

Town of Riverdale Park
Ethics Commission Meeting Minutes
February 23, 2022
7:00 p.m.

In Attendance

Andrea Huberty, Chair
April Engram, Alternate
John Wells

Frederick Sussman, Town Attorney
Jessica Barnes, Director of Administrative Services/Town Clerk

Absent

Corey Beauford, Vice Chair

Call to Order

Ms. Huberty called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Roll Call

Agenda Approval

Mr. Wells made a motion to approve the February 23rd Ethics Commission meeting agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Engram. Vote: 3-0 (Favorable)

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Wells made a motion to approve the minutes for the November 10, 2021, Ethics Commission meeting as submitted. The motion was seconded by Ms. Engram. Vote: 3-0 (Favorable)

Unfinished Business

Review of Long Form Financial Disclosure Statements and incorporated changes

Director of Administrative Services Jessica Barnes provided an overview of the Long Form Financial Disclosure Statement and incorporated changes. Director Barnes discussed the additional revisions recommended by Town Attorney Fred Sussman.

Director Barnes discussed creating a fillable PDF for the Financial Disclosure Statements and Town Attorney Sussman stated that the Commission would need to address whether electronic signatures were acceptable in the future.

Ms. Huberty asked about the definition of “Tenant by Entirety” (Schedule A, Question 5) in relation to the option to select “Owner” or “Tenant” in the previous question (Schedule A, Question 4). Town Attorney Sussman provided clarity. Ms. Engram asked if there was an

appendix or list of definitions that would provide clarity for those completing the form and Director Barnes discussed further review of the established list of definitions. Ms. Huberty asked if a vendor list would also be provided, and Director Barnes replied in the affirmative.

Ms. Huberty noted that in Section E, Question 2, a line to select “sibling” was not included. Director Barnes noted that a line to select “parent” was also needed and further revision was needed.

Ms. Engram made a motion to approve the revised content of the Long Form Financial Disclosure Statement as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wells. Vote: 3-0 (Favorable)

Discussion regarding proposed revisions to Chapter 32 of the Town Code

Director Barnes provided an overview of the proposed revisions to Chapter 32 of the Town Code and read the text of the proposed revision.

Ms. Huberty asked whether the short-form Financial Disclosure Statement was no longer used, and Town Attorney Sussman provided clarity. Town Attorney Sussman explained that it was enabling legislation for the Commission.

Mr. Wells asked about the implementation of the proposed change. Town Attorney Sussman discussed the previous recommendation of the Town Manager and noted that the change would likely take effect next year. Town Attorney Sussman discussed several options for implementation.

Mr. Wells and Ms. Engram asked if deadlines should be included in the legislation and Director Barnes discussed process and procedures could achieve the same goal. Director Barnes discussed the need to document process and procedures for future Commissions.

Ms. Huberty asked if Chapter §32-5(F) also needed to be updated to reflect changes made to the Long Form Financial Disclosure Statement and Director Barnes replied that there had been no substantial changes. Town Attorney Sussman stated that a comparison between the revised Long Form Financial Disclosure Statement and the requirements of Chapter 32 would be prudent.

Ms. Huberty asked if §32-6(C) could be eliminated and Director Barnes noted that by eliminating the section, the submission deadline would also be eliminated. Town Attorney Sussman also noted that the elimination would remove the requirement for the Short Form Financial Disclosure Statement. Ms. Huberty suggested making the Long Form Financial Disclosure Statement the requirement and the Short Form Financial Disclosure Statement the exception. There were no objections. Mr. Wells asked if the Short Form Financial Disclosure Statement was still needed, and Ms. Engram stated that she thought that the Short Form Financial Disclosure Statement was still needed, and Ms. Huberty agreed. Ms. Huberty and Ms. Engram stated that they were comfortable with the language of the proposed revision to Chapter 32 as presented.

Mr. Wells made a motion to recommend, to the Mayor and Council, an amendment to Chapter 32, consistent with the draft language presented by the Town Attorney. The motion was seconded by Ms. Engram. Vote: 3-0 (Favorable)

Director Barnes discussed the process for presenting the recommendation to the Mayor and Council and the potential timeline for adoption of the proposed revisions to Chapter 32.

Mr. Wells stated that he would review §32-5 (F) to be sure that the Long Form Financial Disclosure Statement, as revised, was consistent with the requirements of the Town Code. Mr. Wells stated that he would complete the review by March 4th.

Director Barnes stated that the Financial Disclosure Statements should go out at the beginning of April and Ms. Engram suggested that the Commission meet in mid-March to finalize all of the documents.

Ms. Huberty asked if the use of electronic signatures needed to be clarified. Town Attorney Sussman stated that it was important that the instructions included with the Financial Disclosure Statements be clear. Director Barnes stated that the Commission would review the instructions and definitions included with the Financial Disclosure Statements at the next meeting.

Hearings

There were no hearings scheduled for the February 23, 2022, Ethics Commission meeting.

New Business

There was no New Business to be discussed.

Other Business

There was no Other Business to be discussed.

Next Meeting

The Ethics Commission will meet virtually on Wednesday, March 16th at 7:30 p.m.

Adjournment

Mr. Wells made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 p.m. The motion was seconded by Ms. Engram. Vote: 3-0 (Favorable)