



ADVISORY COUNCIL TO THE SUPERIOR COURT HOUSING SESSION

Reply to: 363 Main St., Suite 301
Hartford, CT. 06106
(860) 616-4472

Notice of Next Advisory Council meeting

1:30 pm

Wednesday, March 12

Connecticut Bar Association

30 Bank St., New Britain, CT

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF DECEMBER 11, 2013

Persons present: Sonja Devitt, Venoal Fountain, Jr., Sharon Levy, David Pels, Raphael Podolsky, Richard Tenenbaum

Location: Burroughs Community Center, 2470 Fairfield Ave., Bridgeport, CT

1. Preliminary matters: The meeting was called to order by the Chairperson, Raphael Podolsky, at 1:50 pm. The agenda was adopted by consent. The minutes of the September 18, 2013 meeting were approved unanimously (motion by Richard Tenenbaum, second by David Pels).
2. E-filing: It is the Council's understanding that summary process cases are presently incorporated into the civil court computer system, known as Cater, in Meriden, Middletown, and Rockville. The Council reiterated its concern that any merging of the housing session computer system, known as Forecourt, into the Cater system be accomplished in a way that preserves a field for property address. It was pointed out that, in addition to reasons identified in the Advisory Council's biennial report, this is important in identifying post-foreclosure summary process cases filed by a bank against occupants whose name the bank does not know (i.e., "John Doe"). Some banks file many such cases, making it impossible to identify the correct one easily without a property address.

The Council is still awaiting a report from Houston Putnam Lowry on the e-filing of summary process cases in Meriden. The Chairperson was asked to request Atty. Lowry to submit a written report at the March meeting. The subject was tabled to that meeting.

A question was raised as to whether it is possible on the Judicial Branch website to find the court that handles summary process for any particular town. The answer is that there are several ways to get to the answer on the website. The direct link is www.jud.ct.gov/directory/directory/directions/housing.htm. One way is the following:

- Go to jud.ct.gov.
- On the left-hand side, under "FAQ Home," click on "Landlord/Tenant/Housing."
- Scroll down to Item #2 "How do I evict a tenant?", Item #3 (How do I defend against an eviction?"), or Item #4 ("What courts handle housing matters?").
- Click on "Find Your Housing Session Location."
- Use the drop down menu to select the town in which the property is located.

You can get to the same location by clicking on Courts >> Superior Court >> Housing Session >> Where to File.

3. Operational reports:

a. Prosecution:

- i. Prosecutor appointment: The Chairperson reported that Steven M. Lesko has been hired as the new Hartford-New Britain-Middletown housing prosecutor. He replaces Robyn Johnson, who was recently appointed a Superior Court judge. The Council reaffirmed its concern that the Bridgeport-Norwalk housing prosecutor, who retired more than three years ago, has still not been replaced. The consequence has been a large reduction in the number of housing prosecutions in that housing court.
- ii. Anti-Blight Task Force: The Chairperson reported that the Anti-Blight Task Force created by P.A. 13-132 expects to finish its work by the beginning of February. No public hearing is planned. Both he and Housing Prosecutor Judith Dicine are among the members of the Task Force. The Task Force appears likely to recommend the adoption of the International Code Council's Property Maintenance Code as a statewide code (analogous to the State Building Code and the State Fire Safety Code). The Task Force's website is at <http://www.cga.ct.gov/pd/Blight/taskforce.asp>. The primary staff person is Peter Murszewski, who can be reached at 860-240-0550.

b. Clerks:

- i. Bridgeport-Norwalk schedule: Judge Rodriguez is considering changing the Bridgeport-Norwalk schedule so as to have two consecutive days per week in Norwalk, with the remaining days in Bridgeport (e.g., Monday through Wednesday in Bridgeport; Thursday and Friday in Norwalk). The Council had no objection to a schedule change but suggested that it would be important that the schedule be coordinated with all housing court staff (including housing specialists and housing prosecutors), since some staff work at other court locations as well

4. Advisory Council appointments and structure:

- i. Appointments: It is anticipated that the Governor will be making appointments to the Advisory Council before the March meeting.

- ii. Structure: P.A. 13-299 reduced the size of the Advisory Council from 36 to 12 and changed its name to the Advisory Council to the Superior Court Housing Session. After discussion, the Council recommended that the name of the Council be changed to the Connecticut Advisory Council on Housing Matters and its size be increased to 18 members (or to some other number between 18 and 24). The new name adopted by the legislature is too narrow, because the Council advises entities other than the housing sessions (e.g., the Chief State's Attorney). The reduced size is so small as to make it difficult to generate sufficient diverse appointments. It also makes the four geographic subdivisions of the Council unreasonably small. The Council recommends that the best arrangement would be five members for each of the three housing court districts and three members for the rest of the state, which would produce an 18-member council.
5. 2014 meeting schedule: The Council will continue in 2014 to meet at 1:30 pm on the second Wednesday of March, June, September, and December, with the March and September meetings at the Connecticut Bar Association in New Britain and the June and December meetings at Burroughs Community Center in Bridgeport. The actual dates will be March 12, June 11, September 10, and December 10. These dates and locations are subject to reconsideration if a new Council membership is appointed by the Governor.
6. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm (motion by Richard Tenenbaum, second by Sharon Levy).

Respectfully submitted,

Raphael Podolsky, acting secretary