



# CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR HOUSING MATTERS



Reply to:

## CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR HOUSING MATTERS MINUTES FOR WEDNESDAY JUNE 15, 2005

Persons present: Jennifer Barry, Judith Dicine, Peter Blasini, Sharon Levy, Richard DeParle, Sonia Devitt, Frank Dineen, Richard Tenenbaum, Joseph Wincze, Jeff Hamner, Roberta Palmer, David Pels, George Papallo

### 1. Preliminary matters

- a. The agenda was approved.
- b. The minutes of the December 15, 2004 and March 16, 2005 meetings were approved.

### 2. Housing court operations reports

#### a. Housing prosecutors (Judy Dicine)

##### i. Prosecutor-related housing legislation

Municipalities can require landlords to provide them with their residential address (Public Act 05-223). A task force has been organized by the Prosecutor's office to draft a model ordinance which municipalities can adopt after October 1, 2005.

##### ii. Housing prosecution and police training manuals

Revised manuals are available and were distributed for a final agreement by the Council's Prosecution Committee. The committee will review within two weeks and return comments to Rafie.

##### iii. Hartford Housing code enforcement issues

Robyn Johnson is the Hartford-New Britain Housing Prosecutor. Her Hartford caseload is increasing. Hartford now has a higher level of enforcement, and the City is increasing the number of referrals to the prosecutor. Lead and housing code referrals in particular are increasing.

##### iv. Eastern Connecticut prosecution

The current housing prosecutor spends only part of her time on housing cases. The position's present responsibilities include criminal and motor vehicle prosecutions. At least 50% of the eastern Connecticut prosecutor's present work load is housing matters, but there is enough work to justify full time on housing.

v. **Investigators**

The prosecutors could use an investigator and do not have one available. Staff support is also needed. Judy Hayes lacks a clerical position and that is a more critical issue. A motion was made for the Council to endorse the following priority request items for the housing prosecutors: a full time clerical support person for the Bridgeport-Norwalk prosecutor, one investigator for the housing prosecution unit, and full time assignment to housing cases for the eastern Connecticut prosecutor. The motion was approved.

b. **Housing clerks**

- i. **WestLaw exclusion of some housing court cases.** Tabled
- ii. **Spanish language booklets for landlords.** Tabled
- iii. **Clerk's Office staffing.** Hartford has 2 clerical positions open. One is to be filled with outside posting for the general public. The closing date has passed. No mention was made in the advertising of the desirability of bilingual skills. The Council's longstanding position is that a bilingual counter presence is necessary and that ads should include a statement that the ability to speak Spanish is desirable.
- iv. **Blue pages telephone listings (Rafie Podolsky)** The Council has recommended a re-organization of the Judicial Department's blue pages listing in the SBC telephone book to make finding the housing courts more user friendly for lay persons. The Judicial Department had informed the Council that its recommendation was accepted and would be implemented. From a review of the most recently distributed phone books, however, it is evident that the Judicial Department has not followed the Council's recommendation.
- v. **Small Claims Centralization (Penny Trick/Jeff Hammer)** The Council does not object to administrative centralization of small claims cases, but there was a strong consensus that all litigant contact regarding housing small claims, including filing, trial, and post-judgment actions, should be through the housing court. Rafie is to draft a letter to Judicial expressing the Council's concerns but to circulate it to the Council for review before mailing it.
- vi. **Other clerk's office issues** None

c. **Housing Specialists (Cynthia Teixeira)**

- i. **Printers** No progress has been made on additional printers. The Council recommends that printers should be supplied. Roberta Palmer will identify the priority needs and provide input so that a letter can be drafted.

- ii **Other Housing Specialist Issues** The housing specialists are exploring potential partnerships with the Department of Rehab Services regarding internships.

3. **Judicial Assignments**

There is a likely turnover of housing court judges in Hartford/New Britain and Bridgeport/Norwalk in September. Recommendations from the subcommittee are to be generated by the end of the month.

4. **Future meeting locations** (Sharon Levy)

Question regarding the possibility of holding some Council meetings further south in the state. Sharon Levy will explore options for the December meeting.

5. **Other Business**

Rafie will survey members/participants regarding their interest in being appointed or reappointed to the Advisory Council.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 pm.

Respectfully Submitted By:  
Sandra Desrosiers