

DELIVERY OF LEGAL SERVICES
SECTION COUNCIL
Minutes
March 24, 2010

Participants: Suzanne Sangree, Chair; Yoanna Moisides, Vice-Chair; Marianne Hendricks, Secretary/Treasurer; Tracy Brown; Ed Fee; Margaret Johnson; Harriet Robinson

Guest: Diane Cipollone of Civil Justice

I. Maryland Mortgage Fraud Prevention Project (MFP): Diane Cipollone of Civil Justice presented on this topic.

- A. Civil Justice is a small organization of attorneys located in bar headquarters in Maryland, has a network of attorneys to whom they provide referrals when people don't qualify for Legal Aid, etc. but also cannot afford regular attorney rates. They provide referrals for all sorts of cases, criminal defense, family, etc. Civil Justice encourages their network attorneys to offer reduced rates to the referred clients. They also have a list serve for their attorneys.
- B. They train and mentor attorneys in foreclosure prevention; it has become one of their largest projects since 2007.
- C. In an effort to provide a preventative measure to the foreclosure problem, they created the Maryland Mortgage Fraud Prevention Project (MFP). It is beginning as a one-year pilot program. The project is funded by a new grant from federal stimulus money (funneled through the state).
 - a. Handout: recruitment letter to attorneys, an outline of services the attorneys will provide and information about client eligibility, and information about the first training session.
 - b. First training is Friday, March 26, 2010 and they have about 60 attorneys attending.
 - c. She would love for us to volunteer and to spread the word to our respective organizations. The hardest part is reaching out to the potential clients, so it would be great to provide brochures and information to people who come in to our offices and need help like this.
 - d. Ken Strong from Baltimore City is on board, housing counseling agencies will refer potential clients.
 - e. We brainstormed different organizations for Civil Justice.

II. Guardianship Handbook: Margaret Johnson reported that Virginia Rawthorne and Daria (law student) of UM Law have been working on updating the Handbook, got together with Lauren Kallins and Ellen Calegary and realized that it is outdated in terms of its overemphasis on guardianship as opposed to looking at guardianship as an option of last resort. So it will focus on the different options people have when facing the issue of possible guardianship. They need a new title now. They expect to complete the Handbook in June. **Suzanne will check with Virginia about how long she expects the Handbook to be. We will follow up in April to check on progress.**

- A. Yoanna Moisides reported that we got the full \$4,000 grant from Maryland Bar

Foundation! **She will inquire as to by when this money has to be spent.** The end of this fiscal year is June 30, 2010.

III. Update on Legal Services Filing Fee Surcharge bills: Harriet Robinson reported that SB passed and HB passed with amendments. HB lowered the amount of filing fee increase. Sunset provision is in HB for 3 years. HB also includes provision for informational oversight of MLSC: the organization will have to provide information about itself from the last couple years to the General Assembly. HB would generate \$4.5 million and SB would generate \$9 million. HB would not make up for the IOLTA deficit. Next step is conference committee, and the committee has not yet been selected.

IV. MSBA Best Section Project: Nominations are due April 9. There are two different kinds of Best Project awards, one for Section members and one for the general public. Ed Fee suggested that we should nominate ourselves for the general public award for our role in getting the Filing Fee Surcharge bills passed. **Ed volunteered to write the nomination letter, which should consist of a project description and materials, if any. Ed will circulate a draft before he submits the letter.**

V. Budget: Marianne Hendricks reported that Terry Bell, our liaison from Budget and Finance, contacted her to inquire about whether we had heard from the Maryland Bar Foundation about our Guardianship Handbook grant application. **Marianne will tell Terry about our \$4,000 award and will ask for an update on our Section Council budget process.** As for our current budget, Suzanne reported that we have about \$2,500 for meetings and \$8,000 for projects (will go to PBRC for the Partners for Justice Conference) for the rest of the year (ends June 30, 2010).

VI. People's Law Library Advisory meeting is April 20, Harriet will continue to attend meetings. **We should let her know if we have any questions or comments.**

VII. MD Justice website: for legal services providers, people can use it to share documents and information. LAB task forces are in the process of being moved to MD Justice. It will have different tiers of access, i.e., for LAB attorneys only, for pro bono attorneys, etc.

VIII. Outreach Project:

A. Foreclosure Committee of Real Property Section Council: Diane Cippolone not sure whether she has been made a part of this, she knows that consumer advocates are not being invited to some sort of meeting. She has been invited to something that is publicly advertised to all of the Section members. She is interested in becoming a part of the Section Council. She will try to make her presence known amongst the Section membership.

B. The attempt to get Laure Ruth of WLC onto the Family Law Section Council was unsuccessful.

IX. Section Awards: Many Sections give out awards, they present them at their presentations at the Annual Meeting. We may do this in the future, when/if we decide to present again at the Annual Meeting (see next item).

X. Annual Meeting presentations: We discussed co-sponsoring a session at next year's Meeting with Elder Law on the updated "Guardianship" Handbook. **We will table this until September 2010.**

XI. Annual Report: Due to MSBA every March. Harriet drafted the report and Suzanne submitted it.

XII. Ed Fee and Margaret Johnson's first terms are up, we voted in both to continue for a second term on the Section Council.

- XIII. We still need someone on our Section Council from an organization that provides services to limited English proficiency (LEP) populations; **Yoanna will reach out to Enid Gonzales of CASA of Maryland to join our Section Council.**
- XIV. We need an update on the Language Access Brochure--**we will ask Gwen Tromley for an update for the next meeting.**
- XV. We will elect new officers at our next meeting. Suzanne was nominated and voted in as next year's President (Suzanne abstained). Yoanna was nominated and voted in as next year's President-Elect (Yoanna abstained). **We need nominations for the Secretary/Treasurer position.**
- XVI. Next meeting: Tuesday, May 18, 2010 at 6 pm at Dogwood Restaurant in Hampden.