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# EYE ON ETHICS

NEWSLETTER OF THE MIAMI-DADE COMMISSION ON ETHICS & PUBLIC TRUST



## Issue 7 - March 2020



### Commission on Ethics & Public Trust by the Numbers:

*The Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust budget of 2.6 million dollars makes up .03% of the total Miami-Dade County budget.*

## Director's Message



Dear Friends & Colleagues,

On behalf of the Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics and Public Trust, we hope that everyone who reads this newsletter, and their family, friends, and co-workers are safe and well.

In accords with national, state, and local health and government advisories and executive orders related to COVID 19, Ethics Commission staff began teleworking on March 16 th , 2020 for a two- week period until March 30 th ,2020. It is likely, given the status of the health crisis at the time of this message and continuing government-imposed limitations on local

### Quick Links

**24 Hour**  
Complaint  
Hotline  
786-314-9560



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### Commissioners

Nelson C. Bellido Esq.,

Chair

Dr. Judith Bernier,

movement and gatherings, that the Ethics Commission will continue teleworking for another two week-time period, through Friday, April 17 th , 2020.

During the teleworking time period, Ethics Commission staff continue to: provide verbal and written ethics guidance; actively work on enforcement matters; and otherwise produce our regular and necessary work product. All Ethics Commission staff members are available by County email and by telephone. Many if not all our staff are available for teleconferences using the Zoom application that is being utilized by local and state agencies in Miami-Dade County.

To comply with the imposed limitations on public gatherings, the April Ethics Commission meeting has been cancelled as well as several of our regularly scheduled lobbyist and board member training sessions. However, we are moving forward with on-line ethics training for lobbyists. Thereafter, if limitations on gatherings continue, board training will likely also go to an on-line format. Please check the Ethics Commission website for updates regarding on-line training.

Regarding training, this past session saw the introduction of local lobbyist training preemption legislation. In Miami-Dade County, the legislation would have ended required training of County lobbyists by the Ethics Commission. The Ethics Commission passed a Resolution opposing the preemption of this foundational ethics, public meeting and records training. The proposed preemption legislation did not become law. County lobbyists are still required to receive training on the County ethics ordinance as well as Florida's Sunshine Meeting and Public Records laws.

Finally, in support of our continuing outreach and education efforts, Chairman Nelson C. Bellido and I recently appeared on local Spanish language television and spoke about the Ethics Commission's work and encouraged citizens to report ethical misconduct and otherwise engage with us.

Best regards,  
Jose Arrojo

Vice Chair  
Judge Lawrence A.  
Schwartz  
Jan Jacobowitz, Esq.  
Wifredo Gort

**Executive Director**  
Jose J. Arrojo, Esq.

**Advocate**  
Michael P. Murawski, Esq.

**General Counsel**  
Martha Perez



**FAQ**



**Florida Commission  
on Ethics**

**Let's Stop the Spread of Coronavirus**





# COVID-19

## General Prevention

Florida Department of Health • FloridaHealth.gov • [tinyurl.com/FLcdcprevention](https://tinyurl.com/FLcdcprevention)

Protect yourself from all infectious diseases by using these precautions.



**Stay home when you are sick**



**Avoid contact with people who are sick**



**Get adequate sleep and eat well-balanced meals**



**Wash hands often with soap and water – 20 seconds or longer**



**Dry hands with a clean towel or air dry your hands**



**Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands or after touching surfaces**



**Cover your mouth with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing**



**Clean and disinfect “high touch” surfaces often**



**Call before visiting your doctor**

**Clean all “high-touch” surfaces every day.**

High touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tables, and bedside tables. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe according to the label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

Florida Health Office of Communications 03-05-20

## Ethics Commission Leadership on the Airwaves

Ethics Commission Chairman Nelson Bellido and Executive Director Jose Arrojo recently appeared on the Spanish language television program "2020", hosted by former City of Miami Mayor Tomas Regalado on Miami's MegaTV.

