



CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR HOUSING MATTERS



Reply to:

Meeting Minutes of September 18, 2002

In attendance: Sandra Desrosiers, Lynn Farley, Richard Tenenbaum, Sonja Devitt, J. Andre Fournier, Michael J. Flynn, Richard DeParle, Roberta Oris Palmer, Cynthia Teixeira, Suzanne Colasanto Houston Putnam Lowery, Ivan Hirsch, Joe Wincze, Raphael Podolsky, Jeff Hammer, David Pels, Frank Dineen, Judy Decine

1. **Preliminary matters** The meeting was called to order at 2:12p.m.
 - a. *Approval of agenda:* The agenda was approved.
 - b. *Approval of minutes:* The minutes of the June 13, 2002 meeting were approved.

2. **Housing Court Operations Report**
 - a. *Housing Prosecutor (Judy Rothschild Decine)*
 - i. *Prosecution Manual updates:* Manual is completed but is not yet approved for release. Committee recommendations and opinions were considered. GA prosecutor training expected this fall.
 - ii. *Availability of housing inspection reports - David Pels.* David filed a freedom of information complaint because the prosecutors have instructed the inspectors that they can not release inspection reports. Code reports are public records under the Freedom of Information Act. Judy Decine will discuss with other Housing Prosecutors to get clarification for the Council.
 - iii. *Other developments - None raised.*

 - b. *Housing Clerks:*
 - i. *Staffing issues (Suzanne Colasanto)* No staffing issues. New Haven staff member coming back in October.
 - ii. *Web Site Update:* Website is up and running. New Haven housing court computerization is functioning. There are no immediate plans to add civil matters to online access. The Council recommends that civil matters received by housing courts should eventually be accessible through the web pages.
 - iii. *Pamphlet update:* Continue to wait for Spanish version of Tenant Rights and Responsibilities.
 - iv. *Clerk evaluation:* Tabled for future discussion
 - v. *Exemption claim forms David Pels:* Current form does not have a signature line for the Judge to sign specifying whether granted or denied. The Council requests those responsible for producing Judicial Branch forms to provide such a signature line. Also there is one Stipulated Agreement form being used infrequently or no longer that also needs an order line.
 - vi. *Issues related to particular court locations:* Norwalk Housing Session will not be moving to Stamford.

- ii. *Other developments*: None raised.
- c. *Housing Specialists*
 - i. Staff - Still under hiring freeze.
 - ii. Other developments - None raised.

3. Review of Draft of biennial report:

Introduction: The membership list of Council members will be adjusted to include active participants.

Section I: At the end of second paragraph, add "long term goal of adding civil cases to the web."

Section I(C): Because there are no current vacancies, this section should be deleted.

Section I(E): In the second paragraph, add the telephone numbers of the housing prosecutors.

Section III(A): If the Prosecutor's Manual is finalized before the December Council meeting, the last sentence of the first paragraph should be deleted: "The Council urges the Chief State's Attorney to finalize the manual as soon as possible."

Section IV(B): The section will be rewritten to recommend that (a) the small claims booklet should be revised to incorporate the current rules on maximum small claims jurisdiction and an update of the annual interest rates for security deposits, (b) the revised version should be distributed to all magistrates, (c) Judicial should continue to send an annual memo to magistrates informing them of each annual interest rate adjustment but need not send the booklet itself out annually to magistrates who already have it, and (d) Judicial should make sure that each magistrate receives a copy of the booklet and the most recent security deposit interest rate update.

Section IV(C): The last sentence will be deleted from this section. The deletion does not change the Council's policy on the rotation of housing court judges.

Section VI(C): The language should be clarified to refer explicitly to clerks who handle housing matters "in the non-housing court districts."

Section VI(D): The clinic operated by the Quinnipiac University School of Law should be referenced, and the language of the section should be directed more toward law schools than toward the court system. It would then read: "Law schools in the Connecticut area should be encouraged to consider replicating the mediation clinics of the University of Connecticut Law School and the Quinnipiac University School of Law."

Section VI(E): The section on supervision of prosecutors should be moved to Part III and rewritten to recommend that on matters of housing prosecution policy, all supervision of

prosecutors is through the supervisory prosecuting attorney and the Chief State's Attorney's office and not through the J.D. state's attorneys.

Changes to Appendix E:

Section I(A): The report should say that computerization is complete in New Haven.

Section I(E): The report should note that the Norwalk clerk position was filled in-house and that the only current vacancy is a housing specialist position.

Section I(F): Houston Putnam Lowry will verify whether changes in toll-free districts have resolved the problem of toll calls from Bristol to New Britain and Greenwich to Norwalk.

Section I(H): This will be revised to read, "Not consistently implemented."

Section I(I): This will be revised to read, "Not implemented."

Section II(A): This will be revised to read, "Partially implemented."

Section III(B): This will be changed to "Implemented" if the Prosecutor's Manual is finalized before the Council's December meeting.

Section VI(D): This will be changed to "A new mediation clinic has been initiated by the Quinnipiac University School of Law."

Section VI(I): The chairperson will discuss the status of post-judgment monitoring with Judy Decine.

Section VI(K): The chairperson will discuss the status of hiring standards with Judy Decine.

4. **Next meeting.** The next meeting of the Advisory Council will be at 2:00 pm on Wednesday, December 11.

5. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra DesRosiers, Secretary