



CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR HOUSING MATTERS



Reply to:

Meeting Minutes of June 18, 2003

In attendance: Richard DeParle, Rocco Guarneri, Rachele Heulsoma, Jeff Hammer, George Papallo, Frank Cochran, Joe Wincze, Raphael Podolsky, Sandra Desrosiers, Ivan Hirsch, Sonja Devitt, J. Andre Fournier, David Pels

1. Preliminary matters: The meeting was called to order at 2:05 p.m.
 - a. Approval of agenda: The agenda was approved.
 - b. Approval of minutes: The minutes of the December 11, 2002 meeting were approved.

2. Housing Court staffing issues: Things are not as bad as they previously seemed in the clerks' offices. The office clerk positions in New Haven and New Britain have been filled, and by transfer New Haven has a new assistant clerk. The only essential vacant position at the present time is an office clerk in Bridgeport. Tabled -- No court staff personnel present. The housing specialist situation, however, is serious. There are only 6.6 housing specialist positions currently filled (the statute requires nine). The specialists all now have secondary coverage areas to try to fill gaps, but one adverse result is that there are no longer specialists in Hartford on Wednesdays, which forces more cases onto the Monday and Tuesday calendars, because they cannot do cases on Wednesdays if they require mediation. If there are more than 50 items on a Monday or Tuesday calendar, it presents problems with getting through the calendar.

3. Housing Court Operations Report
 - a. Housing Prosecutor (Judy Dicine) Not present
 - i. S.B. 900 – Commercial Code Violations. This proposal was combined with another Senate bill and was passed. It provides clarification that all criminal code violations, including violations involving commercial properties, are within Housing Court jurisdiction.
 - ii. Prosecution Manual updates: Tabled.
 - iii. Lines of Supervisory Authority: Tabled
 - iv. Availability of housing inspection reports (David Pels): A question had arisen as to whether a housing code enforcement agency can refuse to make its code enforcement orders available to the public in a case which has been referred to the housing prosecutor. D. Pels had filed an appeal with the Freedom of Information Commission against Manchester, which claimed it was acting under prosecutor's orders, but the appeal was withdrawn when Manchester provided the information on the day of hearing. It was believed at the time that the issue had been resolved. However, there is now reason to believe that the Hartford prosecutor is advising towns not to release inspection reports. Tabled.

- v. No-heat prosecution policy – Tabled.
 - b. Housing Clerks: (Suzanne Colasanto) Not present
 - i. Blue pages listings: Tabled.
 - c. Housing Specialists (Cynthia Teixeira) Not Present.
4. Judicial Assignments: Judge Cocco now has Referee status. No anticipated reassignments for this September. There was a discussion about limiting the number of terms of a housing court judge and assigning referees as primary housing court judges, but there was no consensus among Council members.
5. 2003 legislative Report
- a. H.B. 5594 (Sec. 8) – Rehabilitation subcode – Passed
 - b. H.B. 6583 –Sub-metering and estimated water billing – Did not pass
 - c. S.B. 364 - Increase in Small Claims maximum – Did not pass
 - d. H.B. 5344 – Landlord liability for municipal storage of tenants' property – Died
 - e. S.B. 1004 – Revitalization of state public housing in New Britain, Stamford, Hartford, East Hartford and New London. – Did not pass
 - f. H.B. 6516 – Preservation of federally assisted housing. – Did not pass
 - g. S.B. 1160 – Transfer of \$80 million in Connecticut Housing Finance Authority cash and reserves to the General Fund. – Did not pass but proposal may be brought up again in the Special Session
 - h. S.B. 1037 – termination of Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program and Historic Home Ownership Tax Credit Program – Did not pass
6. Other business.
- a. Discussion regarding statutes and procedures for execution and handling of tenant's personal property after an eviction.
 - b. Discussion of authority of Fair Rent Commissions.
7. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:
Sandra Desrosiers
Secretary