

**MINUTES**

**MOBILE MANUFACTURED HOME ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**SEPTEMBER 17, 2008**

The Mobile Manufactured Home Advisory Council convened at 10:05 a.m. in Room 117 of the State Office Building, 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106.

Members Present:	Ben Castonguay	CT Real Estate Commission Member, Acting Chairperson
	Myriam Clarkson	Mobile Manufactured Home Industry Rep.
	Leonard S. Campbell	Town Planner
	George Cote	Banking Industry Representative
	Jennifer Ponte	DECD Representative
	Keith Jensen	Park Owner
	Marcia L. Stemm	Park Owner
	Al Hricz	Park Tenant
	Erwin Cohen, Ph.D	Senior Citizen
Member Absent:	Bennett Pudlin	Attorney at Law, Acting Chairperson
	Timothy Coppage	CT. Housing Finance Authority Rep.
	Michelina G. Lauzier	Park Tenant
	Neil Gervais	Park Tenant
Board Vacancies:	One Representative of the Housing Advisory Committee	
	One Park Owner	
DCP Staff Present:	Nelson Leon, Advisory Council Secretary	
	Vicky Bullock, Administrative Hearings Attorney	
Public Present:	Erik J. Ness	
	Joe Mike	
	Whitney Merrill	
	Joelen Gates	
	Myklyn Mahoney	
	Deborah Gifford	
	Ernie Coleep	
	Mark R. Berkowitz	

**Note:** The administrative functions of this Board are carried out by the Department of Consumer Protection, Occupational and Professional Licensing Division.  
For information call Richard M. Hurlburt, Director, at (860) 713-6135.

**Agency Web site:** [www.ct.gov/dcp](http://www.ct.gov/dcp)

### **APPOINTMENT OF ACTING CHAIRPERSON**

The Board voted unanimously to appoint Ben Castonguay as Acting Chairperson for today's meeting.

### **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The Advisory Council voted unanimously to approve minutes of the June 18, 2008 Mobile Manufactured Home Advisory Council meeting.

### **NEW ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBER APPOINTMENT**

Appointment letter dated July 10, 2008 from the Honorable Governor M. Jodi Rell, concerning the appointment of Erwin Cohen, Ph.D to the Mobile Manufactured Advisory Council as a Senior Citizen living in a manufactured mobile home park, in succession to Ed Bartsch.

Erwin Cohen, Ph.D was sworn-in by Vicky Bullock, DCP Administrative Attorney.

### **DCP WEBSITE PRESENTATION**

Ms. Bullock conducted a video presentation to the Advisory Council concerning the DCP website ([www.ct.gov/dcp](http://www.ct.gov/dcp)). The presentation was concentrated on navigating through and accessing information on the mobile home link relating to the mobile home park application, mobile home park seller's application, mobile home park license verification, mobile home park roster download, mobile home advisory council meeting minutes, complaint forms and procedures, mobile home associations & organizations, mobile home governmental & federal agencies, mobile home legal assistance to low income persons, mobile national organizations, mobile home purchase & rental resources and mobile home laws & regulations (Connecticut General Statutes, Chapter 412).

## **REPORT FROM SUB-COMMITTEES**

### **EDUCATION COMMITTEE – No Report**

### **LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE**

Mr. Jensen reported on the abandonment statute as it related to the Shelton, CT case, in which an Amicus Brief is being submitted to try to help the case along which is currently under appeal. The Town of Shelton, CT took the community to court concerning the taxes due to the town, which the town feels are not wiped out under the abandonment statute. The case was decided in the Town's favor and that decision is being appealed. The premise of the abandonment statute is to get abandoned homes out of communities so that they can be replaced with an asset producing home for the benefit of the community and town. The CT Manufactured Housing Association is working on an Amicus Brief concerning this matter and upon completion, will present it to the Advisory Council for their review and support.

The Advisory Council voted to create a resolution expressing the Advisory Council's support for the statute, pending further review and acceptance of the final language. Advisory Council member Erwin Cohen was opposed due to lack of financial or insurance resources available to the mobile home owner that would serve to prevent the abandonment of the home.

### **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

- Mr. Cote reports that there are no reverse mortgages available. However, there is conventional financing available for mobile homes.
- Mr. Berkowitz reported that a scheduled 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting with CHFA and the Finance Sub-committee did not take place to discuss the Mobile Manufactured Homes Mortgage Program launched in November 2006. The program was designed to provide mortgages to first-time homebuyers purchasing mobile manufactured homes to be located in one of the Connecticut's 200 mobile manufactured home communities licensed by the Department of Consumer Protection. The discussions were intended to focus on how the program could be expanded to meet the needs of first-time homebuyers, elderly households who have sold larger homes in an effort to downsize, seniors with established credit who are looking to downsize and purchase a mobile home, a single family purchase programs and a park purchase program.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

- **Tax collection issue**

There was no one present at today's meeting concerning this matter.

- **Oil spill / leak issue**

Ms. Clarkson reported on finding an organization offering an affordable oil tank insurance policy which provides a clean-up of an oil spill up to one hundred thousand dollars per clean-up, provides a new tank and replaces the lost oil that was in the tank, all for under two hundred dollars per year, per each oil tank.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- **Solar and photovoltaic panels**

Erwin Cohen reported information on solar panels & photovoltaic panels as an alternative source of energy due to the energy crunch, and felt it could provide a savings to mobile home owners.

- **Harrington Mobile Home Park**

Connecticut Legal Services (CLS) attorneys, representing tenants who are elderly, disabled and/or low-income at Harrington Mobile Home Park (HMHP) in Plainfield, CT together with Erik Ness and Jennifer Janelle from Shipman and Goodwin LLP, who represent the owner of HMHP, are asking the Mobile Manufactured Home Advisory Council for support and assistance in finding financial resources to pay for extensive water and sewer improvements in the park which have been ordered by the state Departments of Public Utility Control, (DPUC) Public Health (DPH) and Environmental Protection (DEP).

HMHP is at risk of closing because the sole owner, Constance Hoyle, an elderly widow in her eighties, does not have the financial resources to pay the estimated cost of over \$1.2 million to connect the park to the public water supply and municipal sewer system as ordered by the state regulatory agencies. HMHP has about 32 to 35 tenants who will be homeless and lose their mobile homes if the park is condemned and closed for lack of water and sewer.

CLS represents thirteen of the tenants at HMHP who qualify for legal aid, but the interest of all tenants in the park, regardless of income, is to keep the park open with affordable rents. Mrs. Hoyle, the owner, is also working to keep the park open with reasonable rents. If other financial resources can be found to pay for the infrastructure, she has promised to keep the rents reasonable with only modest, cost of living rent increases, as she has done for over 20 years.

The owner's and tenants' attorney believe the park could remain open and affordable if two sources of funding can be obtained:

1. The DPUC and DPH must order that the cost of connecting the park to the public water supply be socialized or spread among all Connecticut Water Company customers, which was estimated to be a one time charge of about \$1.00 per customer; and
2. The Town of Plainfield or a municipal entity such as the Plainfield Housing Authority must apply for a federal grant and low-interest loan for the sewer project which is available from Rural Development, part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The Advisory Council voted unanimously to draft a letter encouraging the Town of Plainfield to work with the attorney for the park owner and the residents to explore all avenues, including applying for the federal sewer grant.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nelson Leon  
Advisory Council Secretary

**The next meeting of this Advisory Council is scheduled for Wednesday, December 10, 2008.**