

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION COMMISSION  
OF THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT

In the Matter of a Complaint by  
Olson Drive Tenants' Union, Loretta  
Robinson, Clarissa Schuler, Ruthie  
Mae Harris,

Complainants

Final Decision

against

Docket #FIC79-201

Housing Authority of the City of  
Ansonia,

May 14, 1980

Respondent

The above captioned matter was heard as a contested case on March 6, 1980, at which time the complainants and the respondent authority appeared, stipulated to certain facts, and presented testimony, exhibits and argument of the complaint.

After consideration of the entire record, the following facts are found:

1. The respondent authority is a public agency as defined by §1-18a(a), G.S.
2. By notice of appeal filed with this Commission on September 19, 1979, the complainants alleged that the respondent authority denied them of certain rights conferred under the Freedom of Information Act.
3. Prior to hearing, the complainants and the respondent authority resolved the issues raised in paragraphs 2 through 4 of the notice of appeal by stipulation put on the record at the hearing to the mutual satisfaction of both parties.
4. The sole issue to be decided, therefore, is whether or not the respondent authority may, under all circumstances, continue to meet in its director's office.
5. The respondent authority has in the past met, and continues to meet, concerning an item of business that is of general interest to the complainants.
6. Such matter was taken up at the respondent authority's meeting of August 21, 1979.
7. Such meeting was held in the office of the director of the respondent authority, which is a room that can accommodate approximately 10 members of the public.
8. Approximately fifty members of the public chose to attend the August meeting and, as a result of the size of the crowd, were unable to be present in the meeting room during the course of such meeting.

9. The respondent authority had advance notice that a large number of persons, including most or all of the complainant herein, desired to attend such meeting. However, the respondent authority refused to relocate its meeting place to larger accommodations available to it, as requested by the complainants.

10. The respondent authority continues to refuse, under any circumstances, to relocate its meeting place. As a result of such decision, attendance at its meeting has dwindles dramatically although the authoprity continues to consider an item of business that is of ;idespread interest to the complainants.

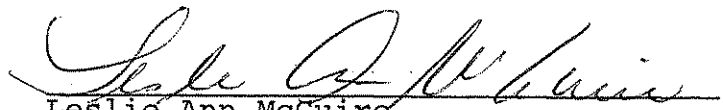
11. It is found that the respondent authority's refusal, under the circumstances of this case, constitutes a denial of the public's right to attend its meetings.

The following order by the Commission is hereby recommended on the basis of the record concerning the above captioned complaint:

1. Henceforth, whenever the respondent authority is on advance notice that its meeting place will be insufficient to accommodate the number of persons who have expressed an intention of attending its meeting, it may hold such meeting only in one of its alternative meeting rooms.

2. Henceforth, whenever the respondent authority's meeting place becomes, after the convening of its meeting, insufficient to accommodate the attending public, it shall make every effort to relocate its meeting to one of its alternative meeting rooms before continuing further with the business of such meeting.

Approved by order of the Freedom of  
Information Commission on May 14, 1980

  
Leslie Ann McGuire  
Clerk of the Commission