



THE CITIZEN S 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

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 8, 1982

Persons present: Patricia Augur, Robert Kor, David Frederick, David Pels, Raphael Podolsky, Mark Margolius, Vivian Martin, Frank Baez, Elaine DiNigris, Fran Calefiore, Linda Bantell.

1. Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 3:20 p.m. at the Hartford housing session, 18 Trinity St., Hartford.

2. Approval of minutes: The minutes of the May 5 and May 28 meetings were approved.

3. Treasurer's report: Raphael Podolsky reported that, of \$350 donated to the Council by Connecticut General, about \$100 was spent on the Advisory Council's reception for Judge Satter and Judge Maloney and \$180 for xeroxing and postage for mailings. An account has been set up and Rafie authorized to sign checks, but he felt that a second person should have to sign as well. Therefore:

MOTION: By Augur, seconded by Pels, that all checks require the signature of Raphael Podolsky and Carol Maurer. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Carol Maurer will be asked to look for additional funding for next year.

4. Housing specialist job requirements: The job description for housing specialist that is being used in Bridgeport was discussed. A job description had been developed some time ago by the Hartford Advisory Council; but the Judicial Department has now changed it in a way which considerably narrows who is eligible to apply for the job. The new minimum qualifications, which will apply to Hartford as well, preclude consideration of a resume which does not show either seven years' inspection experience or a B.A. and three years inspection employment. Most members of the Council felt that the inspection requirement was too narrow, that it shouldn't be used as a pre-condition for the job, and that interpersonal skills were not being stressed enough. It was also argued that the minimum qualifications as written might have a disparate impact on women and minorities and leave the Judicial Department open to a possible Title VII suit. There was general agreement that the minimum qualifications implemented by the Judicial Department were undesirable but some disagreement as to what minimums, if any, would be proper. A series of votes were taken on this issue by the Council:

MOTION: That housing specialists should be required to have at least two years' housing (not inspection) experience. DEFEATED.

MOTION: That housing specialists should be required to have at least one year's housing (not inspection) experience. DEFEATED.

MOTION: That no minimum resume requirements should be imposed for housing specialists. MOTION DEFEATED (2-2-1).

MOTION: That the Judicial Department's requirements of seven years' experience as a housing inspector or a B.A. plus three year's employment in a health and safety inspection field are unreasonably long. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOTION: That the requirement that experience be in an inspection field is not desirable. PASSED (4-1).

The Council also felt that the Judicial Department should screen the applicant pool in Bridgeport to make certain that it had produced a substantial percentage of applications from minorities and women and that, if it had not, the position should be readvertised in a manner consistent with affirmative action.

The chairperson was authorized to write Judge Sponzo, informing him of the Council's views. In addition, he was instructed to inform Judge Sponzo of the Council's concern over the potentially discriminatory impact of the new qualifications and the need to assure that each housing court location has someone on the staff who can speak Spanish. He was also instructed to make clear to Judge Sponzo that the more relevant form of experience for the job of housing specialist is housing background, rather than inspection background.

5. Code Committee report: As a result of a meeting early in the summer with State's Attorney John Bailey, Thomas Prior was requested to prepare a written statement of housing court prosecution policy. The resulting policy statement consisted of one paragraph. In August the committee met with Bailey, Prior, and Judge Brennan. Improvements were promised. The committee also drafted a prosecution policy of its own, which was circulated to John Bailey and Thomas Prior for comments. No comments were received from Mr. Prior but Mr. Bailey requested that the word "policy" be changed to "guidelines."

MOTION: That the proposed housing court prosecution policy be changed to housing court prosecution guidelines, in accordance with Mr. Bailey's proposal. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOTION: That, as amended, the Council adopt the proposed prosecution guidelines as its recommended policy. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

There was also discussion around the manner in which affidavits are being drafted. The prosecutor maintains that they cannot be used to cite a landlord for a code violation on any day other than the day of the final inspection. The prosecutor was requested to work with code enforcement agencies to develop an affidavit form which would permit prosecution for multiple-day violations of the housing code.

6. Judicial Committee: Judge Maloney has been asked by the Council as to whether he wants to stay on the housing court after the end of December. We expect to hear from him soon.

7. Legislative Committee: The report was tabled until the next meeting because of the absence of Carol Maurer and Gerry Maine. There was no decision as to whether the Committee's recommendations should be limited to legislation affecting the housing court specifically, or whether it should address broader housing concerns.

8. 1983 report to the General Assembly: It is due in January. Rafie will write a draft within the next month and circulate it for comments.

9. Handicapped access suit: Pat Augur gave a brief report on the status of the litigation concerning the inaccessibility of the old housing court building on Lafayette St. She has been subpoenaed to testify. The issue at the present time seems to be whether the Judicial Department moved out of Lafayette St. because of the suit or whether it was in the process of moving the housing court anyway.

10. Forms Committee report: The committee presented a report containing a number of redrafted or new forms. Discussion centered upon (a) whether the drafts were in sufficiently plain language, (b) whether there should be a form for a civil action to end a lockout, (c) whether the proposed default motions in summary process cases were adequate, (d) whether the affirmative forms should contain allegations under the Unfair Trade Practices Act. The report was referred back to committee for modification and review at the Council's next meeting.

11. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Patricia Augur

Patricia Augur

Acting Secretary