



Via First Class Mail
and
email at JOBru@ci.miami.fl.us

ETHICS COMMISSIONERS

May 19, 2010

Kerry E. Rosenthal, CHAIRPERSON
Dawn E. Addy, VICE CHAIRPERSON
Judge Seymour Gelber

ROBERT A. MEYERS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MICHAEL P. MURAWSKI
ADVOCATE

ARDYTH WALKER
STAFF GENERAL COUNSEL

Julie O. Bru, City Attorney
City of Miami
444 SW 2nd Ave., Suite 945
Miami, FL 33130-1910

RE: RQO 10-09, "Principals" as Lobbyists
Miami-Dade County Code at Sec. 2-11.1 (s)

Dear Ms. Bru:

In public session on May 19, 2010, the Ethics Commission responded to your query on the meaning of "principal" as per Sec. 2-11.1 (s)(1)(b) of the County Lobbyist Ordinance.

The Ethics Commission opined that the recently proposed definition of "principal" to the County's Health, Public Safety & Intergovernmental Committee was consistent with Ethics Commission precedent and legislative history:

The president of a corporation is a principal. The owner, president, or chief shareholder of a corporation or an individual who has been designated or who has the apparent authority to make final decisions on behalf of the corporate entity is a principal.¹

The Ethics Commission rejected expanding the definition of "principal" to include those who "employ or retain lobbyists." However, in response to your concerns about small business owners, principals of certain certified small businesses have recently been exempt from paying lobbyist registration fees under County Ordinance 10-03. Pending legislation may soon exempt *all* principals from paying lobbyist registration fees. However, County ordinances continue to require principals to register as lobbyists.

¹ The definition, based on previous County Ethics Opinions, was provided by Robert Meyers, Executive Director, Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics to the County's Health, Public Safety & Intergovernmental Committee at a public meeting on May 13, 2010.

This opinion construes the Miami-Dade Conflict of Interest & Code of Ethics Ordinance, but it is not applicable to ethics issues under State law. Inquiries regarding State ethics laws should be directed to the State of Florida Commission on Ethics.

Please feel free to contact or me or Staff Attorney Victoria Frigo if we can be of further assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Meyers", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

ROBERT MEYERS
Executive Director

copy: Barnaby Min, Assistant City Attorney
City of Miami
bmin@miamigov.com