

CONNECTICUT ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HOUSING MATTERS



Reply to:

16 Main St., 2nd floor New Britain, CT. 06051 (860) 616-4472

NOTICE OF NEXT MEETING

2:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 10, 2020

This meeting will be held electronically by Zoom. Details as to how to access the meeting will be distributed soon.

Minutes of the Meeting of March 11, 2020

<u>Council members present</u>: Richard DeParle, Kathy Flaherty, Venoal Fountain, Jane Kelleher, Houston Putnam Lowry, Carl Lupinacci, Raphael Podolsky, Dave Purvis, Richard Tenenbaum, John Wirzbicki

<u>Council members absent</u>: Michael Clinton, Loo Dahlke, Stephanie Ma, Sam Neves, David Pels, J.L. Pottenger, Jr., Margaret Suib

<u>Others present</u>: Hon. James Abrams, Nancy Hronek, Jeff Mastroianni, William Pitt, Maura Coyle (by phone), V. Edward Quinto

The meeting was called to order by the Chairperson, Raphael Podolsky, at 2:02 pm at the Quinnipiac University Law School, Room 116, 370 Bassett Road, North Haven, CT.

1. <u>Preliminary matters</u>

a. <u>Approval of agenda</u>: The agenda was approved unanimously on a motion made by Kathy Flaherty and seconded by Houston Putnam Lowry.

b. <u>Approval of the minutes</u>: The minutes of the December 11, 2019 meeting were approved on a motion by John Wirzbicki, seconded by Houston Putnam Lowry.

2. <u>Public comment</u>: None (at this time).

3. <u>Updates from the housing courts</u>

a. <u>Coronavirus update</u>: Judge Abrams informed the Council that the Judicial Branch is working on COVID-19 plans "as we speak" in response to the pandemic. The courts have to remain open for criminal cases. Civil cases, including housing cases, have a lower priority. To limit the spread of the pandemic, steps are being taken to limit the number of people who physically enter courthouse buildings. Physical presence may be dangerous for both litigants and court staff. Some Council members expressed concern about the adverse public health consequences of court hearings, evictions, and displacement during an emergency in which people are supposed to stay home. There was some suggestion of whether expanded use of technology and virtual hearings would be appropriate in eviction cases, but there was also concern about due process implications and access to the clerks' offices, especially because such a high percentage of defendants are self-represented. It was noted that the pandemic is imposing financial harm to both landlords and tenants, and concern was also expressed that some landlords might illegally resort to self-help. No formal action was taken by the Council at this time.

b. <u>Prosecutors</u>: Maura Coyle reported by phone. The housing prosecutors are doing as much education as possible to get 100% compliance. They have had success in hoarding cases by treating them as mental health issues, rather than criminal prosecutions. The Departments of Social Services, Aging, and Disability Services have been involved. This permits more outreach and connection to doctors for evaluation. The problem is that there are insufficient mental health services available. If a hoarder rejects DSS services, DSS must walk away. The need is for a collaborative effort between code enforcement and others. There is also a need to look at competency issues regarding hoarders, which can require probate court involvement. Hoarding cases are very time-consuming because they involve much pre-prosecutorial activity and they may not result in a warrant.

c. <u>Mediators</u>: Bill Pitt reported that the housing courts currently have enough mediators to handle the caseload. Two more foreclosure mediators are being cross-trained for housing mediation.

d. <u>Clerks and case processing</u>: The Hartford Housing Court has a new deputy clerk. The Council received a complaint from a landlord attorney about a matter in the Hartford Housing Court being scheduled six weeks out. Bill Pitt says that scheduling is usually two to three weeks, so that there must have been some unique aspect to that case. Atty. Nancy Hronek

reported that self-represented tenants in the Hartford court are not being advised about fee waivers and are being told that they cannot attach a second page to any motions. Bill Pitt will check with the clerk's office on these practices and will report back to the Council.

