



THE CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR HOUSING MATTERS

FOR THE HOUSING SESSION OF THE HARTFORD - NEW BRITAIN JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF THE SUPERIOR COURT

Respond to: 111 Oak Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06106
(203) 525-6604

December 9, 1982

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF DECEMBER 9, 1982

Persons present: Joseph Stafford, Carol Maurer, Susan Harkett-Turley, Edward Murtha, Patricia Augur, Raphael Podolsky, Robert Kor, David Pels, Lynn, Cochrane, Gerry Maine, William Curtis, Linda Bantell, Fran Calefiore, Ethel Austin

1. Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 2:45 p.m. at the Hartford Housing Court.

2. Treasurer's report: The Council has a balance in its account of \$71.08, but has already incurred nearly \$50 in bills from its last mailing. Carol Maurer has submitted an application to Connecticut General for a 1983 grant. In addition, she is pursuing the possibility of getting some company to print our 1983 report without charge.

3. Housing court judge: Judge Maloney has requested retention in the housing court for the January term of the court.

MOTION: By Robert Kor, second by Ed Murtha, that the Advisory Council urges the retention of Judge Maloney in the housing court. MOTION ADOPTED (7-0-0).

4. Forms: A revised version of the forms report was submitted by David Pels for the Forms Committee.

MOTION: By Robert Kor, second by Susan Harkett-Turley, that the Advisory Council approves the recommendations of its Forms Committee as a modification of and addition to its 1980 forms recommendations. MOTION ADOPTED (7-0-0).

5. Housing specialist qualifications: Judge Sponzo's letter to the Council was reviewed. The letter generally rejected the Council's request that the minimum qualifications for housing specialist be withdrawn. The Council continues to stand by its own view. It was suggested that, if a housing specialist position were to open in Hartford, the Council should actively solicit applications from a wide range of housing backgrounds and should renew its concerns with the minimum qualifications at that time.

6. Housing court prosecution: It was reported that the chairperson met with Judge Maloney and Judge Brennan. The Council was instructed by

Judge Brennan to direct its comments through Judge Maloney, rather than through him. Judge Maloney is in the process of reviewing the situation and is to make a report to Judge Brennan at the beginning of January. The Council decided to defer action until January to see what would happen, but the consensus was that, if problems continued to exist and were not rectified, the Council should call attention to them at that time.

Bill Curtis reported that the City of Hartford is reviewing about half a dozen cases for possible initiation of civil cases to avoid having to go through the criminal docket of the housing court. Raphael Podolsky reported that some of the problems in communication between the prosecutor and the code agency involved the code agency itself. In particular, the prosecutor had apparently returned the file in the case referred to in the November 20 letter to the agency because of his inability to locate the landlord at the address provided by the city. Questions were also raised about the aggressiveness with which the Hartford police were serving housing code warrants.

It was suggested that persons who were locked out, denied heat, or discriminated against ought to be encouraged to file criminal complaints with the prosecutor.

MOTION: By Pat Augur, second by Robert Kor, that the Advisory Council write to community organizations to urge them to tell clients of their right to file criminal complaints for violation of the laws regarding lock-outs, lack of heat, and housing discrimination, but that they should also be notified to use administrative remedies as well.
MOTION ADOPTED (5-1-1).

In favor: Augur, Kor, Maurer, Stafford, Harkett-Turley.
Opposed: Murtha.
Abstain: Podolsky.

7. Legislative Committee: Carol Maurer reported that the major legislative issue was whether the life of the Advisory Council should be extended. She felt that the Judicial Department paid so little attention to the Council's recommendations that it might not be worth the trouble of retaining the Council. She felt, however, that this required a long discussion which should be deferred until the Council's next meeting.

MOTION: That the discussion of the legislative report be tabled until the Council's next meeting. MOTION ADOPTED (4-3).

In favor: Maurer, Stafford, Harkett-Turley, Murtha.
Opposed: Kor, Podolsky, Augur.

8. Report to General Assembly: The chairperson distributed a draft of the report. A meeting to discuss and act upon it will be held at 2:30 p.m. on December 21. He proposed that an appendix of relevant documents be prepared separately from the report, so that the appendix would not have to be included in all copies of the report, thereby holding down its cost. The following

preliminary suggestions were made for changes in the draft:

- a. Discussion of relation to other advisory councils.
- b. Legislative proposal of additional funding for housing specialists.
- c. Use of a format which will highlight the report's recommendations.
- d. Proposal of a clerical staff person to service the housing specialists and prosecutor.

9. Term of officers: Chairperson Podolsky indicated his desire to have someone else assume the chairpersonship of the Council in January. He has been chairperson for about 18 months. An election of officers will be held at the December 21 meeting. The positions to be elected are chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, and treasurer.

10. Layoffs at the housing court: David Pels reported that the Judicial Department, on short notice, had told all temporary employees that they would be laid off between Christmas and New Year's. Fran Calefiore and Linda Bantell said that this would have a severe impact on the housing court because of the very small size of its staff. The courtroom clerk in Hartford, one of the Hartford secretaries, and the part-time secretary in New Britain are all temporary. In addition, the court is facing difficulties keeping skilled temporary clerical staff, because of the low pay and lack of benefits, and the short-term layoff further compounds the problem.

MOTION: By David Pels, second by Pat Augur, that the Judicial Department be urged to make an exception from its general layoff policy so as not to lay off the housing court's temporary employees for the week after Christmas. MOTION APPROVED (5-0-2).

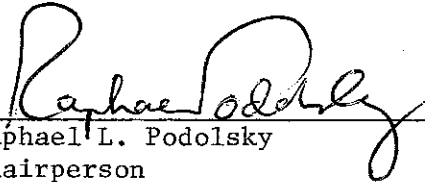
In favor: Augur, Maurer, Murtha, Harkett-Turley,
Podolsky

Opposed: None

Abstain: Kor, Stafford

11. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Raphael L. Podolsky
Chairperson