



CITIZENS ADVISORY
COUNCIL FOR HOUSING MATTERS



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 12/17/92

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 2:10 p.m. by Chairman Raphael Podolsky. The following persons were present:

Linda Francois
Joseph Zibbiddeo
Mellanee Harris
Sr. Susanne Gebrian
Richard Tenenbaum
David Pels
Steven Sellers
Joe Wincze
Elaine DeNigris
Frances Z. Calafiore
William Sadek
Karin Nigol
Barbara Perry
Raphael Podolsky
Nancy Kierstead
Kevin Tierney

Approval of agenda and minutes:

Following the approval of the agenda, a motion to approve the minutes of June 10, 1992, was made and seconded.

Status of Appointments:

Rafie reported that he has been told (again) that they are imminent. We are one of many groups needing appointments.

Most members from the Hartford area are seeking reappointment, lesser numbers from other areas of the state.

The questionnaire sent out by the governor's office to prospective appointees was too detailed for this body. Rafie will ask that the more appropriate questionnaire be sent out.

Selection of New Secretary and Treasurer

Linda Francois unanimously elected secretary.
Barbara Perry unanimously elected treasurer.

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Housing court Update and Review of
Biennial Report

Prosecution Issues now being overseen by Steve Sellers (present), new director of operations in Chief State's attorneys' office. Due to internal reorganization, Dominick Galluzzo is no longer fulfilling this function.

Supervision of Prosecutors

Steve Sellers reports they are considering housing prosecutors (HP) be supervised by the local state's attorneys rather than the chief state's attorney to facilitate the integration of the prosecutors into state's attorneys office. HPs will be meeting with him to work out protocols on when matters will be referred to housing prosecution. The downside is that there will be more pressure on HPs to help in other cases viewed as more important than housing. HPs now cover more than one courthouse. Sellers reports they already handle less than 100% housing matters. Richard Tanenbaum, Joseph Z and Raphie appointed to subcommittee to examine and comment on above plans. After discussion, the committee decided to leave section IIID of draft report unchanged in opposing such an integration.

Lead Paint task force of legislature. Enforcement difficulties with enforcing the health department's tougher lead paint regulations discussed. No criminal enforcement provisions.

Lockout/New Abandonment statutes discussed. Raphie's definition accepted. Not a license to lockout, provisions can only be used when it looks like a tenant has already abandoned.

Recording of criminal dispositions. Sellers reported that dispositions are being recorded, including any charitable donations made.

Consultation in [selection and] assignment of prosecutors. (IIIE of Draft Report). After discussion bracketed words added. All prosecutors hired by criminal justice commission which is a separate entity from Chief State's attorney's office.

Monitoring of probation and accelerated rehabilitation.

Discussion re: best persons for monitoring. Fran C stated the Housing Code (HC) enforcement officers have to monitor cases for their own files and have the expertise to do the work.

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Joe Z stated HC officials needed the court to make the landlords do the work. Municipal code violations have been lowered in classification and carry no jail time (fines only). Majority of HC prosecutions are based on municipal codes. Raphie stated civil enforcement can be more potent in some ways but is underutilized.

Consultation with Council. Sellers urged to consult Council prior to making decision so as to get more consensus and better results.

Housing Specialist (HS) Issues. (Report of Fran C).

Personnel changes/staffing. Nancy Kierstead appointed as Fran's manager, to deal with the Housing Specialist program. Since only on an acting basis her old position cannot be filled. Exacerbates existing staffing problems - 1 specialist resigned, 1 on maternity leave, 1 transferred to Hartford, 1 on extended medical leave. Have a per diem slot 2 days a week. HS's giving 110% percent but by statute must screen all contested cases and not all courthouses covered every week. Courts notified as far ahead as possible of coverage but Fran may not tell them how they should schedule the case load. Outlying areas get 2 out of 4 weeks coverage except Danielson which gets 3 out of 4 of bimonthly.

Housing Specialist Statistics. No staff to compile. If had an intern available it could be done. 96% of contested summary process cases referred to HSs are settled or withdrawn. Fran agrees to provide Council with settlement rates in each jurisdiction and case load information on referrals. Small claims stipulation rate only 21-25% on referred cases, therefore least efficient use of HS time. HS not used very often for small claims cases.

Clerk's office issues. (Report of Bill Sadek).

Identification of housing criminal cases. Cases only identifiable by reference to court docket. IA of draft report language "numbering" changed to "identification" and "some degree of" added after "permits."

Spanishing speaking staff: only one staff person out of seven HSs speak Spanish.

Glass partitions: discussion re "relatively" large speaker

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opening in Hartford Clerk's office, language added to draft report that the partition nevertheless impedes communication with the clerk.

Explanatory information: David Pels will explore possibility of getting a translation of the rights and responsibility booklet.

Judicial Issues

1. Magistrates' bench book 75-80% done. Will be circulated for comment.

2. Evaluation of Magistrates (Housing small claims). Discussion whether magistrates could be adequately reviewed without access to judgment. Fran stated 98% of complaints are based on something that happened in the courtroom. Dick Tanenbaum stated he has heard many complaints about decisions unrelated to facts in Danbury. Council decided that observation of magistrates is worthwhile.

A motion was made by Dick Tanenbaum to adopt the draft report as amended and seconded by Karin Nigol. The motion carried.

Nancy Kierstead introduced.

It was reported that council member Susan Manchester has died. Raphie to write a short sympathy note on behalf of the council.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:32 p.m.