4. <u>Other matters</u>

a. <u>Public comments</u>: V. Edward Quinto asked questions about the appeal process and about denials of motions to open without a hearing. Further discussion of the denial of motions without a hearing was tabled to the next meeting.

b. <u>Website disclaimer</u>: The website disclaimer is posted in at least two places on the Judicial website, although only one is conspicuous. The Forms Committee will examine further.

c. Access to online data: Tabled.

d. <u>Forms</u>:

-- Nancy McGann reported that a plain language expert is looking at the housing forms.

-- The Forms Committee reported its recommended revisions of the answer and special defense form, the motion to open, the stay of execution, and the motion for use and occupancy. The Committee's report is attached as Appendix A. There was much discussion, including whether the proposed revisions were sufficiently plain language and whether the motion to open should be split into separate forms. The Committee report was referred back to the Committee for further review. In addition, Nancy Hronek was added to the Forms Committee and the Chairperson agreed that notice will be sent prior to the next Forms Committee meeting inviting other interested persons to join the Committee.

e. <u>Housing court judge assignments</u>: Judge Abrams advised that Judicial has been trying to change the perception that housing court is not a desirable assignment. In reality, it is a good way train new judges in their duties and to help develop case management skills. Judicial is also holding housing roundtables to build informal mentor relationships between housing court judges and judges handling housing cases in the GA courts. The emphasis is on the importance of treating people decently and moving the docket.

f. Bridgeport courthouse: Tabled.

g. <u>Computer Data and Research Committee</u>: With the help of a referral from the Connecticut Legal Rights Project, the Committee has obtained an intern to help build the

Council's capacity to obtain and analyze data about housing court cases. Judicial has been very cooperative in providing data access and training.

h. <u>Clerk's office and mediator staffing</u>: Tabled.

i. Lawyer-for-a-day pilot programs: Tabled.

j. <u>Small claims booklet</u>: The Council has obtained a law student intern to help with updating the booklet.

5. <u>Legislative report</u>: The Housing Committee has completed action on its bills. The Chairperson will distribute a list. [Post-minutes note: A list is attached as Appendix B, but all bills died without further action because the legislature recessed within a few days after the Advisory Council meeting and did not return prior to its mandatory adjournment on May 6.]

6. <u>Other advisory council projects for the next 12 months</u>: Tabled.

7. <u>Other business</u>: Tabled.

8. <u>Adjournment</u>: A motion to adjourn was made by Houston Putnam Lowry, seconded by Richard Tenenbaum, and approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 4:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Flaherty Secretary

NEXT MEETING: 2:00 pm, June 10, 2020, by Zoom. Further information will be distributed.

APPENDIX A

Report of the Forms Committee

REPORT OF THE FORMS COMMITTEE March 4, 2020

Attached are my attempts to revise the four forms along the lines recommended at the February 21 meeting of our Committee. These are:

| JD-CV-51 | Motion to open judgment |
|----------|---|
| JD-HM-6 | Summary process answer to complaint |
| JD-HM-21 | Stay of execution application - Summary process |
| JD-HM-27 | Motion for use and occupancy payments and objection |

We also considered Form JD-HM-22 [Affidavit of Non-Compliance with Stipulation] at our meeting. We recommend that the Council consider whether this Form should be revised so as to (1) apply to whichever party is claiming non-compliance; (2) to apply to non-monetary alleged breaches; &/or (3) if, instead, a separate Form should be created for a defendant to use claiming a breach by the plaintiff. In that regard, Mr. Pitt reported that some Housing Courts have developed "an informal defendant's version" of this Form, and he agreed to gather examples of them for the Committee (or Council) to review as the above options are weighed.

The Committee agreed to defer its review of Forms ## -23, -24, -26, & -19/-35 to a future meeting.

