



# CONNECTICUT ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HOUSING MATTERS



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## Minutes of the Meeting of December 29, 2020

Council members present: Michael Clinton, Loo Dahlke, Kathy Flaherty, Venoal Fountain, Houston Putnam Lowry, Carl Lupinacci, Sam Neves, Raphael Podolsky, J.L. Pottenger, Dave Purvis, Margaret Suib, Richard Tenenbaum, John Wirzbicki

Council members absent: Richard DeParle, Jane Kelleher, Stephanie Ma

Members of the public present: Mary Conklin, Nancy Hronek, Elliot Lane, Sharon Levy, Michael Rell, John Souza, Eduardo Torrealba,

### 1. Preliminary matters

a. The meeting was held by Zoom. The meeting was called to order by the chairperson, Raphael Podolsky, at 4:12 pm.

b. The agenda was approved unanimously (motion by Houston Putnam Lowry, second by Loo Dahlke).

c. The chairperson advised that only members of the Advisory Council can vote but that others will be allowed to speak and participate in the meeting unless that becomes a practical problem for management of the meeting.

d. The minutes of the December 17, 2020, meeting were approved unanimously, with the correction that Eduardo Torrealba should be listed as a member of the public and not as a public official (motion by J.L. Pottenger, second by Venoal Fountain).

### 2. Biennial report

a. Status of December 17 discussion: It was agreed that consensus, reflected in a proposed draft of the report incorporating that consensus, had been reached on December 17 as to all but two issues. The chair noted that the consensus draft contained two minor changes since the December 17 discussion: (i) The report now cites C.G.S. 1-65aa as analogous to the Council's recommendation on notarization of signatures and (ii) one table had been added to the Appendix (Appendix C-7) and one table had been deleted (the former Appendix F). There was no objection to these changes.

b. Unresolved issues: Two unresolved issues were carried over from the December 17 meeting: (i) Whether a hearing should be required before an execution is issued and (ii) whether the eviction moratorium should be changed. Since the December 17 meeting, the Governor has extended the eviction moratorium until February 9, 2021, without any changes. It is not clear if any further extension will be up to the Governor or up to the legislature.

An extensive discussion of those two issues, as well as of the rental assistance program, followed. John Souza suggested that the Temporary Rental Housing Assistance Program (TRHAP) had been helpful when landlords and tenants were able to cooperate. Allowing landlords to apply is important. Grants need to be larger than \$4,000, especially now that the

pandemic has gone on for more than nine months. Concern was expressed that the new \$250 million program will not be operational soon in light of the length of time it has taken to implement the much smaller \$40 million TRHAP program. Both landlord and tenant members stressed the importance making expanded rental assistance available quickly so that landlords can be paid and tenants kept in place. It was noted that Massachusetts and New York now allow \$10,000 as the maximum rental assistance benefit -- more than double the Connecticut maximum. Landlords may be willing to forgive some rent if they can receive \$10,000. There was disagreement about whether payment of arrearages by TRHAP or any any successor program should result in a stipulated judgment or a withdrawal of a pending eviction. There was concern about whether arrearages should be paid if the tenant was unlikely to remain current in the rent. It appears that the new program will allow rent to be subsidized going forward as well as making payment on the arrearage.

In light of the absence of consensus on the two issues carried over from December 17, it was moved to delete both of those proposals from the draft report (motion by John Wirzbicki, second by Richard Tenenbaum). After further discussion, the motion was passed unanimously with one absention (Carl Lupinacci). The amended biennial report was then approved unanimously (motion by Houston Putnam Lowry, second by Loo Dahlke).

It was decided to call a special meeting to continue the discussion of the rental assistance program. That meeting was scheduled for 4:00 pm on January 14, 2021.

3. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was adopted unanimously (motion by Houston Putnam Lowry, second by Venoa Fountain). The meeting adjourned at 4:51 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathy Flaherty, Secretary