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Summary of the Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics & Public Trust Meeting Held on February 12, 2020

The Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics and Public Trust took the following actions at its monthly public meeting held on February 12, 2020.

Presentation: Protecting the Identity of Alleged Violation Reporting Individuals

Ethics Commission Executive Director, Jose Arrojo, made a presentation regarding the COE's non-disclosure policy that seeks to protect the identity of alleged violation reporting individuals. Mr. Arrojo requested policy guidance regarding the current practice that seeks to encourage individuals, including department heads and elected officials, to contact the Ethics Commission without fear of reprisal. Section 112.324, Florida Statutes, relating to the public records exemption for pending ethics investigations was also discussed.

Presentation: INQ 20-04 Gifted Super Bowl Tickets, Section 2-11.1 (e) Relating to Gifts

Executive Commission Executive Director, Jose Arrojo, made a presentation regarding **INQ 20-04** and Section 2-11.1 (e) of the County Ethics Code, relating to gifts, and its application to a County elected official's receipt of tickets to the Super Bowl game. In this opinion, Section 2-11.1 (e), allowed County Mayor Carlos Gimenez to accept Super Bowl tickets from Stephen Ross given there was no evidence that the offer or acceptance of the gift was part of a defined quid pro quo transaction. Additionally, although the disclosure of the gift may not have been required, the opinion recommended that the gift be disclosed.

Mr. Arrojo requested policy guidance regarding "appearance of impropriety and best practices" recommendations when the Ethics Code does not specifically prohibit conduct, but the conduct may negatively impact the public's trust in local government.

Presentation: Expansion of the County Ethics Ordinance to CRA's

Executive Commission Executive Director, Jose Arrojo, made a presentation regarding County Commission Resolution R-499-16, and new state laws requiring mandatory ethics training for local Community Redevelopment Agencies (CRAs). Mr. Arrojo explained that meetings between COE lawyers, representatives from the County, the various CRAs, and municipal lawyers will take place to determine to what extent the County Ethics Ordinance applies to CRAs and how the COE can offer ethics training to CRAs in compliance with new state laws.

Several Complaints Filed Against Village of Palmetto Bay Mayor Dismissed

C 19-50-12, C 19-51-12, C 19 52-12: The Ethics Commission unanimously voted to find 3 separate complaints against Village of Palmetto Bay Mayor Karyn Cunningham Not Legally Sufficient and Dismissed each of the cases.

Complaint Filed Against City of North Miami Councilwoman Dismissed

C-19-47-11: The Ethics Commission found No Legal Sufficiency and Dismissed a case against City of North Miami Councilwoman Mary Estime-Irvin.

The Ethics Commission was created in 1996 as an independent agency with advisory and quasi-judicial powers. It is composed of five members, serving staggered terms of four years each. Through a program of training, outreach and enforcement, the Commission seeks to empower the community and bolster public trust.