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May 29, 2024

**VIA CERTIFIED, REGULAR & ELECTRONIC MAIL**

Rajeh A. Saadeh  
c/o Marc D. Garfinkle, Esq.  
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**Re: In the Matter of Rajeh A. Saadeh**  
Docket No. 24-056  
District Docket No. XIII-2022-0013E  
**LETTER OF ADMONITION**

Dear Mr. Saadeh,

The Disciplinary Review Board has reviewed the motion for discipline by consent (admonition) filed by the District XIII Ethics Committee (the DEC) in the above matter, pursuant to R. 1:20-10. Following a review of the record, the Board granted the motion and determined to impose an admonition for your violation of RPC 1.3 (lacking diligence) and RPC 1.4(b) (failing to keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and to comply with reasonable requests for information).

Specifically, on or about June 11, 2021, Arijit Datta retained you to represent him in the purchase of a residential property in Jersey City, New Jersey. Your written fee agreement indicated that you would represent Datta from “contract negotiation . . . to closing.” You engaged a title company,

Lemonbrew Abstract (Lemonbrew), to handle the closing and recording of the deed.

The seller's attorney prepared the deed, which incorrectly identified the property's block and lot numbers in three places: (1) the Hudson County data page; (2) the first page of the deed; and (3) the non-resident seller's tax declaration. Although you reviewed the documents, you failed to notice the repeated errors in the block and lot numbers.

On August 4, 2021, the closing proceeded, with the incorrect block and lot numbers still in the deed. You did not attend the closing. Instead, Datta met with a Lemonbrew agent to sign the closing documents. After the closing, Datta's real estate broker told him that you would provide him with copies of the recorded deed and his title insurance policy. According to Datta, you never advised him of this information.

In September 2021, about a month after the closing, Datta contacted your office for an update on the status of the recorded deed and title insurance policy. Lemonbrew advised your office that the Hudson County Clerk's Office had not yet returned the deed as recorded.

For the next eight months, Datta repeatedly sought information from you (as well as from Lemonbrew) regarding the status of the deed and title insurance policy.

E-mail messages exchanged among your office, Lemonbrew, and Datta during this period reflect that the County Clerk's Office returned the deed package to Lemonbrew two or three times, due to various recording errors, including Lemonbrew's "transmission of at least two . . . incorrect checks." Eventually, having received no assistance from you, Datta filed a complaint with the New Jersey Department of Banking and Insurance (the Department) regarding Lemonbrew's handling of the matter. Thereafter, an investigator from the Department began communicating with Lemonbrew. Finally, on May 18, 2022, more than nine months after the closing, a corrected deed was recorded by the Hudson County Clerk.

On July 11, 2022, your office sent Datta a message, by e-mail, stating that the deed had been recorded and a copy would be mailed to him. Datta wrote

back, asking about the status of the title insurance policy. However, your office failed to reply.

You stipulated that you violated RPC 1.3 by failing to ensure the deed accurately described the property before the closing; take corrective steps after the errors on the deed were discovered; and ensure the timely recording of the deed and issuance of the owner's title insurance policy. You further stipulated that you violated RPC 1.4(b) by failing to properly communicate with Datta for nine months while Lemonbrew mishandled the recording of his deed; offered to speak with him about the recording of his deed only if he paid an additional fee; and, instead of intervening on his behalf, advised him to contact Lemonbrew. You asserted that, at the time, you believed you had no obligation to intervene because your fee agreement "only contemplated representation . . . *to closing*" (emphasis in stipulation); however, you stated you now understand that as Datta's attorney for the purchase of the property, you were accountable for ensuring the deed was recorded by your closing agent and the title insurance policy was issued in a timely manner.

In imposing only an admonition, the Board accorded mitigating weight to your entry into a disciplinary stipulation, whereby you accepted responsibility for your misconduct and conserved disciplinary resources. The Board also weighed your lack of prior discipline and your public service to the bar and community.

Your conduct has adversely reflected not only on you as an attorney but also on all members of the bar. Accordingly, the Board has directed the issuance of this admonition to you. R. 1:20-15(f)(4).

A permanent record of this occurrence has been filed with the Clerk of the Supreme Court and the Office of Board Counsel. Should you become the subject of any further discipline, this admonition will be taken into consideration.

The Board also has directed that the cost of the disciplinary proceedings be assessed against you. An invoice of costs will be forwarded to you under separate cover.

Very truly yours,

*/s/ Timothy M. Ellis*

Timothy M. Ellis  
Chief Counsel

TME/akg

c: Chief Justice Stuart Rabner  
Associate Justices  
Heather Joy Baker, Clerk  
Supreme Court of New Jersey  
Hon. Mary Catherine Cuff, P.J.A.D. (Ret.), Chair  
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