



CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR HOUSING MATTERS



Reply to:

Meeting Minutes of December 13, 2000

In attendance: Richard DeParle, Jeff Hammer, Ivan Hirsch, David Pels, Joe Wincze, Raphael Podolsky, Sandra Desrosiers, Suzanne Colasanto, Hon. L. Paul Sullivan, Keith Currier, John Rowland, Courtney Anderson, Michael J. Flynn, Kristen Rinehart-Totten, Steve Pereira

1. **Call to order:** The meeting was called to order at 2:15 p.m. The minutes of the September 13, 2000 were approved.
2. **Judge assignment report:** New Haven and Bridgeport have retained judges. Judge Sullivan has been assigned to Hartford Housing Court as of the end of November 2000. Until the first of January 2001 both Judge Sullivan and Judge Crawford will hear housing court cases. After January 1, 2001 Judge Crawford will go to Criminal Court and Judge Sullivan will remain with the Hartford Housing Court.
3. **Advisory Council Appointments:** Any party interested in an appointment to the Council must complete the necessary applications and submit all forms as required by the Governor's office. Once the forms are properly and completely submitted, acknowledgement letters should be received to confirm. If any applicant has not received such a letter they should contact the Governor's office directly. There is no confirmation that any appointments will be made by the Governor's office at this time.
4. **Housing Court Operations Report**
 - a. *Housing Prosecutor*
 - i. **Supervisory prosecutor** – K. Currier reported that J. Rothschild has been instated as the Supervisory Prosecutor and is conducting monthly meetings.
 - ii. **Prosecution Manual** – K. Currier reported that J. Rothschild is taking input for the manual and will present it to Chris Murano for approval. Once the manuals are finalized they will be distributed to the GA's that do not have housing prosecutors. R. Podolsky requested the Council be allowed to review the Prosecution Manual before it is published and distributed. K. Currier will relay that information to Judy
 - iii. **Police academy training curriculum** – Training in police departments is currently operating on an as needed basis. Prosecutor's office would like to pursue a heavier rotation.

- iv. **Case Tracking in GA courts** – Systems to be able to track criminal housing cases. J. Rothschild is currently working on a list of statutes Housing Prosecutors utilize. K. Currier reported that Chris Murano expressed this issue was a matter for judicial to address and prefers to leave it to them to resolve. The Clerk's office expressed concern that their staff would be burdened by the reporting whereas the PA's office could easily provide a count from their records. The matter was tabled until J. Rothschild could be present.
 - v. **Other Developments** – K. Currier reported that because of procedural set backs his Motor Vehicle caseload will not be alleviated until February 2001, instead of November 2000. 50% of his time in New London will be freed up for other matters. Currently 40-45 % of his week is dedicated to motor vehicle cases. After the transition in New London, only 10% of the P.A.'s time will be for motor vehicle responsibilities
- b. *Housing Clerks:*
- i. **Bridgeport court's relocation** – The new courtroom is one-third the size of the previous area. The Judge's bench is too close to hall and the noise level is disruptive to the court. A greater increase in hall traffic. The move was made over night without any planning stage involved. Housing specialists are assigned to one room and can negotiate only one case at a time due to privacy issues. The Council considers this situation to be an emergency that requires immediate resolution. The current arrangement is a necessary short-term solution that must be addressed within five years. And requests to be advised of re-location plans regarding the Housing Courts before they are carried out. A Committee for Bridgeport Housing Court matters was formed and will include R. Tenenbaum, I. Hirsch, R. DeParle and J. Wince.
 - ii. **Small Claims booklet for magistrate** – S. Colosanto has sent a memo to the magistrates with information regarding interest rates on security deposits, change in maximum increased to \$3,500 effective 10/1 and allowances for damages doubled over that threshold.
 - iii. **Activity honoring Vic Felgenbaum** - H. Putnam-Lowry is aware of the need to move forward in a timely manner on this activity.
 - iv. **Hartford Judge**- Judge Crawford and Judge Sullivan are both currently hearing housing matters in Hartford. Effective Jan. 1, 2001 Judge Sullivan will continue to hear housing court matters and Judge Crawford will be moved to Criminal Court.
 - v. **Hartford Housing Court telephone system** – J. Hammer reported that incoming calls to the housing court now roll over to all 8 or 9 lines. This is an improvement to the previous system of 3 roll over lines and then the caller was disconnected.]
 - vi. **Pamphlet update** – Spanish Tenant's guide, Spanish Rights and Responsibilities, English Landlord Guide, Spanish Landlord Guide are not ready for distribution.

- vii. **Entry of defaults for failure to appear** – the Committee agreed on the suggested language for the practice book revision should be “until second business day, not less than 48 hours.”
- viii. **Other developments-** C. Anderson raised the issue of parking in Hartford. Parking has historically been an issue for court visitors. J. Hammer will look into day parking passes for CRT Eviction Prevention Program coordinator and DSS Eviction Prevention Services Worker.

c. *Housing Specialists*

- i. Magally Coffey replaced Maureen Marquis as a Housing Specialist in the Bridgeport Housing Court.
 - ii. There is a freeze on hiring and supply ordering. Open positions are to be filled through transfers and promotion. Staff is down in all of the courts.
 - iii. There is a lack of space available in the Hartford Housing Court to the Eviction Prevention Program coordinators and their clients for confidential discussions. J. Hammer was unaware of the concern and will pursue a remedy. Courtroom C is a possible solution when it is not use for hearings.
5. **Approval of 2001 biennial report** – the Council reviewed the report and subject to changes approved the report and proposed amendment to 10-24-00 revised draft. R. Podolsky will make changes and S. Colasanto will review language.

6. **Other Business**

- a. S. Colasanto expressed concern regarding the consolidation of housing court cases from Norwich to New London. One concern is the adverse impact on users who are unable to arrange transportation to the new location.
- b. Next meeting is scheduled for March 14, 2001 at 2:00p.m. at the Connecticut Bar Association's offices on 30 Bank Street, New Britain. Garage parking will no longer be validated.
- c. Meeting adjourned at 4:20p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:
Sandra Desrosiers
Secretary