Sorry I cannot join you for the Council's meeting on March 11, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,

J.L. Pottenger, Jr., Committee Chair

| MOTION TO OPEN JUDGMENT SMALL CLAIMS AND HOUSING MATTERS) ID-CV-51 Rev.6-19 C.G.S. §§ 52-212, 52-212a, 52-259c P.B. §§ 17-4, 17-43, 24-31 | | STATE OF CONNECTICUT SUPERIOR COURT www.jud.ct.gov |
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| NOTICE: This motion must be filed with the correct fee require section 52-259c(a) of the Connecticut General Statu (Name and address of plaintiff or plaintiffs alto | ites. | Court Use Only MTOPJH SCMTO |
| (Name and address of defendant or defendant | it's attorney) | ADA NOTICE The Judicial Branch of the State of Connecticut compiles with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you need a reasonable accommodation in accordance with the ADA, contact a court clerk or an ADA contact person listed at www.jud.ct.gov/ADA. |
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| | SUMMARY PROCESS (EVICTION) ANSWER TO COMPLAINT JD-HM-5 Rev. 8-19 C.G.S. §§ 474-44, 478-5, 478-7, 478-15, 478-20, 478-20e, 478-23c, 478-33, 478-57, 49-31p | ADA NOTICE The Judicial Branch of the State of Connecticut complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you need a reasonable accommodation in accordance with the ADA, contact a court clerk or an ADA contact person listed at www.jud.ct.gov/ADA. | STATE OF CONNECTICUT SUPERIOR COURT www.jud.ct.gov |
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| MOTION FOR USE AND PAYMENTS AND OBJEC JD-HM-27 Rev, 10-19 C,G.S. § 47a-265 | | | | F CONNECTICUT UPERIOR COURT www.jud.ct.gov |
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Dockel nümber District of: Housing Session at Name of case **Objection to Use and Occupancy Payments** I object to the motion or order for use and occupancy payments for the following reasons: USE THIS TO REPLACE Current Notice to As" IF YOU OBJECT TO PAYING NUTO COURT THE AMOUNT REQUESTED ABOUT OR IF SUD WHAT & HEARING ON THIS MOTTON, YOU MUST FILE AN OBSECTION WITHIN FIVE DAYS OF WHEN MOTTONFILED on page one. Certification I certify that a copy of this document was or will immediately be mailed or delivered electronically or non-electronically on (date) to all attorneys and self-represented parties of record and that written consent for electronic delivery was received from all attorneys and self-represented parties of record who received or will immediately be receiving electronic delivery. Name and address of each party and attorney that copy was malled or delivered to *If necessary, attach additional sheet or sheets with name and address which the copy was mailed or delivered to Signed (Signature of Defendent/Tenent, Attorney for Defendent/Tenent) Print or type name of personalgoing Date signed Malli ass (Number, street, lown, state and zip code) Telephone number JD-HM-27 Rev. 10-19 (Page 2 of 2)

| AFFIDAVIT OF NONCOMPLIANCE WITH STIPULATION | |
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| JD-HM-22 Rev. 7-19 P.B. § 17-53 | |

STATE OF CONNECTICUT SUPERIOR COURT www.jud.ct.gov

| COURT USE ONLY |
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| AFFNWS |
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ADA Notice The Judicial Branch of the State of Connecticut complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you need a reasonable accommodation in accordance with the ADA, contact a court clerk or an ADA contact person listed at www.jud.ct.gov/ADA.

| Judicial District at | Housing Session at | Docket Number |
|--|-----------------------|---------------|
| Address of court (Number, street, town and zip code) | | |

Name of case

| Date of judgment | _ | | |
|------------------|-------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| or court order | Use and occupancy | Amount due: | Payment date(s) |
| | Arrearage | Amount due: | Payment date(s) |

The undersigned hereby deposes and states the following:

- 1. I am over the age of eighteen years and I believe in the obligation of an oath.
- I am the person ordered to receive the above-mentioned payment(s); or, I am familiar with the accounting/financial books and records of the entity ordered to receive the above-mentioned payments, and I have personal knowledge of the matters stated herein and the facts set forth are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.
- On the above-mentioned date of judgment or court order, the defendant was ordered to pay use and occupancy and/or arrearage in the amount shown above, on or before the payment date(s) indicated.
- 4. To date, payment has not been received.
- 5. I therefore request that a Summary Process (Eviction) Execution for Possession issue.

| Signed (Affiant) | | | Print or type name and title of person signing | Date signed |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------|--|-------------|
| Subscribed and sworn to before me: | On (date) | Signed (Assistant | L Clerk, Notary, Commissioner of the Superior Court) | |

Certification

I certify that a copy of this document was or will immediately be mailed or delivered electronically or non-electronically or in hand on ______(date) to all attorneys and self-represented parties of record, and that written consent for electronic delivery was received from all attorneys and self-represented parties receiving electronic delivery. (If necessary, attach additional sheets with names, addresses and methods of delivery.)

