

MSBA CORRECTIONAL REFORM SECTION COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting October 19, 2010

Members Present: Alison Leonard-Leach, James Johnston, Roland Knapp, Monique Dixon, Arnold Hopkins, Walter Lomax, Angela Eaves.

Call to Order/Introductions: Many thanks to Monique Dixon for hosting this meeting at the offices of the Open Society Institute. Vice-Chair Alison Leonard-Leach called the meeting to order at approximately 6:40 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the meeting held on September 28, 2010 were reviewed. Arnold Hopkins moved their approval; Roland Knapp seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Correctional Reform Issue of the Maryland Bar Journal: Proposed topics and authors include: (1) Diminution Credits/Joe Tetrault; (2) Overview of the Criminal Justice System/Michael Berlin; (3) Youths Charged as Adults/Monique Dixon and Wendy Hess; (4) 40th Anniversary of the Inmate Grievance Office/Scott Oakley; (5) Review of Supreme Court Cases that Impact Prisoners' Rights/Stephanie Lane-Weber and Maureen Dove; (6) Women Inmates/(Angela Eaves to speak with Magistrate Judge Susan Gauvey); (7) Justice Policy Institute on Juveniles Sentenced to Parole Eligible Life Sentences/Walter Lomax and Tracy Velasquez; (8) Senate Bill 714/(Arnold Hopkins to speak with Senator Webb); (9) Solitary Confinement/Moges Abebe; (10) Aging Prison Population/Arnold Hopkins, Roland Knapp and Michael Berlin.

James Johnston suggested several additional topics for consideration and will follow up with authors: (1) Mental health issues; (2) Evidence-based sentencing; and (3) Correctional options (e.g., boot camp).

Reminder: The deadline for providing topics and authors to Janet Eveleth is December 2010. Therefore, we must have firm commitments by the November 16, 2010 CRSC meeting.

With respect to the proposed article on the Aging Prison Population, Arnold Hopkins reported that he compiled materials and met with Scott Oakley and Stephanie Lane-Weber. The article could cover the following: (1) resources for aging prisoner upon their release; (2) document innovative programs and services to show Maryland officials how to address the aging prisoner population's issues (e.g., health care, physical infrastructure); (3) answer outstanding questions such as how to boost medical parole (lowering age threshold from 60 to 50 in line with other states). The Council members present also watched a brief portion of a videoconference by the National Institute of Corrections on the needs of aging and terminally ill prisoners.

Roland Knapp suggested that we invite the chair of the Parole Commission to a future meeting to discuss and share ideas on this topic.

Selection of Topics for the Year: The Council discussed the topics that were selected at the September 28, 2010 meeting.

With respect to the Aging Prison Population, the discussion led by Arnold Hopkins was merged with the discussion of the proposed article for the bar journal. The Council needs to decide whether it will produce a resource manual or otherwise engage the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services in changing its policies and procedures to be more consistent with the current research and literature on this topic.

With respect to the Reentry of Offenders, the discussion led by Angela Eaves was whether the Council wishes to follow up on the efforts of the participants at past Maryland Partners for Justice Conferences to create a resource manual, or to engage DPSCS in pre-release planning as suggested by failed legislative efforts (SB 183 and HB 142), or to spearhead conferences like those for MCIW inmates. Walter Lomax indicated that the Maryland Restorative Justice Initiative, Inc. is working with the Mayor of Baltimore's Ex-Offender's Program (now led by Tomi Hiers formerly of DPSCS) to update an existing guide. He also suggested that violent offenders should be included in our efforts. Monique Dixon informed the Council that Secretary Maynard chairs a state task force that includes OSI grantees and the task force has a report pending that includes the issue of reentry.

The Council decided to defer until the November meeting to the Chair's prerogative any definitive action as to how to proceed with the topics for the year.

Legislative Liaison: Alison Leonard-Leach has agreed to be the liaison for the Council with respect to recommendations on upcoming legislation before the 2011 General Assembly. She already works closely with the MSBA's Legislative Director, Richard Montgomery.

New Business: Roland Knapp directed the Council to read the article "Free Willy" published on October 13, 2010 in the City Paper. The article discusses problems with the criminal justice system and seems to conclude that a major overhaul is needed.

Old Business: With respect to the packet of information provided by Walter Lomax at the September 28, 2010 meeting about the Maryland Restorative Justice Initiative, he would like the Council to write a letter of support regarding MRJI's legislative efforts. The Council is open to making appropriate recommendations to the MSBA Board of Governors.

Next Meeting: November 16, 2010 at MSBA Hqtrs.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:15 p.m.