



**CASE
CLOSED**

Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics & Public Trust
Investigative Report

Date: 4-18-19

Investigator: Susannah Nesmith
Complainant: Anonymous

Case No.: PI 19-18
Subject/Case Name: Brent Latham

Date Opened: 4/5/19

Date Submitted: 4/16/19

Allegation(s):

It was alleged via an anonymous e-mail from a concerned NBV resident, that North Bay Village Mayor Brent Latham is exploiting his position by promoting local restaurants as part of what he is calling "Mayor Latham's NBV Restaurant of the Month."

Relevant Law:

Sec. 2-11.1. – Miami-Dade County Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics Ordinance. (January 2016)

(g) Exploitation of official position prohibited. No person included in the terms defined in subsection (b)(1) through (6) and (b)(13) shall use or attempt to use his or her official position to secure special privileges or exemptions for himself or herself or others except as may be specifically permitted by other ordinances and resolutions previously ordained or adopted or hereafter to be ordained or adopted by the Board of County Commissioners.

Investigation:

On April 16, 2019, this investigator met with Mayor Brent Latham to discuss the allegations. He explained that the idea of having a "Mayor's restaurant of the month" was his idea; he did not seek any Commission approval of the idea. He further stated that, in his view, supporting and promoting the businesses of North Bay Village is part of his job as Mayor. He said he had spoken to the owners of each of the seven or eight restaurants in the Village and worked out a schedule to give each one a dedicated month, with "222 Taco" scheduled for May so the owner could take advantage of Cinco de Mayo. He said the restaurants supported his endeavor and were eager to be involved. The "restaurant of the month" recognition offers a 20% discount to all NBV residents. Mayor Latham has no personnel investments in any of the participating restaurants. The flyer promoting "Miami Halal Mart" as the kickoff to "restaurant of the month" was posted on a Facebook group page called "North Bay Village Residents Speaks," it is not the Village's Facebook page.

He said the Village seal was put on the flyer by a Village staffer, who created the flyer for him.

Given the concerns expressed in the e-mail received by COE, Mr. Latham said he would formalize the process to ensure transparency and so that residents understood he was not supporting certain village restaurants over others.

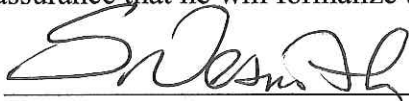
Documents/Exhibit Review:

Latham's initial and subsequent Facebook posts about the promotional program.

Latham's campaign finance reports for the 2018 election. His contributors do not include the restaurant or the owner of the restaurant.

Conclusion:

After discussion with the Ethics Advocate it was decided that this matter would be closed with no further action. Latham sought out participation in his "restaurant of the month" program to support local businesses in North Bay Village. There was no indication that the Mayor was using his official position to promote one particular business but rather, encouraging NBV residents to patronize local, Village businesses in general. Moreover, there is no evidence that the Mayor will profit or be enhanced financially by advocating a "restaurant of the month." Given the Mayor's assurance that he will formalize the process, this matter does not warrant any further action.

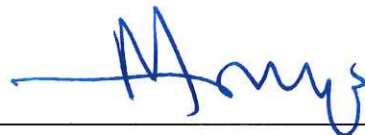


COE Investigator Susannah Nesmith

Approved by:



Michael Murawski, Advocate



José Arrojo, Executive Director