

Minutes
Access to Facilities Implementation Committee

January 15, 2013
80 Washington Street
Hartford, CT

The Connecticut Judicial Branch Access to Facilities Implementation Committee met on Tuesday, January 15, 2013 in the first floor conference room in Community Court at 80 Washington Street, Hartford, CT.

Committee members in attendance: Atty. Stephen Ment, Chair; Ms. Virginia Apple, Mr. Troy Brown, Mr. Robert P. Burke, Chief Judicial Marshal Russell Downer Jr., Ms. Jamey L. Harris, Mr. Robert Kilpatrick, Ms. M. Jill Levine, Atty. Richard Loffredo, Ms. Sandra Lugo-Gines, Ms. Debra Novaco, Atty. Brandon E. Pelegano, Mr. Gary Salisbury, Atty. Roy Smith Jr., Chief Judicial Marshal Relford Ward, Ms. Janet Zigadto.

Committee members absent: Mr. James V. Morgan, Ms. Jeanne Roberge, Mr. Rich Byam.

Others in attendance: Ms. Heather Nann Collins, support staff.

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Atty Ment.

- I. Welcome and introductions: Atty. Ment welcomed the members and thanked them for attending the Committee meeting and participating in their subcommittee meetings.
- II. Approval of Nov. 14, 2012 meeting Minutes: Atty. Loffredo noted three areas of correction to the minutes of the November meeting; the corrected version was approved by those in attendance at that meeting.
- III. Recent activities:
 - Channel 30 WVIT news segment: The work of this Committee was featured in a recent 2.5 minute segment on the Hartford television station, [NBC30](#), [WVIT](#). Atty. Pelegano and Atty. Ment were featured discussing the Committee's charge, and several court users were interviewed by reporter Todd Piro about their experiences with signage in the Litchfield Judicial District. The users' comments were that signage in general needs to be improved, including identifying signage and wayfinding signage. The story included local images and images of existing and suggested signage from the final report of the original Access to Facilities Committee. Atty. Ment, who is the Deputy Director of the External Affairs Division, thanked Atty. Pelegano for his very quick response in arranging the media visit with Judicial Marshals and the Judges.
 - The members were provided, prior to the meeting, a video file of the report, and at the meeting copies of a written version of the story were also

provided. The members congratulated Attorneys Ment and Pelegano for their excellent work and helping to address, publicly, the Branch's efforts.

IV. Reports on [the Judicial District Pilot Subcommittee](#):

- Atty. Loffredo chairs this Subcommittee, which has met three times, and presented to the Committee a list of seven recommendations to improve overall access to facilities. Atty. Ment noted that the majority of the recommendations are identical to, or logical extensions of, the recommendations contained in the Access to Facilities Report. The recommendations are: to assign Branch staff in each JD to assess signage on a regular basis to ensure that the signs are current and in good condition; that a sign stating the Branch's mission be displayed in each facility; that signs should be created in languages other than English, when possible, and that they reflect the commonly-spoken language of each particular JD; that permanent signage, when possible, include Braille; that directories are placed in each building and, when appropriate, on each floor; that hand-written signage be eliminated and replaced with signage printed by the Commission on Legal Publications (COLP) using an approved template, or printed locally, using the template; and that each courthouse may designate a space to be used for general, non-court required materials, such as information for the bar, etc. Atty. Ment noted that this recommendation, and the recommendation regarding the mission statement, are not recommendations of the Access to Facilities Report and will therefore need further consideration. The Committee discussed the recommendations and Mr. Salisbury presented examples of potential templates for printed paper signage, which would include the Branch seal and ensure uniform typeface and size. The template was approved by the committee. Atty. Loffredo said the Subcommittee is researching the cost of plastic sign holders which would allow signage to be easily removed or changed at a nominal cost.
- Atty. Loffredo distributed a draft of model courthouse signage with areas for review including regulatory signage; identification signage; directional signage; orientation signage; and other signage that is particular to a facility's purpose, i.e., SES or probation office, law library, etc.
- Ms. Apple presented for the Committee's consideration a draft of a protocol that would be distributed Branch-wide explaining the formatting of paper signage. The protocol would support uniformity and will be discussed at the next meeting of the committee. Ms. Apple also suggested that existing, permanent signage be examined for its usability and there was general discussion about the feasibility of establishing a committee or group of employees to review signage and/or serve as designated sign reviewers.
- A motion was made to accept for further review the Subcommittee's seven recommendations, and the measure was approved unanimously.
- Atty. Ment thanked the Subcommittee for its work.

V. Report of the [Subcommittee on Online Directions and General Information](#):

- Ms. Apple chairs this Subcommittee, which has met twice. She told the Committee that the Branch's redesign of its webpages is well underway and that the new site has launched. Importantly, she noted, the new directions pages have been posted and include expanded information from the previous pages, including GPS coordinates, public transportation links, and hyperlocal

maps. Driving directions continue to be reviewed to ensure accuracy, uniformity of language, and that reference points – ie. “Coming south from Hartford, coming west from New London” etc. – are included.

- Ms. Apple reported that the Subcommittee members are reviewing the new Directions and General Information webpages in their judicial district for accurate phone numbers and GPS information, and are doing outreach to divisions and units within the Branch to ensure accuracy.
- Atty. Ment thanked Ms. Apple and the Subcommittee for their work and offered thanks to IT, through Ms. Apple, for their excellent progress in improving online information for the public.

VI. Wayfinding Efforts:

- Atty. Smith reported to the Committee that wayfinding, which is the process of using signage to locate facilities, including highway signage and street signage, is increasingly important as the Branch tries to improve access to the public. It can be difficult for people to locate courthouses and Branch facilities that are not directly off an interstate, and few facilities actually are that conveniently located. Atty. Smith told the members that he has contacted officials from the City of New Haven and that they have indicated a willingness to include Branch facilities when erecting new signage with Small Cities Block Grants. Atty. Smith suggested that a small subcommittee be formed to develop a cohesive outreach program that would tap other state resources, such as the state Department of Transportation, as well as local governments, to make the best possible use of state money for signage. Atty. Ment agreed with the suggestion that a working group be formed, indicating that this effort would directly address recommendation # 19 of the Access to Facilities Report. Atty. Ment also noted that Rockville is a great example of cooperation that has led to signage being posted from the highway to the courthouses. Atty. Smith volunteered to chair the subcommittee, and Committee members Ms. Apple and Ms. Lugo-Gines also volunteered to serve. Ms. Collins, the Committee’s support staff, also volunteered to serve and assist in the writing process. Atty. Ment thanked the volunteers, who will provide an update at the next full Committee meeting.

VII. Working group report on Welcome & Notice document:

- Atty. Ment noted that a “Welcome” notice has been developed with input from various committee members, review by the Legal Services Unit, and awaits review and approval from the Office of the Chief Court Administrator’s office. The Welcome notice is a simple, one-page document that can be easily translated into a sign, telling the public what to expect when they enter a courthouse, including metal detector and safety protocol, and including information on how to obtain assistance under the Americans with Disabilities Act in that facility.

VIII. Other business:

- There was discussion about the need to assist people with low literacy skills. Atty. Smith suggested that using pictures as graphics could be helpful in certain areas. Atty. Ment said that an External Affairs staff member will explore that suggestion.

- IX. Scheduling of the Next Meeting: The next meeting of the Committee will be at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, March 14th at 80 Washington Street. A Meeting Notice and Agenda will be forthcoming.
- X. Adjournment: Atty. Ment thanked the members and a motion was made and approved unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 11:25 a.m.