

RIVERDALE PARK ETHICS COMMISSION

Minutes of January 21, 2015 Meeting

A meeting of the Riverdale Park Ethics Commission was convened at 7:55 p.m. in the Conference Room at the Riverdale Park Town Hall. Commission Vice Chair Lora Katz, Commissioner Sarah McClellan and Town Attorney Fred Sussman were in attendance. Vice Chair Katz presided over the meeting.

Commission members noted that some Commission members were uncertain as to the location of this meeting. The Town Attorney advised the Commission that all meetings are held in Town Hall unless the Commission is advised otherwise.

Upon motion made by Commissioner McClellan, seconded by Vice Chair Katz and duly adopted, the Commission approved the proposed agenda for the meeting.

Upon motion made by Commissioner McClellan, seconded by Vice Chair Katz and duly adopted, the Commission approved the minutes of the Commission's December 4, 2013, meeting.

The Town Attorney provided the Commission with a screenshot of the Town's website depicting where the Commission's Bylaws, Procedures, meeting minutes and other materials may be viewed. The Town Attorney then presented to the Commission a proposed article for the Town Crier advising the public that the Town's website has a link to the Ethics Commission on which Commission's Bylaws, Procedures and other materials may be viewed. The Commission requested that the Town Attorney provide the article to the Commission electronically for further review.

The Town Attorney advised the Commission that it needs to elect a Chair and Vice Chair for 2015. Because Commission members were uncertain about their respective terms of office, the Commission, by consensus, agreed to defer elections until the next meeting and requested the Town Attorney to provide clarification regarding Commission members' terms of office.

The Town Attorney advised the Commission that the Town Administrator filed the Commission's annual report with the State Ethics Commission, albeit beyond the October 1 deadline. The Commission requested the Town Attorney to request the Town Administrator to file the Commission's annual report timely in the future.

The Town Attorney advised the Commission that financial disclosure forms for calendar year 2014 will need to be distributed for completion and filing by no later than April 30, 2015, and that candidates for elective office at the Town's May, 2015, election will need to complete and submit financial disclosure forms for the period January 1, 2015 through the date of filing for election. The Town Attorney provided the Commission with proposed financial disclosure forms for elected officials and Town employees for calendar year 2014 and for candidates for elective office in 2015. The Town Attorney explained that the forms are substantially the same as those used for financial disclosure reporting for calendar year 2013. Upon motion made by Commissioner McClellan, seconded by Commissioner Katz and duly adopted, the Commission approved the proposed forms as provided by the Town Attorney.

The Town Attorney advised the Board that distribution of financial disclosure forms for calendar year 2013 was not made until April 23, 2014, and that the Ethics Ordinance requires annual financial disclosure forms to be completed and filed by April 30 of each year. Town staff provided a reminder regarding completion of the forms on December 11, 2014. To date, completed calendar year 2013 forms have been received from Mayor Archer, Councilman Thompson and the Town Administrator, Police Chief and Public Works Director. The Commission members advised that they had not received forms to complete even though the Ethics Ordinance requires them to do so. Upon motion made by Commissioner McClellan, seconded by Vice Chair Katz and duly adopted, the Commission agreed to defer review of calendar year 2013 financial disclosure forms until additional calendar year 2013 forms are filed.

Upon further motions made by Commissioner McClellan, seconded by Vice Chair Katz and duly adopted, the Commission requested the Town Attorney to do the following:

1. Prepare a draft letter from the Ethics Commission to those members of the Town Council who have not filed financial disclosure forms for calendar year 2013 directing them to file the forms promptly and notifying any of them who plan to run for reelection that they will not be allowed to file their certificate of candidacy unless all financial disclosure forms have been filed. Even though Councilman Rivas has resigned from the Council the Town Attorney advised the Commission that Councilman Rivas still must file financial disclosures for calendar years 2013 and for 2014 up to the date of resignation.
2. Request Town staff to distribute calendar year 2013 financial disclosure forms to members of the Commission for completion.
3. Coordinate with Town staff so that, in the future, financial disclosure forms are presented to the Commission for approval and distributed in a timely manner.
4. Coordinate with Town staff to ensure that administrative functions of the Commission are handled efficiently and timely, including preparing a calendar of critical financial reporting dates.
5. Coordinate with Town staff to post on the Town website the calendar of critical financial reporting dates.
6. Request Town staff to send Commission members timely reminders of the date, time and location of each Commission meeting.

The Commission determined by consensus that it will set its next meeting when calendar year 2013 reporting forms are filed.

Upon motion made by Commissioner McClellan, seconded by Commissioner Katz and duly adopted, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Frederick C. Sussman, Recorder