Administrative Law—Review—Statute of Limitations

Weston Wardell Jr.

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.law.buffalo.edu/buffalolawreview

Part of the Administrative Law Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://digitalcommons.law.buffalo.edu/buffalolawreview/vol6/iss2/6

This The Court of Appeals Term is brought to you for free and open access by the Law Journals at Digital Commons @ University at Buffalo School of Law. It has been accepted for inclusion in Buffalo Law Review by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ University at Buffalo School of Law. For more information, please contact lawscholar@buffalo.edu.
that the Commission, operating under the new statute, could not reaffirm the
determination of the annulled proceedings but decided that all information avail-
able, including the findings of the annulled proceeding, could have been consid-
ered by the Commission and were reviewable by the Court.8 As to the failure of
the Commission to properly notify the petitioner as required by the amended
 statute,9 the Court held that such failure was not so prejudicial as to demand
reconsideration and reaffirmation by the Commission for a valid denial. An admin-
istrative denial unaccompanied by specific factual findings does not satisfy the
statute in most cases;10 however, in the present case the petitioner was adequately
represented by counsel before the Commission in the annulled proceedings and
the Court deemed this sufficient notification of the Commission's grounds for
denial.

The Court did not feel it was impeded in its review by the general character
of the denial by the Commission11 and seemed reluctant to find the refusal
arbitrary even though there had not been strict compliance by the Commission
with the amended statute. While the Court did not demand literal compliance,
it felt that the safeguards of the statute were preserved to the petitioner in the
instant case. A dangerous precedent has not been set in view of the statement of
the Court that in most cases of an administrative denial unaccompanied by specific
factual findings stricter compliance would be required.12

Review of Administrative Determination

In view of a serious post-war housing shortage, the legislature in 1946 estab-
lished the Temporary State Housing Rent Commission in the interests of public
health, safety, and general welfare to provide regulations to assure the maintenance
of "the same . . . essential services . . ." to tenants as they enjoyed before the bill
became effective.13

In First Terrace Gardens, Inc. v. McGoldrick14 the Court held that the evidence sustained a determination by the Rent Administrator that tenants of a

8. People ex rel. Empire Trotting Club v. State Racing Comm., 190 N. Y.
31, 82 N. E. 723, (1907); Grannan v. Westchester Racing Ass'n., 153 N. Y. 449,
47 N. E. 896 (1897); Agoglia v. Mulrooney, 259 N. Y. 462, 182 N. E. 84 (1922).
9. See text of Act at note 3, supra.
10. Perpente v. Moss, 233 N. Y. 325, 56 N. E. 2d 726 (1944); In Scudder v.
O'Connell, 272 App. Div. 251, 70 N. Y. S. 2d 607 (1st Dep't 1947), where the State
Liquor Authority denied reconsideration of its denial of an application for
a license on facts and factors that were not disclosed to the petitioner, it was
noted: "(I)t ought not to be necessary for an applicant to start a pro-
ceeding under Article 78 of the Civil Practice Act in order to learn why he
has been turned down."
11. Barry v. O'Connell, 303 N. Y. 46, 100 N. E. 2d 127 (1951); Newbrand
12. See note 10, supra.
large group of apartment buildings would be deprived of essential services to a substantial extent if the landlord's proposed conversions were approved. Among the requested alterations were the changing of elevators from manual to automatic operation, and elimination of separate lobbies from each adjoining building, substituting therefor two centralized lobbies with corridors affording access to outlying buildings. The Administrator determined that personal protection of the tenants would be sacrificed by such a change and that a compromise protection plan submitted by the owner was insufficient to afford the same protection from intruders now assured by the physical presence of elevator operators.

The regulating powers of the Commission were early reasoned to be administrative in nature and as such they involve an exercise of judgment or discretion which is reviewable. However, the Court will refuse to upset a determination of an administrative body if the order has warrant in the record and a reasonable basis in law. The issue then is whether or not the determination was arbitrary, whimsical, or capricious. The dissent adopted the minority opinion of the Appellate Division that in view of previous lease reservations the owner had secured a right to certain conversions and that it became an unreasonable denial of fundamental property rights for the commission to disallow the request unconditionally.

Finding the determination of the administrative body to be not wholly unwarranted it was incumbent upon the Court to sustain it. The dissent here would require a departure from the settled law by substituting its judgment for that of an administrative body, requiring the administrator to reconsider a determination which they did not hold to be originally arbitrary or capricious.

Review—Statute of Limitations

A proceeding under Article 78 may be brought to compel the performance of a duty specifically enjoined by law or to review a determination. Article 78

21. N. Y. Civ. Prac. ACT §1284 (3). The expression “to compel performance of a duty specifically enjoined by law” refers to all other relief heretofore available in a mandamus proceeding.
22. N. Y. Civ. Prac. ACT §1284(2). The expression “to review a determination” refers to relief heretofore available in certiorari or a mandamus proceeding for the review of any act of a body exercising administrative functions, which involves an exercise of judgment.