Name and address of first attorney or party

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| Name and address of second attorney or party | | | Hand delivered Mailed |
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| Name and address of third attorney or party | | | Hand delivered Mailed |
| | | | Electronically delivered |
| Name and address of fourth attorney or party | | | Hand delivered Mailed |
| | | | Electronically delivered |
| Signed (Signature of filer) | Print or type name of person signing | | Date signed |
| Mailing address (Number, street, town, state and zip code) | | | Telephone number |
| | | FOR COL | URT USE ONLY |
| Notice To Defend | ant | File Date | |
| A Summary Process Execution will issue after the filing of this affidavit with the c execution issuing, you must file an object | ourt. If you object to the | | |
| the execution with the clerk at the court ad | | | |

| the new second | Housing Forms | | | | |
|----------------|---|---------|------|-------|------------|
| JD-HM-002 | Summary Process Execution for Possession (Eviction) | Housing | Rev. | 04/19 | HM002.pdf |
| JD-HM-003 | Claim of Exemption - Summary Process (Eviction) | Housing | Rev. | 03/19 | HM003.pdf |
| JD-HM-005 | Summary Process (Eviction), Answer to Complaint | Housing | Rev. | 08/19 | HM005.pdf |
| JD-HM-005P | Summary Process (Eviction), Answer to Complaint - Polish | Housing | Rev. | 08/19 | HM005P.pdf |
| JD-HM-005PT | Summary Process (Eviction), Answer to Complaint - Portuguese | Housing | Rev. | 08/19 | HM005PT.pd |
| JD-HM-005S | Summary Process (Eviction), Answer to Complaint - Spanish | Housing | Rev. | 08/19 | HM005S.pdf |
| JD-HM-007 | Notice to Quit (End) Possession | Housing | Rev. | 04/19 | HM007.pdf |
| JD-HM-008 | Summary Process (Eviction) Complaint, Nonpayment of Rent | Housing | Rev. | 02/19 | HM008.pdf |
| JD-HM-009 | Motion for Default for Failure to Appear and Judgment for Possession | Housing | Rev. | 05/19 | HM009.pdf |
| JD-HM-010 | Motion for Default for Failure to Plead and Judgment For Possession | Housing | Rev. | 03/20 | HM010.pdf |
| JD-HM-013 | Motion For Judgment By Stipulation | Housing | Rev. | 04/19 | HM013.pdf |
| JD-HM-016 | Reply to Special Defenses | Housing | Rev. | 06/19 | HM016.pdf |
| JD-HM-019 | Notice of Suit Housing Code Enforcement | Housing | Rev. | 03/19 | HM019.pdf |
| JD-HM-020 | Summary Process (Eviction) Complaint, Termination of Lease by Lapse of Time | Housing | Rev. | 04/19 | HM020.pdf |
| JD-HM-021 | Stay of Execution Application - Summary Process | Housing | Rev. | 02/19 | HM021.pdf |
| JD-HM-022 | Affidavit of Noncompliance With Stipulation | Housing | Rev. | 07/19 | HM022.pdf |
| JD-HM-023 | Entry and Detainer Proceedings, Summons and Order to Show Cause | Housing | Rev. | 04/19 | HM023.pdf |
| JD-HM-024 | Verified Lockout Complaint and Application for Temporary Injunction | Housing | Rev. | 04/19 | HM024.pdf |
| JD-HM-026 | Defendant's Affidavit and Objection to Execution | Housing | Rev. | 04/19 | HM026.pdf |
| JD-HM-027 | Motion for Use and Occupancy Payments and Objection | Housing | Rev. | 10/19 | HM027.pdf |
| JD-HM-032 | Summons - Summary Process (Eviction) | Housing | Rev. | 04/19 | HM032.pdf |
| JD-HM-034 | Summary Process Execution for Possession - Nonresidential | Housing | Rev. | 09/19 | HM034.pdf |
| JD-HM-035 | Complaint - Housing Code Enforcement | Housing | Rev. | 03/12 | hm035.pdf |
| JD-HM-039 | Application for Judgment of Possession - Deceased Tenant/Occupant - Summary Process (Eviction) | Housing | Rev. | 04/19 | HM039.pdf |
| JD-HM-040 | Summary Process Execution for Possession - Deceased Tenant/Occupant | Housing | New | 04/19 | HM040.pdf |

