



City of Rockville Ethics Commission

Minutes - Amended

Diamondback Terrapin Conference Room

Meeting No. 20-2

Wednesday, February 12, 2020 at 6:30 PM

Commissioners Present: Eugene Thirolf, Karyne Akhtar (by telephone), Kris Dighe (by telephone), Kevin Jenkins, Jamie Espinosa
Janice Frankle

City Staff : Marlaine White

- I. Convene
- II. Approval of Agenda
Commissioner Thirolf moved that the agenda be approved. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jenkins and passed unanimously (5-0).
- III. Approval of Minutes
Minutes from January 6, 2020 - Commissioner Dighe moved that the minutes from the January 6, 2020 meeting be approved. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Akhtar and passed (4-0). Commissioner Espinosa abstained.
- IV. Old/New Business
 - Future Meeting Dates: March 18, 2020 – confirmed; April 22, 2020 – confirmed; May 20, 2020.
 - Update and Discussion on Ethics Training for Boards and Commissions:
Commissioner Thirolf asked if other members had any edits or changes to the draft letter to the Boards and Commissions Chairs. Commissioner Dighe suggested changing “enacted to “amended” and suggested that Staff create a form for each Board and Commission member to execute warranting that the member reviewed the Ethics slides. Staff would receive the executed forms and provide them to the Commission. The Commissioner agreed that they would like the letter to be sent out by the end of this month. Staff suggested a three (3) month deadline for Boards and Commissions to complete review of the training slides and remit the executed forms due to the wide range of Boards and Commission’s meeting schedules. The Commissioners set May 15, 2020 as the deadline to remit the executed forms. Commissioner Thirolf suggested adding a sentence to the first paragraph of the letter stating that if any Board or Commission member has any questions about the slides to please direct the questions to Staff to be presented to the Board to provide assistance. Staff asked the Commissioners if they wanted to offer in-person training to the Boards and

Commissions upon specific request. Commissioners agreed that such an approach would be inefficient especially in light of the upcoming financial disclosure statement review. The Commission discussed whether the training slides should be sent to the Boards and Commissions electronically or in hard copy. The Commission decided to send both electronically and in hard copy. Commissioner Thirolf requested that Staff create a review confirmation form similar to that used by HR to confirm Ethics training and to revise the letter to the Boards and Commissions, provide the revision to Commissioner Thirolf for a final review, and then send out within five (5) business days.

- Discussion of expanding Ethics Commission to six (6) members: Commissioner Thirolf suggested amending the Ethics Ordinance to increase membership to six (6) members. He stated that the Commission would need to make a recommendation to Mayor and Council that the Ethics Code should be amended to increase the Commission to six (6) members. Commissioner Espinosa made a motion to formally recommend to Mayor and Council that the Ethics Code be amended to expand the Commission membership to six (6) members. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jenkins and passed unanimously (5-0).
- Commissioner Espinosa asked if there were any additional questions or matters of interest that arose during the Commission's presentation at the January 6, 2020 Mayor and Council meeting. Commissioner Thirolf related that Councilmember Ashton indicated that the ordinance should be reviewed to ensure its gender - neutral and that Councilmember Feinberg wanted to ensure that the amendments provide adequate time to respond for financial disclosures.

The Commission discussed the need to email the letter reminding required filers of their obligation to complete their financial disclosures by the end of February. The Commission directed Staff to add to the reminder letter, that pursuant to the recent amendments to the Ethics Code, the Commission will review each disclosure statement for technical completeness. Commissioner Espinosa asked if a list of the companies with whom the City transacts business could be provided. Commissioner Espinosa stated that previous financial disclosure letters included a link to the forms on the Commission's website, as well as a fillable electronic form attachment.

The Commission discussed options for efficient review of the financial disclosure statements. Commissioner Espinosa suggested review on a rolling basis. Commissioner Thirolf suggested being flexible as to review and suggested that checking for technical completion should be a review of the boxes checked, real estate addresses listed, and information sufficiently detailed. Commissioner Jenkins suggested to create an outline of review criteria and that Commission hold a special meeting to review the statements. Commissioner Espinosa asked if the Commission's preference was to review all statements after the submission deadline. Commissioner Jenkins suggested the Commission review all statements after the submission deadline. Commissioner Thirolf suggested to wait and see how many statements are submitted by the Commission's March 18, 2020 meeting and at that meeting establish a list of review criteria. Upon Commissioner Espinosa's suggestion, the Commission determined that in order to do a trial review each Commissioner will submit his or her form prior to the

Commission's March meeting and the Commission will review those statements to determine a list of review criteria for the remaining statements.

V. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Espinosa. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dighe and passed unanimously (5-0).