Participation in Mayor Regalado's show served to further the commission's outreach effort by using media outlets as a means of informing the South Florida Community of the



important role that the Ethics Commission plays in bolstering public trust in the administration of government. Furthermore, such bridge-building efforts encourage citizen participation in government and educates the community as to how the ethics commission goes about serving as the guardian of the public trust.

## March Ethics - Commission Meeting Actions



The Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics and Public Trust took the following actions at its monthly public meeting held on March 11, 2020.

### **Village of Virginia Gardens Councilman, Public Works Director, and Other Village Employee Stipulate to Probable Cause**

**C 20-07-02, C 20-08-02, C 20-09-02:** Village of Virginia Gardens Councilman, Jorge Arce, Public Works Director, Butch Martin, and Public Works Department employee, Robert Martin all stipulated to findings of

Probable Cause for violating the Miami-Dade County Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics Ordinance entitled Exploitation of Official Position Prohibited, after Robert Martin and George Arce took gasoline that belonged to the Village and used it in their own personal vehicles. Butch Martin admitted giving them the gasoline. The complaints were dismissed with the agreement that they all accept a Letter of Instruction, reimburse the Village, and pay investigative costs.

### **Complaint Filed Against Councilman Elvis Maldonado Dismissed**

**C 20-13-02:** The Ethics Commission found that a complaint filed against Miami-Dade Commission Candidate for District 9, Elvis Maldonado, was Not Legally Sufficient, and was Dismissed.

### **No Probable Cause and Dismissal in Complaints Filed Against City of North Miami Councilwoman**

**C 20-03-01, C 20-02-01:** The Ethics Commission found there was No Probable Cause to sustain a complaint, (**C 20-03-01**) filed against City of North Miami Councilwoman Mary Estime-Irvin. In a separate complaint (**C 20-02-01**) filed against Ms. Estime Irvin, **the Ethics Commission found that the complaint was Not Legally Sufficient and was Dismissed.**

### **Complaint Filed Against Coral Gables Assistant Public Works Director Dismissed**

**C 20-05-01:** The Ethics Commission found that a complaint filed against Coral Gables Assistant Public Works Director, Jessica Keller, was Not Legally Sufficient, and was Dismissed.

## Ethics Commission in the News

To read the articles click on the links below:

*Parks Chief Sold Jerseys From His Company to City Football Team. Now He's on Leave*

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## Educating the Community / Upcoming Events

**ALL IN-PERSON MARCH AND  
APRIL TRAINING SESSIONS /  
EVENTS ARE CANCELLED UNTIL  
FURTHER NOTICE**

**SAVE THE DATE**

*Use of Public Resources Luncheon*

***CANCELLED***

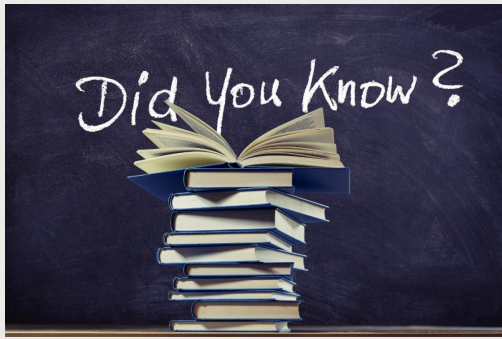
When: April 23, 2020, at 12 pm

Where: Miami Shores Country Club

10000 Biscayne Boulevard, Miami Shores, Florida, 33138

Cost: \$35 (includes lunch)

RSVP: [rodzand@miamidade.gov](mailto:rodzand@miamidade.gov)  
For more information call (305) 579-2594 or click [here](#).  
*Florida Bar CLE Credits have been applied for*



This year, the Ethics Commission is scheduled to move from its current location to an expanded location at Overtown Village, North Tower 8th Floor East Suite. The new location will prove to be a much more accessible location and space for the public.

Miami-Dade County Commission on  
Ethics & Public Trust  
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Website: [www.ethics.miamidade.gov](http://www.ethics.miamidade.gov)

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