

06/24/2010 Access to Facilities Meeting Minutes

Present: Ms. Sandra Lugo-Gines, co-chair, Atty. Roy Smith, co-chair, Ms. Virginia Apple, Mr. Robert Burke, Ms. Michelle Burroughs, Mr. Robert Burke, Chief Russell Downer, Ms. Cristina Goncalves, Atty. Jeffrey Hammer, Ms. Jamey Harris, Ms. Precious Hyland, Mr. Robert Kilpatrick, Ms. Margaret Levine, Atty. Stephen Ment, Ms. Debra Novaco and Atty. Steven Pelletier

Submitted by: Michelle Burroughs

- The Committee approved the minutes from the 04/08/2010 meeting.
- Atty. Smith and Ms. Lugo-Gines met with a Strong Cohen Graphic Designers and explained the Committee's charge to them. The design firm reviewed the Committee's template and felt that it was good. The design firm provided some feedback regarding signage currently displayed in and around the CT Judicial Branch's courthouses. The Committee reviewed some examples of signage at the Middletown and New Haven courthouses that the design firm felt could be improved. The firm also provided examples of signage they have designed for their clients across the country. Some of these examples include directories with interchangeable parts and paper signs in plastic sheeting. Atty. Smith also met with the Karyn Gilvarg Director of City Planning. Ms. Gilvarg provided information regarding how New Haven and other cities utilize signage to direct people to the courts. She also provided Atty. Smith with reports that the City of New Haven uses to develop plans for signage. She explained that before signage becomes permanently implemented in New Haven, a test run is done to confirm that it is effective.
- Next week, Atty. Smith and Ms. Lugo-Gines will meet with Lauretano Sign Group of Connecticut. This company fabricates and installs sign projects throughout North America. Atty. Smith and Ms. Lugo-Gines will also be meeting with the Department of Correction. The Department supplies the Executive Branch with all of its signage.
- Atty. Smith and Ms. Lugo-Gines are creating binders, one for each town that will contain checklists, pictures and other documents resulting from the Committee's research. The Committee briefly reviewed the contents of these binders.
- The Committee offered suggestions regarding the checklist. Some of the suggestions included using a Word document and including courtrooms on the template. Based on these suggestions, Ms. Lugo-Gines will revise the document so that it is more user-friendly.
- The group reported out on their sample observations and experiences during their tour of selected Judicial facilities. Some of the observations noted were:
 - an absence of signs (Bristol)
 - difficulty distinguishing the employee exit from a public entrance (New Haven)
 - signs for parking not visible/clear (Middletown)
 - small signs should be repositioned (New Britain)

- many helpful directories apparent in the courthouse (New Britain)
- inaccurate driving maps to the courthouse appear on the Judicial website, Google maps and Map Quest . For example, in Waterbury one can't turn left onto Bank Street to get to courthouse as noted in the driving directions.
- confusing court bypass sign off Merritt Parkway and incorrect city directional signs (Stamford)
- easy to understand color coded signs in garage and elevator (Stamford)
- large protruding sign/flag made the Court Service Center easy to find (New Britain)
- flat signs, not at eye-level making offices difficult to locate and identify(New Britain)
- offices constantly moving (Hartford)
- outdated building directory (95 Washington Street, Hartford)
- the public is not clear on the difference between a GA and JD court
- helpful, bi-lingual signage displayed (Danielson)
- bilingual signs (Spanish) only posted at the Marshal's station
- Some are of the opinion that protruding signs would be helpful. However, they may be broken or vandalized at certain court locations, especially during high traffic times.
- It was noted that visitors to the court (especially in Hartford where there are many different courts located in close proximity of each other) are often confused due to not thoroughly reading the notices they received. The text on the notices is small. It was suggested that a recommendation be made to make all notices uniform, in a way that emphasizes important information such as the court location. Signs in glass casing have been found to be helpful. They could be utilized when there is a Braille sign to accompany it order to meet ADA requirements.
- Local committees are slated to be formed in the fall of 2010.
- Atty. Smith and Ms. Lugo-Gines are in receipt of statistics provided by the Interpreter's Office which identify the second and third most commonly spoken languages in each District. This information may be used to determine the language(s) of signage used in the court facilities.
- It is recommended that Committee members locations outside of the Judicial Branch within as well as outside of the state to gather ideas regarding effective signage. Committee members should document their findings and suggestions for improvement. Sites to visit include JFK International Airport or any other airport. The group of Committee members visiting these locations should consist of 2 to 3 individuals. Ms. Lugo-Gines and Atty. Smith will be taking a guided tour of the federal courthouse and state courthouse in Boston. Ms. Apple volunteered to go to JFK and

Grand Central Station in July. She will also go to the Yale Primary Care Center. Ms. Novaco will go to Danbury Hospital. Ms. Lugo-Gines will go to Connecticut Children's Medical Center. Ms. Levine will visit Eckerd College in Florida. Mr. Kilpatrick will go to Eastern College in Connecticut. Atty. Ment visit Trinity College in Connecticut. Atty. Smith will visit Yale University. Prior to visiting any facility to tour it and take pictures, the Committee members should send a letter similar to the revised letter addressed to the Edward W. Brooks Courthouse in Boston to request permission to do so.

- Mr. Kilpatrick will provide Atty. Smith and Ms. Lugo-Gines with the Branch's design standards and these will be forwarded to the Committee before they go out to visit non-Judicial facilities.
- A suggestion was made that a template or Judicial form for temporary signs used in Clerk's Offices be created and placed on the network drives. It was also suggested that: 1) standardized wording for directions be created, 2) driving directions for every Judicial location should be made available on the Judicial website with directions from every interstate, 3) walking directions should also be displayed on the Judicial website and 4) directions to each location should include an inset map of the area surrounding the location. The Committee may opt to recommend a commercial engine (i.e. Mapquest or Google Earth) to be utilized by the Branch.
- Ms. Apple asked the Committee members to contact her if they are aware of any directions to the courthouses that are not accurate. She will compile a list for the Web Board. Atty. Smith asked the members to relate experiences that had while attempting to access directions via telephone. Someone tried to contact Danbury and they were disconnected. The phone system in Waterbury refers you to the Public Information Desk and you are able to speak with a live person. Atty. Smith encouraged the group to call the courts prior to making any future visits and to try to drive to the court using the directions provided by the automated system and to document their experiences.
- The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 28th at 2:00 p.m. The meeting location is to be determined. Ms. Apple will check the availability of rooms housing a Smart Board.