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EYE ON ETHICS

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



Issue 11 - July 2020 Happenings



Commission on Ethics & Public Trust by the Numbers:

*During the previous fiscal year, the
Commission on Ethics and Public
Trust logged and responded to 81
Hotline Calls.*

Director's Message



Dear Friends & Colleagues,

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

This past month, our community was regrettably a witness to a local elected official's resignation as a result of criminal conduct related to public office. It is always a sad occasion when an elected official is charged with a crime and forced to resign her position. Nevertheless, our community should take solace in the fact that the misconduct was originally discovered by the Ethics Commission and that we remained a partner in

Quick Links



Commissioners
Nelson C. Bellido Esq.,

the investigation with the State Attorney's Office until criminal charges were filed and the case closed with a sentence that included resignation from office. Kudos to our enforcement section and our lead investigator in the case, Susannah Nesmith. A link to media reporting in that case is found in our *In the News Section*.

Serious ethics enforcement cases like the one described above serve also to highlight the importance of the Commission's ethics opinion function. If a local official or employee is unsure of his or her contemplated future conduct, *ask us first for guidance before you act*

Also, in July, we learned that Felix Jimenez has been selected to succeed Mary Cagle as the County's Inspector General. The County Inspector General's Office is often a partner to the Ethics Commission, and we salute Mary Cagle for her work as the Inspector General and look forward to a continuing relationship with Felix Jimenez, the current Deputy in that office. Our Ethics Commission Chair, Attorney Nelson C. Bellido, led the process as the Chair of the selection committee for the County Inspector General and was joined on the committee by State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle and Public Defender Carlos Martinez, along with law enforcement leaders.

The Ethics Commission's July meeting was held in a live, on-line video format allowing for public participation consistent with Florida's Sunshine Laws as modified by the Governor's Executive Order allowing for virtual meetings. The upcoming August meeting will be held in the same format.

Ethics Commission training for County, City of Miami, and Jackson Health System lobbyists and vendor representatives continue fully on-line.. Regularly scheduled training for County and Municipal Boards are now available using the Zoom platform. If you are a board member in need of ethics training, please visit our website for additional information.

Consistent with current health and safety recommendations, Ethics Commission employees continue to staff our office daily with a rotating and reduced crew of attorneys, investigators, community outreach personnel, and administrative and support staff. We are providing verbal and written ethics guidance, responding to public records requests, and actively working on enforcement matters. Absent face-to-face meetings, the Ethics Commission is fully operational.

Please stay safe and be assured that the Ethics Commission continues, during this extraordinary time, to work towards ensuring ethical and transparent local governance.

Best regards,
Jose Arrojo

Chair
Dr. Judith Bernier,
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, Esq.



FAQ



**Florida Commission
on Ethics**

Let's Help Stop the Spread of Coronavirus



Best Practices for Social Distancing at Your Business

Florida Department of Health • FloridaHealth.gov/COVID-19

**KEEP AT LEAST 6-Feet
between people whether
they are employees or
customers**

**ROUTINELY CLEAN &
DISINFECT ALL FREQUENTLY
TOUCHED SURFACES**

DISCOURAGE HANDSHAKING

**PLACE HAND SANITIZERS IN
MULTIPLE LOCATIONS &
ENCOURAGE EMPLOYEES AND
CUSTOMERS TO WASH THEIR
HANDS OFTEN**

**PROVIDE TISSUES AND
NO-TOUCH DISPOSAL
RECEPTACLES**

**DO NOT HOLD GATHERINGS OR
MEETINGS IN EXCESS OF 10
PEOPLE. EVEN IN SMALL
MEETINGS, MAINTAIN
6-FOOT DISTANCE.**

**DISCOURAGE WORKERS FROM
SHARING PHONES, DESKS,
OFFICES OR OTHER WORK
TOOLS**

**USE PRECAUTION WITH SICK
CUSTOMERS**

**EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE
OF STAYING HOME IF AN
EMPLOYEE IS FEELING SICK**

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

COE Chairman Bellido Chairs IG Selection Committee



Commission on Ethics & Public Trust Chairman Nelson Bellido recently served as the Chair of the Miami-Dade County Inspector General (IG) Selection Committee, a group tasked to select the next leader of a vital agency who seeks to prevent fraud, waste, mismanagement, misconduct, and abuse of power in Miami-Dade County. The original field of 31 candidates was reduced to a pool of 8 finalists with Felix Jimenez, the current Deputy Inspector General, ultimately being nominated to replace the outgoing IG, Mary Cagle.

"It is a great honor to chair this committee and I take it very seriously because I carry the flag of the ethics commission and my fellow commissioners," says Chairman Bellido. "Mary Cagle has done an outstanding job serving as Inspector General. I have known Mary since my days as a prosecutor and she is an individual who does everything for the right reasons and just wants to serve the public."

