

MIAMI-DADE COMMISSION ON ETHICS & PUBLIC TRUST

Summary of Minutes and Agenda Actions

Meeting of April 8, 2015

The Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics convened in the Biscayne Building, 19 West Flagler Street, Suite 820, Miami, FL, on April 8, 2015. Present were Commission Chair Nelson Bellido, Vice-Chair Lawrence Schwartz, Commissioner Judith Bernier and Commissioner Marcia Narine. Also present were Joseph Centorino, Executive Director; Michael Murawski, Advocate; Gilma Diaz-Greco, Staff Attorney; Rhonda Victor Sibilia, Communications Director; Rachelle Cedeno, Executive Secretary, Investigator Breno Penichet, and Ethics Commission Interns Dalisi Otero and Denise Calle. Also present were Assistant Miami City Attorney Matt Haber, Attorney Peter Raben, Carol Jordan, Esq., Martha Perez and Dusty Melton. The meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m. by Vice-Chair Schwartz. A quorum was present.

I. Approval of Minutes from March 11, 2015

Commissioner Narine moved to approve the minutes of March 11, 2015. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bernier and unanimously approved (3-0).

II. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

III. Requests for Opinion

Staff Attorney Gilma Diaz-Greco said that RQO 15-03 would be deferred to the next meeting since new information was recently received.

IV. Monthly Summary of Inquiries/Housing requests

Staff Attorney Diaz-Greco presented a Summary of Inquiries issued since the last meeting and highlighted a few of them. Executive Director Joseph Centorino responded to a question from Commissioner Narine about one inquiry he handled.

V. Miami Beach Lobbyist Appeals

Advocate Michael Murawski presented a list of ten registered lobbyists in Miami Beach who neglected to file the city's required expenditure statements on time. Since all were new to the process and had no prior history, he recommended the fines be waived. Commissioner Schwartz made a motion to waive the fines. It was seconded by Commissioner Narine and unanimously approved (4-0).

VI. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Joseph Centorino reported on positive accolades regarding the program for the "Ethics In Education: A to Z" conference and encouraged Ethics Commissioners to share the information in their circles. He announced that Miami-Dade County Commissioner Rebeca Sosa will sponsor the proposed Honor Code and its implementing order, which is expected to go before a Commission subcommittee in May. Mr. Centorino introduced Martha Perez, who will begin working as a part time staff attorney in the beginning of May and she was welcomed by the Ethics Commissioners. Mr. Centorino introduced Carol Jordan, Assistant Legal Counsel in the Office of the Inspector General, and requested she be appointed as Special Advocate to handle a complaint (C 14-51) from which Mr. Murawski has recused himself. Commissioner Schwartz made a motion to approve the appointment. It was seconded by Commissioner Narine and unanimously approved (4-0).

VII. Complaints

Vice Chair Schwartz made a motion to approve the defense request for a continuance until May for **C 14-36** because Hialeah Mayor Carlos Hernandez was in Tallahassee. It was seconded by Commissioner Narine and unanimously approved (**4-0**).

Advocate Michael Murawski sought three subpoenas as part of a status update on **C 14-41**.

The Ethics Commission convened in closed session at 10:26 a.m. The Commission returned to open session at 10:41 a.m. and took the following action:

Commissioner Narine made a motion to approve a settlement with a former Miami Beach police major who tried to affect the prosecution of a drunken-driving charge against a relative. As part of the settlement to the complaint (**C 12-46**), now-retired Major Angel Vazquez pled no contest and paid a \$500 fine. Commissioner Bernier seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved (**3-0**, Chair Bellido recused).

Vice Chair Schwartz made a motion to approve the Advocate's request for an extension of the 60-day time limit to determine probable cause to three related complaints (**C 15-04**, **C 15-05**, and **C 15-06**). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Narine and unanimously approved (**4-0**).

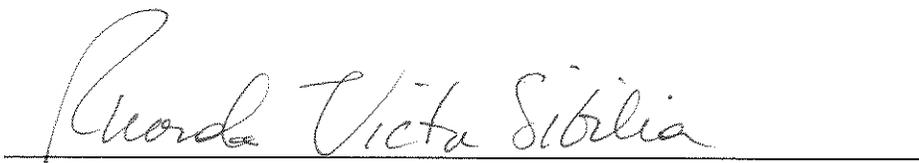
Vice Chair Schwartz made a motion to approve the Advocate's request for an extension of the 60-day time limit to determine probable cause to **C 15-07**. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Narine and unanimously approved (**4-0**).

Vice Chair Schwartz made a motion to issue of Letter of Instruction and dismiss a complaint (**C 15-08**) "in the interest of justice" against a representative for a Miami Beach property owner who allegedly violated that city's ordinance by failing to register as a lobbyist before he appeared before the Historic Preservation Board in April of last year. Michael Marrero told Commissioners that he and his firm were retained on an emergency basis and his contact with the city on that matter was very limited. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Narine and unanimously approved (**4-0**).

Vice-Chair Schwartz made a motion to dismiss for lack of legal sufficiency two complaints (**C 15-11** & **C 15-12**) filed against Doral City Council members Pete Cabrera and Councilwoman Sandra Ruiz for interfering with the city administration by getting involved in personnel decisions. While their actions may violate the Doral City Charter, the COE does not have the authority to enforce the charter. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Narine and unanimously approved (**4-0**).

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business before the Ethics Commission, Vice-Chair Schwartz moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Narine and it passed unanimously (**4-0**). The meeting adjourned at 10:44 a.m.



Prepared by Rhonda Victor Sibilía, Communications Director