



December 1, 2008

John G. Murphy
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3026 S. California
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Dear John:

Thank you for inviting us to meet with you on November 18th to discuss the eviction process and service of forcible detainer actions in Cook County. Having discussed these issues with Kevin Connelly and Jim McArdle this summer, we were pleased to learn that the Cook County Sheriff's Office is looking for ways to improve its practices and procedures. Based on our conversation, we are hopeful that we can work together with your office to effect some needed changes.

Below is a brief summary of the points we discussed in our meeting:

(1) Service of Process in Forcible Detainer Actions: We proposed allowing a building owner the option of choosing a special process server in lieu of the Sheriff's office for service of process in forcible detainer actions. The current requirement that the Sheriff attempt service first is delaying the eviction process at least three weeks in the majority of cases. Our understanding from your office is that the Sheriff successfully serves only approximately 30-35% of these actions. Our proposal will not cause a revenue loss for the Sheriff's office, because building owners who choose a special process server would still pay the Sheriff's fee for service. Giving a building owner the option to use special process servers would cut wasted time from the eviction process.

(2) Cook County's Eviction Procedure: Until our meeting this summer with Kevin and Jim, Cook County's eviction procedure was not spelled out in writing anywhere. Through our conversations with Kevin and Jim, we were able to put together a summary of the Sheriff's current eviction procedure for our members as well as for the Sheriff's website. In response to your question, we agreed that it would be more helpful for the Sheriff to spell out its eviction procedure in even more detail, specifically pointing out what the building owner should or should not do.

(3) Better Communication: One of the themes we discussed is improving communication between the Sheriff's office and building owners during the eviction process. First, as you suggested, it would be beneficial to receive a call earlier than the day before the scheduled eviction. Second, it would be extremely beneficial for the Sheriff's officer to call 15 to 30 minutes before they arrive at the building for the eviction. To this end, we reiterated our proposal of supplying cell phones to the 4-6 teams of officers currently handling evictions. Simple communication with cell phones would cut down on a lot of wasted time and money for the Sheriff's department as well as for building owners. Our groups have offered to subsidize the cost of the phones, if necessary. Any communication and coordination between the Sheriff's office and building owners would allow evictions to be carried out more efficiently and in a more streamlined manner.

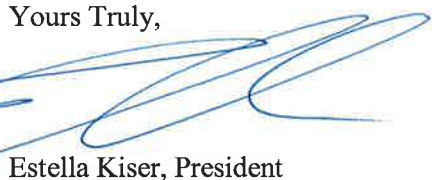
(4) Inclement Weather: As we discussed, building owners are unclear as to how and when inclement weather affects evictions. We understood from our meeting this summer that the decision to cancel evictions due to inclement weather is made in the early morning, each day. However, some of our members have reported that they have had evictions cancelled in the middle of the day by the Sheriff's office due to inclement weather, without receiving notice of the cancellation. We requested that the protocol for inclement weather be delineated in the Sheriff's website and that notice of cancellation of evictions also be put on the website early in the morning, each day. In addition, if an eviction is cancelled due to inclement weather in the middle of the day, the Sheriff should notify the building owner by phone of the cancellation.

(5) Possible Task Force: If the Sheriff's office decides to convene a task force, as you suggested, to meet regularly about evictions and service of process of forcible detainer actions, we would be delighted to have representatives on that task force.

(6) Eviction Disclosure Forms: We discussed the eviction disclosure forms, which we saw for the first time at our meeting, and made some suggestions to increase the submittal rates of those forms. Our suggestions included making the forms available on the Sheriff's website and allowing the forms to be submitted electronically.

We understand that you are meeting with others before making recommendations to the Sheriff's office regarding the eviction process. In the interim, we welcome any additional questions you may have. Please keep us apprised of your progress and any changes we can expect. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Truly,



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