



CITIZENS ADVISORY
COUNCIL FOR HOUSING MATTERS



Reply to:

November 4, 1994

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 9/29/94

Present:

Odessa Young, Joe Wincze, Houston Putnam Lowry, Vic Feigenbaum, Suzanne Colasanto, Tais Ericson, Roberta Oris Palmer, Cynthia Teixeira, David Pels, Richard Tenenbaum, Sheldon Hosen, Robert Kor, Elaine DeNigris, Raphael Podolsky, Murray Czaczkes, Sister Suzanne Gebrian, Linda Francois.

1. Preliminary Matters

a. Call to Order: the meeting was called to order at 2:15 p.m.

b. The agenda was approved and the minutes of the meeting of 6/15/94 were approved with the corrections of the spelling of Suzanne Colasanto and the replacement in 2f. of "Chief Housing Specialist" with "Manager of Dispute Resolution." Change was made in the summary of Housing Court Reports by deletion of "unsuccessful" from #4.

c. Financial report: no changes.

d. Update on new appointments. There are indications that appointments may come out in November to complete the term ending in 1995.

2. Review of Draft Biennial Report

IA. Computerization of housing cases. Discussion re: advisability and necessity of connecting to Superior Court computer system. Clear need for computers for word processing, accounting, file status, but no need to integrate with non-housing computers. Mailing time for notices would be too long for abbreviated housing time limits.

Each of J.D.s and G.A.s have one computer for judicial research. But Hartford Housing Session does not have one.

Recommendations:

- 1.) All housing locations have P.C.s to be networked to all other housing matter locations.
- 2.) The Hartford housing judge should have access to a computer for judicial research.

Murray Czaczkes stated that the statutes have to be amended re: new courthouses where housing will be on the J.D. level and the statute does not provide for it. Discussion re: appropriate place to file housing matters and practicality/space.

General Recommendation: Over the long run housing matters should be continued to be transferred to J.D. of each district. In the short run, as physical hearing place changes, the statute should be amended to reflect that the case will be returnable to where it is heard.

ID. Spanish speaking staff. Roberta Palmer stated she is on a Committee convened by Judge Hennessy to recruit Spanish speaking judicial staff. We provided her with a copy of our previous recommendations toward this.

IF. Explanatory materials. Suzanne Colasanto reported that many complaints have already been addressed. They have a problem with display racks as some people take hundreds of forms at a time. She suggested posting a list in clerk's office of available forms. It was suggested that reduced copies of pamphlet covers could be posted if practical. It was decided to remove the word "ideally" from paragraph F.

IG. Pro se assistance. The tenant's guide is due to be reprinted and the change in the draft has been suggested to Judicial. Discussion re: difference between legal advice and pro se assistance.

Last sentence change "should" to "is."

IJ. Case processing. Date of G.A. 10 study should be included.

IIA. Housing Specialist Issues: Staffing. Discussion re: huge increase in numbers of housing cases. Recommendation: place this information in paragraph IA and make reference to it in IC as a further need for computers, also in IJ, and in IIA as a further reason to fully staff housing specialist ranks.

IIB. Law student mediation program. After discussion it was decided that the mediation program was a net benefit to the system.

Suzanne Colasanto stated and it was agreed that the last sentence of the paragraph should be deleted as the program was something that should be initiated by the schools. It was agreed that language could be added such that the council would like to see expansion of the program.

IIC. Coordination with eviction prevention programs. Suzanne Colasanto reported that it had been found unnecessary to have a community mediation person present at the New Haven housing court as the existing telephone referral system is successful. Therefore the Council agreed to delete the sentence "Housing Court staff...program" from the draft.

IIIA. Prosecution Issues - Supervision of prosecutors. This section was retained in its entirety. It was noted that no one from the chief state's attorneys office attended our meeting and this was attributed to the change recited in IIIA.

IIIC. Recording of criminal dispositions. Suzanne Colasanto questioned whether this was still true. Rafie noted that no one has asked to change it. After discussion it was decided to replace "There remains doubt" with "The council is uncertain."

VA. Council membership. This will be deleted if appointments are made before the report is printed.

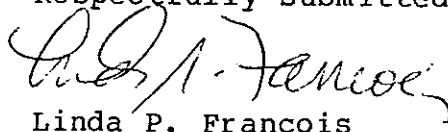
The council unanimously passed the motion to adopt the report with the changes decided upon this date, subject to any comments reported to Raphie after mailing a copy to council members, with any controversies to be reviewed by the executive committee.

3. Other matters

a. Magistrate evaluation: The Council reaffirmed its support for the development of a questionnaire for use by litigants and attorneys to evaluate small claims magistrates. If the Judicial Department, in conjunction with the Council, does not develop such a questionnaire, the Council committee is authorized to develop and distribute its own.

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

Respectfully submitted,



Linda P. Francois