



CITIZENS ADVISORY
COUNCIL FOR HOUSING MATTERS



Reply to: 80 Jefferson St.
Hartford, CT 06106
860-278-5688 x13

NOTICE OF MEETING

**2:00 p.m.
Wednesday, March 17, 2004**

Connecticut Bar Association
30 Bank St., New Britain
(860-223-4400 for directions)

Minutes of the meeting of December 17, 2003

Persons present: Richie DeParle, Michael J. Flynn, Andre Fournier, Jeff Hammer, Ivan Hirsch, Roberta Oris Palmer, David Pels, Raphael Podolsky, Richard Tenenbaum, Joe Wincze

I. Preliminary matters:

(1) Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 2:15 pm at the Connecticut Bar Association, 30 Bank St., New Britain.

(2) Approval of agenda: The agenda was approved.

(3) Approval of minutes: The minutes of the September 17, 2003, meeting were approved.

II. Housing court operations:

(1) Housing prosecution issues:

(a) Prosecutor's manual: Judy Dicine, who was unable to attend the meeting, has not as yet submitted a draft of the prosecutor's manual to the Advisory Council, as a result of which the Housing Prosecution Committee was unable to meet. That committee consists of David Pels, Richie DeParle, Rocco Guarnieri, Joe Wincze, and Rafie Podolsky. The chairperson will contact Judy Dicine, attempt to get a copy of the draft manual for review, and call a meeting of the committee.

(b) Lines of supervisory authority: Judy Dicine's immediate supervisor is the Deputy Chief State's Attorney. That person is now Paul Murray, since Chris Morano has become Chief State's Attorney. The extent of Judy's supervisory authority over the other housing prosecutors remains unresolved, and the Council continues to await a decision from

Mr. Morano.

(c) Advisement to non-citizens: The matter was tabled to the next meeting because of the absence of both Judy Dicine and Houston Putnam Lowry.

(d) Police training: Joe Wincze attended the police training in Waterbury, which was conducted by Judy Dicine, and thought that it was done well. Joe obtained permission to attend by contacting the Waterbury Police Department, which sponsored the training. About 80% of the 2½-hour training was spent on lockouts, but other subjects were covered as well. There were about 15 officers from Waterbury, Ansonia, Cheshire, and Wolcott. Many questions were asked.

(e) Availability of housing inspection reports: David Pels reported that he is aware of no problem in obtaining housing inspection reports from code enforcement agencies. The matter was therefore tabled indefinitely.

(f) No-heat prosecutions: David Pels reported that he is aware of no problem with no-heat cases being referred to the housing prosecutor. The matter was therefore tabled indefinitely.

(2) Clerk's office issues:

(a) Blue pages: The chairperson has received no response from a letter sent to Linda Vickers of the Judicial Branch, urging it to adopt the Council's 2003 recommendations for housing listings in the blue (government) pages of the telephone book. He will follow up by contacting Joseph D'Alesio.

(b) Fee for modification of stay of execution: The Council sent a letter to Joseph DelCiampo stating its view that the modification of a stay of execution does not require the payment of a fee to reopen a judgment. No response has at yet been received.

(c) Case reporting services: The matter was tabled to the next meeting because of the absence of Houston Putnam Lowry.

(d) Spanish booklets: Joe Wincze reported that the clerk in Bridgeport was unaware that there was a Spanish version of the booklet on tenant rights and responsibilities. It appears that New Britain is also unaware of the booklet. All court locations should have received an initial supply of the booklets, after which it is the clerk's responsibility to order more copies as needed. Richie DeParle will survey the housing courts and G.A. courts handling housing to determine which ones have copies of the booklet available, will ask those without booklets to request them from Judicial, and will report back at the next meeting.

(e) Computer issues: The New Britain computers are currently out of service, making it impossible to access case information. Some information about cases is stored only electronically and is not contained in the hard-copy file. All of the computers are old and crash too frequently. It would therefore be desirable for the computers to be upgraded.

(f) Staffing: Hartford, Bridgeport, and New Haven continue to have one vacant permanent clerical position each. It had been the Council's understanding that all of those vacancies would be filled, but none have been filled so far. The chairperson was directed to

communicate the Council's concern to the Judicial Branch.

(g) Notice to quit: Ivan Hirsch specifically commended Chief Housing Clerk Suzanne Colasanto for having arranged for the modification of the termination language of the notice to quit form. The form was reissued with revisions in April, 2003. Ivan also submitted for the Council's information his proposed epitaph:

Here he lies,
A man of wit.
He changed
The notices to quit.

The forms were wrong.
He made that clear.
So pay him homage
While you're here.

(3) Housing specialist issues:

(a) Staffing: The chairperson wrote the Judicial Branch about the need to fill the Rockville/Danielson/Middletown housing specialist position and spoke about it with Nancy Kierstead. It does not appear, however, that Judicial is planning any immediate replacement.

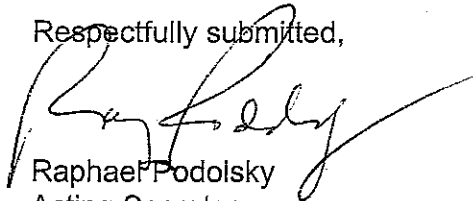
(b) Computers and printers: Two of the housing specialists in Hartford still have no computers, and the printer for the specialists is in the office of the housing clerk, from which it is inconvenient to retrieve copies. There are also no computers for specialists in Waterbury. Without a computer, the specialists have no knowledge of the status of the case and must do their negotiating without access to this information, except as it may be presented by the parties. Laptop computers would eliminate the need to write every stipulation by hand. They would also allow hook-up to printers in the courtroom. In contrast, the Bridgeport housing specialists have been doing stipulations by computer for the past several months.

III. 2004 legislation:

The only proposals mentioned were ones to (a) increase the small claims maximum to \$5,000 and (b) allow the landlord to hold the tenant's property post-eviction in residential evictions, as is now permissible in commercial evictions. The Council took no position on either proposal but it appeared, from the comments of individual members, that there was mainly support for the small claims proposal and mainly opposition to the post-eviction proposal.

IV. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,


Raphael Podolsky
Acting Secretary