CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR HOUSING MATTERS

CACHM

Reply to: 44 Capitol Ave., Suite 301
Hartford, CT 06106
860-278-5688 x203

NEXT MEETING

1:30 p.m.
Wednesday, March 9, 2011

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

Minutes of December 15, 2010 Citizens Advisory Council meeting

Persons present: Richard DeParle, Sonja Devitt, Robert Fernandez, Carl Lupinacci, David Pels, Raphael Podolsky

(1) PRELIMINARY MATTERS

(a) Call to order: The meeting was called to order by the chairperson, Raphael Podolsky, at 2:20 p.m. at the Burroughs Community Center, 2470 Fairfield Ave., Bridgeport.

(b) Approval of agenda: The agenda was approved without objection.

(c) Approval of minutes: The minutes of the September 15, 2010, meeting were approved unanimously (moved by Richard DeParle, seconded by Sonja Devitt).

(2) BIENNIAL REPORT

The chairperson presented a draft of the 2011 biennial report that had been revised to incorporate changes made or requested at the September 15, 2010, meeting. The following substantive changes were considered:

(a) In Section I(C)(6), concerning electronic access to foreclosure files, the Council added a sentence urging that case files be accessible to any person by computer and that access not be limited to attorneys or persons with an appearance in the file.

(b) A motion to delete subsection (F) of Section III, concerning the Council's endorsement of a statewide minimum housing code, was defeated, 2-3 (motion by Carl Lupinacci, second by Robert Fernandez).

After discussion, the report was approved unanimously.

(3) OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Council membership: The Council voted to recommend that Council membership be reduced from nine members per district (36 total members) to six members per district (24 total members) (motion by David Pels, second by Sonja Devitt, approved 3-2).

(b) Public Service and Trust Commission: The Council reviewed the housing recommendations of the Public Service and Trust Commission and the Bench/Bar Small Claims Committee. The implementation of many of these recommendations is in process. The Council last received an update on implementation in June, 2010. The Council will request a current update.

(c) Cell phones: It was alleged to the Council that, in the Bridgeport courthouse, cell phones which ring in the courtroom are being confiscated by marshals without adequate warning and a fee of $25 or more is being charged for their return. The Council recommended unanimously that (a) conspicuous signs should be posted near the entrance to each housing courtroom stating that cell phones must be turned off upon entry and stating the consequences of a failure to do so; (b) phones should not be confiscated without the marshal first giving a specific verbal warning to the owner of a phone that rings; and (c) the appropriateness of charging for the return of a confiscated phone should be reviewed. The Council will request information from Judicial as to the existing practice in Bridgeport and in other housing courts and the extent to which the above recommended standards are currently being applied.

(4) MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2011

The Council agreed to change its meeting schedule for 2011. Meetings will be held on the second Wednesday of March, June, September, and December and will begin at 1:30 pm. Meetings in the past were held on the third Wednesday of those months and were scheduled for 2:00 pm. In 2011, the meeting dates for the Council will therefore be:

Wednesday, March 9, 2011, at 1:30 pm
Wednesday, June 8, 2011, at 1:30 pm
Wednesday, September 14, 2011, at 1:30 pm
Wednesday, December 14, 2011, at 1:30 pm.

The alternation of meetings between the Connecticut Bar Association in New Britain (March and September) and the Burroughs Community Center in Bridgeport (June and December) was not changed.

(5) ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Raphael Podolsky, Acting Secretary