



CONNECTICUT ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HOUSING MATTERS



Reply to: 363 Main St., Suite 301
Hartford, CT 06106
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Notice of the next Advisory Council meeting

2:00 pm
Wednesday, June 10
Quinnipiac Law School
370 Bassett Rd., North Haven

Minutes of the meeting of March 11, 2015

Connecticut Bar Association, 30 Bank Street, New Britain, CT

Members present: Mary Conklin, Loo Dahlke, Venol Fountain, Jr., Friedrich Helisch, Jane Kinney-Knotek, Houston Putnam Lowry, Carl Lupinacci, Stephanie Ma, David Pels, Raphael Podolsky, John W. Rowland, Lynn Taborsak, Richard Tenenbaum, Juan Verdu

Others present: Suzanne Colasanto, Judith Dicine, Leanne Kennedy, Steve Lesco, Michele Sensale

Members absent: Richard DeParle, Kathy Flaherty, J.L. Pottenger, Jr., Margaret Suib

Preliminary matters: The meeting was called to order at 2:03 pm by Chairman Raphael Podolsky. A motion was made by Juan Verdu and seconded by David Pels to accept the agenda. The motion passed unanimously. A motion was made by Juan Verdu and seconded by Fred Helisch to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2015 special meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Committee updates: The following committee updates were presented:

Small Claims (Kathy Flaherty) held a conference call meeting on January 27th at which the committee discussed the handling of housing cases in the small claims courts, magistrate selection and magistrate access to resources, including to the Advisory Council's booklet on housing issues in the small claims courts. Concerns were raised that it can take two to six weeks to get an execution. An OLR report on the magistrate selection process was submitted for distribution. The Chairperson reviewed the eight concerns in the Advisory Council's biennial report to the General Assembly that pertain to housing small claims. It was noted that housing small claims matters make up about 4.9% of all small claims cases.

Case Processing (David Pels), Tenant Screening (Houston Putnam Lowry) and Prosecution and Anti-Blight (Fred Helisch) will meet today following the conclusion of the Advisory Council meeting. The latter committee will look in particular at the

decline in the number of criminal prosecutions in several housing court districts and at the failure of criminal cases in New Britain to be held in the New Britain housing court.

Committee members: The Chairperson added the following members to committees:

To Tenant Screening: Mary Conklin

To Prosecution and Anti-Blight: John Rowland

To Case Processing: Venoa Fountain and Juan Verdu

Judith Dicine will remain a participant in the Prosecution and Anti-Blight Committee but, as the chief housing prosecutor, will not be a member of the committee.

Prosecution issues: Judith Dicine reported that a housing prosecutor for Bridgeport-Norwalk has not been appointed because of the state hiring freeze.

Member information booklet: Houston Putnam Lowry volunteered to create a directory containing background information about each Advisory Council member.

Legislative Update: A number of pending bills affecting landlords and tenants were summarized for the Advisory Council. HB 6924 would raise the small claims court maximum from \$5,000 to \$10,000. HB 5356 would relieve landlords of responsibility for reimbursing the city for the costs of relocating tenants if the relocation resulted from conditions intentionally or negligently caused by the tenants. A bill sponsored by Senator Cassano (the "Dead Tenant" bill) would correct a drafting error in the statute that provides landlords with an alternative to summary process if the tenant has died. SB 18 creates a Hoarding Task Force to bring together code officials, social service providers, mental health practitioners, fire and safety officials and others to develop solutions to problems resulting from hoarding. HB 6759, which addresses the responsibilities of landlords and tenants concerning the treatment of bedbug infestations, is an effort to pass a compromise bill that failed in the 2014 legislative session.

Meeting locations: Three alternative meeting locations were discussed: the Quinnipiac Law School in North Haven, the Burroughs Community Center in Bridgeport and the New Haven Housing Court courtroom. The Council decided that the next meeting will be held at the Quinnipiac Law School. The meeting is scheduled for 2:00 pm on June 10th.

Adjournment: A motion to adjourn was made by Houston Putnam Lowry and seconded by Jane Kinney-Knotek. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 3:51 pm.

Submitted by
Lynn Taborsak, Acting Secretary