The newly nominated IG, Felix Jimenez, will now go through a vigorous background check and will be presented to the County Commission by October 1st.

July Ethics - Commission Meeting Actions

The Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics and Public held a virtual Commission Meeting on July 8, 2020 by way of the ZOOM platform. The following actions took place:

Executive Director's Report



Commission on Ethics Resolution **20-02** was presented and unanimously passed establishing a 90-day grace period for county employees to file the Outside Employment Statement.

Executive Director Jose Arrojo introduced a proposed request for formal opinion from the Commission regarding prohibitions on public comment by public officials with a voting conflict on the matter relating to the conflict.

No Probable Cause Found in Case Involving North Miami Beach Commissioner

C 20-18-04: The Ethics Commission unanimously found No Probable Cause that North Miami Beach Commissioner Michael Joseph violated the Truth in Government Section of the Citizen's Bill of Rights. The Commission had previously found at their June meeting, No Probable Cause that Commissioner Joseph violated the Public Records provision of the Citizens' Bill of Rights. Both allegations had been brought by the same

Complaint Dismissed Against Director of the City of North Miami Parks Department

C 20-14-02: The Ethics Commission found no Probable Cause that City of North Miami Parks Director Derrick Corker was engaged in any business with the City of North Miami that employs him, and the complaint was dismissed. However, the Commission did find Probable Cause that Mr. Corker did not obtain written approval as required by Section 2-316 (k)(1)(c) of the City's ethics code and also found that Mr. Corker was not in compliance with Section 2-316 (k)(2) for the non-disclosure of income in years 2018 and 2019, however, since the violations were insubstantial, they dismissed the complaint.

COE Staff Partnering to Provide Best Practices



As early voting continues for local elections and primaries in August ahead of the general elections in November, the Ethics Commission continues its role in providing ethics and fair election practices training to candidates and local officials. This past month, the Ethics Commission partnered with the League of Women Voters, the Weiss Serota law

firm, and our local municipal Clerks, to provide regional training to over 50 Miami-Dade and Broward County candidates and local officials.

Special thanks go out to the League of Women Voters for their sponsorship!

Ethics Commission Moving in Upcoming Weeks

The Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics and Public Trust will be moving its office in the upcoming weeks from its current location situated in Downtown Miami at 19 West Flagler Street, to a nearby location at the Overtown Village North Tower, 8th Floor East Suite.



The new location will have a larger ethics commission chamber, additional office and open space for staff and the public, increased security capabilities, more parking options, and will be more accessible to public transportation with the MetroRail and Brightline stations in its surrounding area. The COE looks forward to this exciting highly-anticipated move that also comes at a cost savings for the County.



Ethics Commission in the News

To read the article click on the link below:

North Bay Village Commissioner Used Staff for a Private Event. She's Now Plead Guilty.

Miami Herald, July 22, 2020

Ethics Concerns Could Torpedo a Task Force Reviewing the Potent Miami 21 Zoning Code

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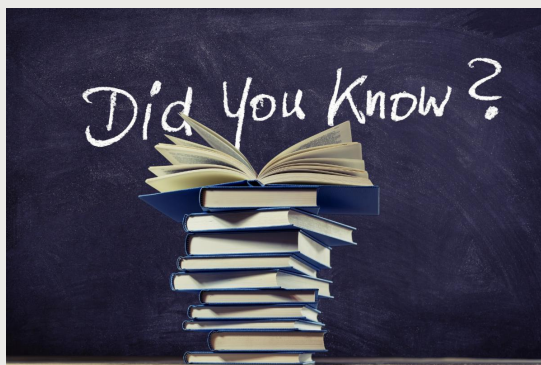
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Educating the Community / Upcoming Events

**ALL IN-PERSON AUGUST TRAINING SESSIONS/EVENTS
ARE CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. LOBBYIST
AND LOBBIST REFRESHER COURSES ARE AVAILABLE
ONLINE.**

**AUGUST 10 – BISCAYNE PARK ADVISORY BOARD
VIRTUAL BRIEFING.**

**AUGUST 19 – COE ADVISORY BOARD VIRTUAL
TRAINING.**



The exclusive funding source for the COE is Miami-Dade County, however, the COE may accept grants, contributions or appropriations from the federal government, state government, any municipality within Miami-Dade County, or any academic institution or nonprofit entity which has not entered into a contract or transacted business with the County.

Miami-Dade County Commission on
Ethics & Public Trust
Phone: 305-579-2594
Email: ethics@miamidade.gov
Website: www.ethics.miamidade.gov

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