



THE CITIZEN S ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR HOUSING MATTERS

January 13, 1984

MINUTES OF MEETING OF JANUARY 10, 1984

Members present: Aura Diaz, Jon Alander, Patricia Wallace, Sheldon Hosen, Nancy Brown, Edward Murtha, Raphael Podolsky, Joseph Stafford, Bernadine Tatem, Joseph Wincze, Frances Church, Robert Kor, Elaine DiNigris, Douglas Mintz

Members absent: Rev. Hudson Richard, Kevin Tierney, Karin White, Ronald Diorio, Reginald Walker, David Frederick, Hugh McKittrick Jones, Rev. John Jay

Others present: David Pels

(1) Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 4:20 p.m. on January 10, 1984, at the State Police Academy in Meriden. Douglas Mintz presided.

(2) Election of officers: The following officers were nominated and elected unanimously. There were no other nominations.

Chairperson	-- Douglas Mintz
Vice-chairperson (Hartford-New Britain)	-- Robert Kor
Vice-chairperson (New Haven-Waterbury)	-- Patricia Wallace
Vice-chairperson (Bridgeport-Norwalk)	-- Reginald Walker
Secretary	-- Raphael Podolsky

Each of the three vice-chairpersons will be in charge of a regional committee. Pat Wallace moved that the Council function primarily through those regional committees, based upon housing court district lines, with the Council acting as a whole only on issues of general concern to all housing court districts. As an example, she suggested that recommendations on the assignment of a housing court judge could be handled by the regional committee for that housing court district. The motion was seconded by Elaine DiNigris and was adopted unanimously. The Council chairperson should be on the mailing list of all regional committees.

Joseph Wincze moved that the five officers constitute an Executive Committee of the Council, with power to act for the Council between meetings. The motion was seconded by Nancy Brown. There was discussion of the scope of the delegation of powers. The sense of the Council was that the Executive Committee should consult with the Council membership through the regional subcommittees if possible before acting on matters that were controversial. The motion was approved unanimously.

Jon Alander moved that, except for emergencies, notices of all Executive Committee meetings, and agendas for those meetings, be mailed in advance to all members of the Council, and that the Executive Committee send its minutes and notices of any actions it takes to all members of the Council. The motion was approved unanimously. All meetings of the Executive Committee are open to anyone on the Council who wants to come.

(3) Appointment of committees: The chairperson initially recommended the establishment of two additional standing committees -- Legislative and Judicial. After some discussion, the second committee was dropped. It was agreed that contact between the Council and the Judicial Department did not require a separate committee, since either the Council chairperson (for general matters) or the regional committee chairperson (for matters specific to a housing court district) could serve as liaison.

Raphael Podolsky was appointed Legislative Committee chairperson. The task of the committee is to gather information on proposed legislation affecting the housing courts and to report back to the Council and the Executive Committee. The committee itself is not to take positions on legislative issues. Any person wanting to be on the Legislative Committee should contact Doug Mintz or Raphael Podolsky.

(4) Payment for Council expenditures: There was some discussion of how the Council is supposed to pay for its mailings and related expenditures. The Hartford Council in the past has received a small grant from Connecticut General to cover expenses and had its report printed without charge by Phoenix Mutual, both of which are insurance companies. Nancy Brown indicated that it might be possible to obtain some funds from a Fairfield County foundation. Joe Wincze offered to do mailings to the Council members from the Bridgeport-Norwalk housing court district. It was decided that the Council would explore obtaining funds from Connecticut General and/or a foundation. The matter was then referred to the Executive Committee for further action.

(5) Housing code prosecution policy: Pat Wallace said that there was a need for housing code prosecution to reflect some consistent policy. Both the New Haven Council and the Hartford Council have recommended such policies for their districts, although their recommendations are quite different from each other. It was decided to table the matter for discussion at the next Council meeting and, in the meantime, to distribute the Hartford and New Haven policies to Council members.

(6) Statewide housing prosecutors office: Raphael Podolsky reported that the Chief State's Attorney may be introducing a bill to centralize housing code prosecution in his office, using prosecutors who would work exclusively on housing code prosecution. In the past, the Hartford Council has supported this proposal on the ground that it would be more likely to produce prosecutors who believe in code enforcement and who see it as important and that it would be easier to hold the Chief State's Attorney accountable than to attempt to deal with the administrative judges. The New Haven Council, in contrast, has preferred separate local prosecutors who spend part-time on housing code prosecution because it feels that they are closer to the local situation, know the area and the people better, and are more subject to pressure. The Legislative Committee was directed to be alert to this legislation. The matter was then referred to the Executive Committee to be made one of the issues on which the Council will work this year.

(7) Housing court expansion: Raphael Podolsky reported that several legislators from Danbury have been pressing for the creation of a housing court in the Danbury area. Because of its small size, a separate Danbury housing court is unlikely, but the General Assembly may consider taking some

action in 1984 to expand the existing housing court districts. Jon Alander moved that the Council recommend that there be no housing court expansion without a prior study and that the Council should offer to do the study for the legislature, preferably with supplemental funding but without it if necessary. Pat Wallace seconded the motion. Nancy Brown objected to opposing expansion, which might put the Council in conflict with housing advocates in Danbury. Mr. Alander then withdrew the motion and moved instead that the Council recommend that there be a study of the possible expansion of the housing court system and that the Council offer to do the study, preferably with some funds. Pat Wallace seconded this motion also. Some members of the Council thought it unwise to ask the legislature for funds. There was also some discussion of the Council simply doing a study on its own initiative. The motion was approved, 10-0-3:

In favor: Alander, Wallace, Hosen, Murtha, Stafford, Tatem,
Wincze, Church, Kor, DiNigris.
Opposed: None.
Abstain: Podolsky, Brown, Diaz.

The chairperson was directed to convey the Council's recommendation to the legislature.

(8) Council membership: The Council still has three vacancies from the Hartford-New Britain district and two from the New Haven-Waterbury district. Council members with suggestions for appointments should communicate them to Doug Mintz or to the appropriate regional committee chairperson.

(9) Next meeting: No date was set for the next meeting, which will probably be in late February or early March. The agenda for that meeting will, however, include the following items:

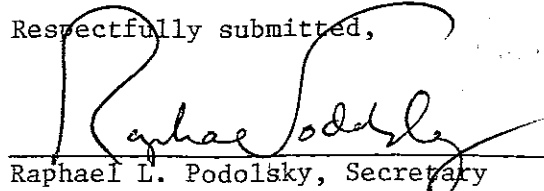
- a. Housing code prosecution policy.
- b. Job specifications for housing specialists. Materials on this subject from the Hartford Council are enclosed.
- c. Spanish-language forms.
- d. Listing of housing court telephone numbers in local telephone directories.
- e. Housing court prosecution office.

Each regional committee is to gather information, prior to the next Council meeting, on (a) the use of Spanish-language forms and explanatory materials in their districts; (b) the extent to which telephone books for towns in their districts do not include a housing court listing in the blue pages; (c) the cost of adding such listings; and (d) the cost of toll-free lines so that anyone in the district could call a housing court location as a local call.

Enc.:

- a. Membership list
- b. Prosecution policy
- c. Housing specialist qualifications
- d. Housing Court Act and Legislative Report (if absent from meeting)

Respectfully submitted,


Raphael L. Podolsky, Secretary