NHA.

“We welcome him to the board and look forward to working with him,” said NHA Executive Director Curtis Law, before addressing matters before the board. “The big issue is working toward the completion of Washington Village, and there’s always concern about the funding from the government and funding from the state as well given the financial condition of both the state and federal government.”

The NHA, developer Trinity Financial and general contractor Dimeo Construction Co. plan to complete this spring the first phase of the Washington Village Transformation Plan. Work is nearly complete on the 80 new apartments at 13 and 20 Day St.

The larger Washington Village Transformation project calls for razing Washington Village and its 136 apartments and building 273 apartments in five new buildings. The new complex will be a mixture of workforce, public-housing and market-rate apartments.

Dupervil also joins the board as it searches for a new executive director. Law, who has headed the NHA since 1975, tendered his retirement notice last year but continues to serve as executive director at the board's request. He said his contract has been renewed through March but he'll remain afterward as needed.

“The idea is that I would remain until they found someone, so that I could provide some sort of transition,” Law said.