

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION

In the Matter of a Complaint by June Chiaia-Logie, Easton

File No. 2022-012

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Complainant brought this Complaint pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes § 9-7b, alleging the Easton Republican Town Committee (“ERTC”) failed to notice a meeting of the ERTC to nominate and elect as party endorsed candidates to serve on the ERTC.

After an investigation of the Complaint, the Commission makes the following findings and conclusions:

1. The Complainant alleges that the ERTC failed to properly notice a meeting to nominate and elect as party endorsed candidates to serve on the ERTC.
2. On December 27, 2021, ERTC chairperson Wendy Bowditch scheduled a meeting of the ERTC for 7:00 p.m. on January 4, 2022, at the Easton Public Library Community Room. On December 31, 2021, Bowditch published a legal notice in the Fairfield Citizen to warn the public that the election of party endorsed candidates to serve on the ERTC would take place on January 4, 2022, in the Easton Public Library Community Room, at 7:00 p.m.
3. On January 2, 2022, due to a surge of Covid-19 and an emergency declaration by the Connecticut Governor to follow certain health and safety measures, Bowditch and Easton Republican Registrar of Voters Dori Wollen, discussed whether the Easton Public Library Community Room was sufficient to hold the ERTC meeting, due to its small size. On January 3, 2022, Bowditch changed the location of the meeting from the Easton Public Library Community Room to the Samuel Staples Elementary School. On January 4, 2022, a sign was placed on the Easton Public Library door notifying the public that the location of the ERTC meeting was changed to the Samuel Staples Elementary School.
4. On January 4, 2022, the ERTC meeting took place at the Samuel Staples Elementary School. At the meeting, the community members in attendance nominated and elected thirty persons as party endorsed candidate to the ERTC.
5. Complaints were filed with the Republican State Central Committee (“RSCC”) and on February 3, 2022, the RSCC Dispute Committee considered the complaints. The RSCC, through its Dispute Committee and Chairperson Ben Proto, determined that as a result of the location change proper notice of the January 4, 2022, meeting was not given, and therefore, the actions taken at the meeting were null and void.

6. On March 4, 2022, the Complainant filed a lawsuit seeking declaratory and injunctive relief in the Superior Court Judicial District of Fairfield at Bridgeport, and on December 8, 2022, the case was dismissed. See *Chaia-Logie v Republican State Committee*, CV-22-5048056-S (Conn. Super. Dec. 8, 2022).
7. General Statutes § 9-390, provides in pertinent part:
 - (a) Except as provided in subsection (g) of this section, party endorsed candidates of any party in any municipality for municipal office shall be selected, *in accordance with the rules of such party, by*: (1) The enrolled members of such party in such municipality in caucus, (2) delegates to a convention chosen in accordance with such rules by such enrolled members, or (3) the town committee of such party. *The town chairman or his designee shall give notice in a newspaper having a general circulation in the town of the date, time, location and purpose of a caucus* held pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection. Such notice shall be given not less than five days prior to the date set for the caucus; provided, if the rules of the party in any municipality require earlier notice, such party rules shall prevail. [Emphasis added.]
8. General Statutes § 9-387, provides:

The state rules of each party shall prescribe *the manner in which any dispute as to the endorsement by such party* of a candidate for state, district or municipal office or for town committee member, or as to the selection by such party of a delegate to a convention, including conflicting claims to such endorsement or selection, shall be resolved. [Emphasis added.]
9. The Commission finds that General Statutes § 9-390 includes "date, time, location and purpose" within the elements of the notice requirement for a caucus, and provides that such notice must be in accordance with party rules. The Commission further finds that changing the "location" of the January 4, 2022, public meeting required new notice under General Statutes § 9-390. Finally, the Commission finds that pursuant to General Statutes § 9-390 the "town chairman or his designee" is required to give a public notice of a caucus.
10. The Commission concludes, for the reasons detailed in paragraph 9 above, the Chairperson of the ERTC was required to give public notice of the January 4, 2022, caucus which included the "location" of that caucus and by failing to do so violated General Statutes § 9-390.
11. The Commission notes that General Statutes § 9-387 provides that: *The state rules of each party shall prescribe the manner in which any dispute as to the endorsement by such party of a candidate for state, district or municipal office or for town committee member, or as to the selection by such party of a delegate to a convention, including conflicting claims to such endorsement or selection, shall be resolved.* The Commission finds the RSCC, through its Dispute Committee and Chairperson Ben Proto, in accordance with General Statutes §9-387 determined that as a result of the location change proper notice of the January 4, 2022, meeting was not given, and therefore, the actions taken at the meeting were null and void.

12. The Commission notes the Connecticut Superior Court rejected the Complainant's General Statutes §9-390 claim and upheld the RSCC and the Dispute Committee's decision.
13. Based upon the foregoing, it is the determination of the Commission that this matter should be dismissed.

ORDER

The following Order is issued on the basis of the aforementioned findings:

The complaint is dismissed.

Adopted this 19th day of January, 2023 at Hartford, Connecticut.



Stephen Penny, Chairman
By Order of the Commission