



CITIZENS ADVISORY
COUNCIL FOR HOUSING MATTERS



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Minutes of Meeting of December 9, 1991

The meeting was called to order at approximately 2:10 p.m. by Chairperson Rafael Podolsky. The meeting was held in the conference room of the Connecticut Bar Association in Rocky Hill. Those present included: Linda Francois, Richard Tanenbaum, Rafael Podolsky, Susanne Gebrian, Fred Wallace, Richard Preston, Ethel Austin, Joseph Zibbideo, Kevin Tierney, Joseph Wincze, Glenn Falk, Joelen Gates and Sheldon Hosen.

1. Agenda: The agenda was approved with no additions.
2. New appointments: No new appointments have been made at this date, they are supposed to have come out already.
3. Minutes: The minutes of the June 17, 1991 meeting were approved with a correction on the bottom of page 2 substituting "Zibbideo" for "Wincze."
4. Treasurer: The report was tabled due to the absence of the Treasurer. It is thought that it would contain the \$179.76 balance reported 12/90 which was left over from previous fundraising.
- 5a. Open Houses: Housing Court districts have not held open houses or luncheons for the now sitting judges.
- 5b. Judge Assignments: Judge Vertefeuille and Judge Berger are in their third terms and it is anticipated that new judges will be appointed. The new term commences March 1. Names should be submitted to Judge Ment three months before. If they are not in by two months before, the decision will be made without our input.

6. New Housing Court Developments

The chief state's attorney was met with re: developing police training in the housing area. Suggestions were presented to both academies but we have no feedback yet.

6a. iii. Identification of Criminal GA cases. Richard Preston's office likes the idea of identifying housing matters; however, there is a moratorium on changes to judicial's computer program. Bill Sadek advised there is no money to reprogram the computer and even if there were, for the small number of cases involved, a manual system would be more cost effective. The housing courts take care of 20,000 cases annually manually.

Richard Preston advises that extensive questionnaires are too time consuming but there are separate docket sheets for criminal housing cases in New London and Danielson. He will send a copy of one to Fred Wallace, Morris Czackes, and Rafie. Fax of one received. It is unknown how the clerks distinguish the cases from others. New London has an "H" list. Middletown is distinguished by the the time docket is heard.

6c. i. Prosecutors

i. Budget issues

[all four back in place]

ii. Prosecutors: other

Litchfield and Danbury termed a "black hole" for criminal cases. The state attorney throws them out. This is a policy issue between the Chief's State's attorney and the local office. These districts are the only ones with this problem. Walter Flanagan in Danbury not receptive to our input. By statute housing prosecution is to be centralized in the Chief State's attorney's office. Rafie believes our Danbury subcommittee should write directly to Chief State's attorney. Richard Preston stated Dominic Galuzzo was going to handle it. Rafie suggested that a joint effort might force some change.

6b. Housing Specialists (Fran Calafiore).

i. No layoff problems. Rafie advises that statutorily we must have 9 so if any were laid off it would be below the minimum (Rafie sent a letter to this effect).

ii. Other: Discussion regarding the tension between uniform procedures and having to do what the local judge requires.

-- Fran questioned about allowing the Commission access to specialist's report forms. Fran will discuss this with Bill. Although she believes the information is valuable she does not want specialists to be overly concerned about statistics. Richard Tanenbaum and Joseph Wincze appointed to follow up on this.

-- The recession has caused it to be a tenant's market which has decreased the number of cases to housing specialists. Case numbers are rising again, however.

6a. ii. Spanish Translations -- Tenants guide should be translated, other forms are lower priority. Joe Wincze will look for help translating it. Barbara Perry is appointed to help because of her connection to the Neighborhood Housing Coalition.

6a. v. Recruitment of Bilingual Employees. We recommend some employees be bilingual. This tabled until next meeting. Joe Wincze will start working on a list by hiring area with priority for housing court districts. If we find many organizations which should get job postings the Commission could do mailing ourselves if judicial is reluctant.

6a. Housing Court Clerks (Bill Sadek)

i. Budget -- danger of layoffs is passed.

iv. Pro se assistance in G.A. Courts - variable quality depending on personnel. Loss of personnel hurts. Response has been to standardize pro se assistance by self-explanatory standardized and increased publications to make up for staffing problems. Meriden is a problem, especially because there is no niche with small claims actions. A good clerk was laid off but is returning in February. Bridgeport is also a problem but all housing courts have all the forms.

New fee waiver form in use. Dick Tannenbaum is not happy with the equity information required as it has little to do with the ability to pay. Judicial's legal services department produces the forms. Discussion re: lack of responsiveness to issues raised by the committee or the clerks. The commission would like to give legal services direct input but we have only

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been allowed to do so through Bill Sadek.

8. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:05 p.m.

/s/ Linda Francois
Linda Francois
Acting Secretary