Forms Found : 25

APPENDIX B

<u>Bills of interest approved by the Housing Committee of the Connecticut General</u> Assembly prior to March 12, 2020

Note: All of these bills died because of the failure of the General Assembly to act on them prior to May 6, 2020.

Criminal record lookback:

<u>S.B. 109 -- Criminal records</u>: Requires the Department of Housing by regulation to impose limits on the consideration of criminal records in rental applications of no more than 3 years (misdemeanor) and 7 years (felony).

<u>H.B. 5122 -- Criminal records</u>: Imposes 3-year (misdemeanor) and 10-year (felony) limits on consideration of criminal records in rental applications; requires that crimes considered be relevant to behaviors required of tenants; requires that rejected applicants be allowed to explain their record.

Rent subsidy:

<u>S.B. 108 -- RAP/Open Choice pilot</u>: Requires the Department of Housing to run a 2-year pilot program for 10 Rental Assistance Program (RAP)-eligible families/year who have been in the school integration Open Choice program for at least one year, so that they can move to the town where their child goes to school.

<u>S.B. 188 -- Healthy Housing assistance pilot</u>: Requires the Department of Housing to conduct a similar 2-year pilot of 25 RAP certificates per year for families with children having persistent asthma, to be used in high and very high opportunity areas.

<u>H.B. 5125 – Public disclosure of Section 8 maximum fair market rents (FMRs)</u>: Requires housing authorities to post their Section 8 maximum FMRs on their website and inform 211 of these maximum rent limits.

Government policy:

<u>S.B. 105 -- Right to housing</u>: Articulates goal that state housing policies should promote the right to affordable, decent, safe and stable housing; requires state housing programs to give priority to households below 50% of median and to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

<u>H.B. 5123 – Municipal enforcement powers</u>: Allows towns to establish penalties for violation of landlord licensing ordinances; imposes strict liability for damages resulting from violations of lead regulations; authorizes stop-work orders for work being done without a building permit.

Public housing

<u>S.B. 110 -- Housing authority areas of operation</u>: Allows housing authorities to establish "expanded areas of operation" to include high and very high opportunity census tracts in nearby towns (within 15 miles of their town).

<u>S.B. 183 -- Free 211 calls</u>: Prohibits cell phone providers from deducting units or dollars from FCC-licensed lifeline cell phones for calls to 211.

<u>H.B. 5120 – Public housing voter registration</u>: Requires housing authorities to provide a voter registration application to new move-ins and at annual recertification.

Other landlord-tenant law:

<u>H.B. 5121 -- Family day care homes</u>: Strengthens zoning laws that allow in-home licensed family day care in residential zones; permits licensed family day care in appropriate rental units.

<u>H.B. 5124 -- Disclosure of foreclosures</u>: Requires the landlord to notify tenants of foreclosure actions; makes foreclosure the basis for a 47a-14h proceeding.

<u>H.B. 5126 -- Late fees, inspections, ombudsman</u>: Requires landlords to permit pre- and post-occupancy joint tenant/landlord inspections; caps late fees; creates Rental Housing Ombudsman in the Department of Housing.

<u>H.B. 5244 -- Lock change for domestic violence victims</u>: Requires landlords to promptly change locks at the request of a tenant who is a domestic violence victim and has obtained a judicial restraining order, or to permit the tenant to make the change himself or herself.