



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

JUDICIAL PROCEDURES COMMISSION

Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration/500 West Temple Street, Room B-50/Los Angeles, California 90012 / (213) 974-1431

MINUTES OF THE 705th MEETING OF THE JUDICIAL PROCEDURES COMMISSION

The 705th meeting of the Los Angeles County Judicial Procedures Commission was held on September 10, 2009, in Room 140 of the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, California. A list of those present follows:

MEMBERS PRESENT

Heather Aubry, Vice Chair
Clifton Albright
Nelson L. Atkins
Gary L. Barr
Andrew Friedman
William J. Galloway
Paul A. Jacobs
Neal S. Millard
Sylvia Scott-Hayes

MEMBERS EXCUSED

Dennis P. Zine, Chair
Bertrum CeDillos
Annie Y. Huang
David C. Voss, Jr.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Don Mike Anthony, President, Los Angeles County Bar Association (LACBA)
Captain Samuel Dacus, Sheriff's Dept.
Beatriz Dieringer, District Attorney's Office
Zoe Venhuizen, Superior Court

COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES

James Endman, Superior Court
Margaret Little, Ph.D., Court Representative

STAFF

Martha Arana, Commission Services Staff
Jimmy Prieto, Commission Services Staff
Andrew Sevrin, Commission Services Staff

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Aubry called the 705th regular meeting of the Los Angeles County Judicial Procedures Commission (JPC) to order at 12:28 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The pledge of allegiance was led by Commissioner William Galloway.

MEMBERS

Dennis P. Zine
Chair

Heather Aubry
Vice Chair

Nelson L. Atkins
Clifton Albright
Annie Y. Huang
Bertrum CeDillos
Andrew Friedman
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APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF AUGUST 13, 2009 MEETING

On motion of Commissioner Barr, seconded by Commissioner Albright, and unanimously carried, the minutes for the meeting of August 13, 2009, were approved as submitted.

GUEST SPEAKER, DON MIKE ANTHONY, PRESIDENT, LOS ANGELES COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION (LACBA) "OVERVIEW OF LACBA"

Don Mike Anthony, President, Los Angeles County Bar Association, reported the following:

- The Los Angeles County Bar Association (LACBA) is the largest metropolitan bar association in the world. It employs 93 staff and operates on a \$13 million budget. The Commission is invited to the grand opening on September 24, 2009, of the new LA County Bar Association facility, located on the 26th and 27th floors at 1055 W. 7th Street in downtown Los Angeles.
- Stewart Forsythe, Executive Director, is retiring from the Bar Association in November 2009 after five years of service. There is a nationwide search for a new Executive Director, and four suitable candidates are in the running for the new position.
- Although there are currently 75,000 attorneys in Los Angeles, only 25,000 belong to the Bar Association. More are encouraged to join the Association.
- LACBA has several committees presently operating, one of which is the Fair Election Judicial Practices Committee, which reviews candidates for judicial office (using a "qualified" rating system). The recommendations are published for public view. Another committee reviews potential candidates for judges sent by the Governor, which is similar to the State Bar's Committee on Judicial Commissions. This committee makes recommendations to the Governor, using a "qualified" rating system; recommendations are made confidential.
- LACBA has the following three public service projects underway: 1) Immigration Project – Operates out of the Federal courthouse and provides legal aid for immigrants; 2) HIV/AIDS Victims Project – Providing legal assistance to low-income HIV/AIDS victims facing medical, housing, and/or employment issues. Funding is currently hampered by the State budget crisis; and 3) Domestic Violence Project – Funded by LACBA, lawyers volunteer their services with a small staff assisting victims of domestic violence. 6,000 restraining orders were processed via the Domestic Violence project. Donations have been very low this year for the project.
- The Los Angeles Superior Court system is the largest and the best court system in the country. Funding has been drastically reduced because of the budget, consequently staff that are retiring or terminating are not being replaced. Next year's Fiscal Year looks bleak: a worst-case scenario would mean layoffs and court closures in Pasadena, Glendale and other parts of the San Fernando Valley, with the potential of forcing clients and attorneys to commute outside their community to attend a hearing.
- Family courts would be the most impacted due to their under funding and lack of resources.
- Mr. Anthony will step down as President of LACBA next year and he will be succeeded by Alan Steinbrecher.

- A significant resource provided by LACBA is the Lawyer Referral Service which provides referrals for attorneys vetted for experience in their practice and covered by malpractice insurance.

Commissioner Millard proposed that LACBA and the Commission could work together on Commission projects, such as the Public Guardian Program or the Bench Diversity. Mr. Anthony remarked that LACBA recently held a two-day diversity summit. Diversity is important because in order to adequately be represented, one needs to be represented and judged by peers.

In response to Commissioner Jacobs, Mr. Anthony suggested that the Commission can best help the County Bar Association by recommending which programs and projects need the most attention. Many programs at LACBA are created by young barristers, like the Returning Veterans Program which provides legal assistance to veterans undergoing difficulty gaining employment and housing upon their return to the home front. There is also a Foreclosure Section offering pro-bono legal assistance to homes and businesses by re-negotiating loans preventing foreclosure by banks and investment corporations.

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

Safe Child Custody Exchange Program (SCCEP)

Ex-Officio Dieringer reported that the Department of Children and Family Services informed her that the Board of Supervisors approved a recommendation for funding allocation for the SCCEP. The news was surprising to the beneficiaries as they were unaware that the Board of Supervisors had taken action on July 21, 2009; they understood that the item had been tabled for a future date. Vice-Chair Aubry attested to being present at the meeting when the Board Letter was approved. She addressed the Board of Supervisors in favor of the item on behalf of the Commission. Funds will be released to the Grace Resource Center (5th District) and Friends of the Family (3rd District) at the beginning of January 2010. Supervisor Antonovich and his Deputies Helen Berberian and Anna Pembedjian were most instrumental in securing funds for the SCCEP. Commissioner Millard proposed drafting a letter thanking the Fifth Supervisorial District for their support on the SCCEP.

Diversity on the Bench Initiative

This item was deferred to the October 15, 2009, meeting.

Public Guardian Program

Margaret Little, Ph.D., Court Representative, recommended that the Commission set up a mechanism for receipt of funds to be re-distributed for this purpose. Commissioner Barr commented that the next item on the agenda will aid in the funding of the program.

RECOMMENDATION TO ESTABLISH AND APPROVE THE JUDICIAL PROCEDURES COMMISSION TRUST FUND COMMITTEE AND APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

The Commission approved the establishment of a Judicial Procedures Commission Trust Fund Committee comprised of Commissioners Albright, Barr and Ex-Officio Member Dieringer. Commissioner Barr was appointed Committee Chair.

Motion: Commissioner Jacobs, seconded Ex-Officio Dieringer
Vote: Unanimous

Commissioner Barr accepted his appointment and reported that there is currently \$2,716.17 in the Trust Fund. The balance includes the donation from the Sogo Group in the amount of \$500 for the month of August 2009. The Committee will need to meet regarding the administration of funds, and then present their recommendations to the Commissions at a future meeting.

MATTERS NOT ON THE POSTED AGENDA (TO BE PRESENTED AND PLACED ON A FUTURE AGENDA)

There was none.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, on motion of Ex-Officio Dieringer, seconded by Commissioner Barr, and unanimously carried, the 705th meeting of the Judicial Procedures Commission adjourned at 1:18 p.m.