

MIAMI-DADE COMMISSION ON ETHICS & PUBLIC TRUST

Summary of Minutes and Agenda Actions

Meeting of February 20, 2013

The Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics convened in the Biscayne Building, 19 West Flagler Street, Suite 820, Miami, FL, on February 20, 2013.

Present were Commission Chair Charlton Copeland, Vice-Chair Nelson Bellido, Commissioner Kerry Rosenthal and Commissioner Lawrence Schwartz. Also present were Joe Centorino, Executive Director; Michael Murawski, Advocate; Miriam Ramos, Deputy General Counsel; Victoria Frigo, Senior Staff Attorney; Rhonda Victor Sibilia, Communications Director; Rachelle Cedeno Ross, Administrative Legal Clerk; Miami City Commissioner Marc Sarnoff, his wife and his attorney John Dellagloria; Alyce Robertson, Downtown Development Authority; and Carolina Lopez, Miami-Dade Elections Department. The meeting was called to order at 10:05 AM. A quorum was present.

I. Approval of Minutes from January 24, 2013

Commissioner Schwartz moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rosenthal and passed unanimously (3-0).

II. Request for Opinion

Senior Staff Attorney Victoria Frigo presented **RQO 13-01** from Shania Moore of the Office of the Clerk of the Board, asking if members of advisory boards that did not meet during 2012 still have to file financial disclosure statements for the year. Ms. Frigo recommended that since advisory board members were approved and authorized to serve in 2012 and because they could have been exposed to undue influence associated with their membership, they should file financial disclosure statements by July 1, 2013. Commissioner Schwartz made a motion to approve the recommendation. It was seconded by Commissioner Bellido and unanimously approved (4-0).

In a related **RQO, 13-02**, the Miami-Dade Elections Department asked if it may accept financial disclosure statements that are sent electronically. The department receives approximately 5,500 annually and ultimately scans them. The Ethics Code is silent on the physical form of the statement, but Ms. Frigo recommended that as long as security standards are followed, the forms may be sent via fax, e-mail or other devices compatible with the Elections Department's systems. Commissioner Rosenthal made a motion to approve the recommendation. It was seconded by Commissioner Schwartz and unanimously approved. (4-0)

III. Section 8 Requests

Commissioner Rosenthal moved to approve four contracts involving County employees seeking to become Section 8 landlords. Commissioner Schwartz seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously (4-0).

IV. Monthly Summary of Inquiries

A summary of Inquiries issued since the last meeting was presented to the Commissioners for review.

V. Executive Director's Report

Joseph Centorino explained the need for an update to the COE's policies and procedures and distributed an edited version for review and discussion at the next meeting.

Mr. Centorino announced the promotion of three staff members, based on expanded responsibilities. Investigator Karl Ross is assuming the duties of Forensic Accountant. Staff Attorney Victoria Frigo is now Senior Staff Attorney. And, Community Outreach Coordinator Rhonda Victor Sibilia is taking the title of Communications Director. He also reported that, of 109 applications for two open investigator positions, 13 will be interviewed over the next few weeks.

Mr. Centorino distributed a draft program for the two-day Public Corruption Conference scheduled for May 9 & 10 at the Miami Police Training Center and invited the Ethics Commissioners to attend.

A chart of Commissioners' preferences for a regularly scheduled meeting time was distributed and discussed. Commissioners agreed their first preference would be in the morning on the second Thursday of the month. Staff agreed to gage Commissioner Addy's preference and report back next month.

VI. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

VII. Complaints

Attorney John Dellagloria asked the Ethics Commission to review last month's discussion regarding whether "probable cause" was found in C 12-41 in which Miami City Commissioner Mark Sarnoff was accused of failing to properly report travel expenses as a gift. Commissioner Rosenthal made a motion to remove "find no probable cause" to the complaint. There was no second. He then asked to table the motion so that the absent Commissioner Addy, who was part of the majority vote last month, may participate. The Commission agreed.

The Ethics Commission convened in closed session at 11:19 AM. Upon returning to open session at 11:23 AM, the Commission took the following actions:

Agreed to the respondent's request for a continuance for C 12-40. Commissioner Rosenthal made the motion. It was seconded by Commissioner Bellido and unanimously approved (4-0).

Accepted the complainant's request to dismiss with prejudice C 13-01. Commissioner Rosenthal made the motion. It was seconded by Commissioner Schwartz and unanimously approved (4-0).

VIII. Old Business

There was no old business.

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business before the Ethics Commission, Commissioner Bellido moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schwartz and it passed unanimously (4-0). The meeting adjourned at 11:24 AM.