

Town of Riverdale Park
Ethics Commission Meeting Minutes
September 29, 2021
7:00 p.m.

In Attendance

John Wells, Chair
Corey Beauford (arrived at 7:16 p.m.)
April Engram, Alternate
Andrea Huberty

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

Call to Order

Mr. Wells called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Roll Call

Agenda Approval

Mr. Wells made a motion to approve the September 29th Ethics Commission agenda. The motion was seconded by Ms. Huberty Vote: 3-0 (Favorable)

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Huberty made a motion to approve the minutes for the August 11, 2021, and August 17, 2021, Ethics Commission meetings. The motion was seconded by Ms. Engram. Vote: 3-0 (Favorable)

Unfinished Business

1. Review of CY2020 Financial Disclosure Statements

Town Attorney Fred Sussman provided an overview of the CY2020 Financial Disclosure Statements.

Ms. Barnes provided an overview of the outreach to former CMs Henry and Dixon.

Ms. Huberty stated that the Commission should accept both of the forms CM Henry's submissions as sufficient. Ms. Engram and Mr. Wells agreed. By consensus, the Ethics Commission accepted the Financial Disclosure Statements submitted by former CM Henry as sufficient.

Ms. Engram suggested that the Commission ask once more for the date to be added to former CM Dixon's submissions. Mr. Wells suggested that Ms. Barnes formalize the correspondence with former CM Dixon. There were no objections.

2. Designation of Chair and Vice Chair of the Ethics Commission

Mr. Wells stated that he would like to step down as chair of the Ethics Commission. Mr. Beauford discussed his time constraints.

Mr. Wells made a motion to nominate Ms. Huberty as Chair and Mr. Beauford as Vice Chair. The motion was seconded by Mr. Beauford. Vote: 3-0 (Favorable)

3. Position Statement for Financial Disclosure Statements

Mr. Wells asked if there were any changes to the position statement drafted by Ms. Barnes. Ms. Engram described the position statement as concise.

Mr. Sussman stated that the section “can be designated as an acting Director of a Department” was unclear as there were no standards or criteria that he was aware of for those who may be designated as someone who could be an acting Director of a Department.

Ms. Barnes discussed revisions to the Town’s position descriptions which would indicate whether an annual financial disclosure statement would be required for the position.

Mr. Wells asked if the position statement needed to define who could be designated as an acting Director. Mr. Beauford stated that he did not think that it was necessary to include a definition within the position statement. Ms. Engram suggested that the designation could be made at the staff level. Ms. Barnes suggested adding “as designated by the Town Manager” to the position statement. Ms. Huberty and Mr. Beauford agreed that the additional language would provide clarity.

Mr. Sussman suggested that the Commission request a list of employees that have a role in procurement or may be an acting Director from the Town Manager in order to identify those who needed to complete Financial Disclosure Statements. Mr. Wells suggested that the Commission request the list by a certain date and Mr. Beauford stated that he liked the idea of a deadline.

Ms. Barnes suggested that the Commission create an outline of the Commission’s procedures and include timeframes for distribution of Financial Disclosure Statements.

Mr. Wells asked if the line “can be designated as an acting Director of a Department” could be removed. Ms. Engram suggested that “any Town employee with a decision-making role in procurement or vendor relations” may be enough and further information could be included in the Commission’s procedures. Mr. Wells and Mr. Beauford agreed. Ms. Barnes provided an overview of the Town staff that currently submit Financial Disclosure Statements.

Ms. Barnes stated that another issue that the Commission raised at a previous meeting was that the draft position statement did not include any information about Boards and Commissions.

Ms. Huberty and Ms. Engram asked about the purpose of the position statement. Mr. Sussman stated that it was his understanding that the purpose of the position statement was to provide clarity to the Commission as it related to who should file a Financial Disclosure

Statement. Ms. Huberty stated that the Town Code gave the Commission the authority needed, so the only thing needed would be criteria.

Mr. Sussman discussed the Commission's approval of a list of staff, recommended by the Town Manager, required to file Financial Disclosure Statements.

Ms. Huberty suggested the following language: "The Town of Riverdale Park Ethics Commission (TRPEC) is committed to transparency and ethical governance. Any Town employee with a decision-making role in procurement or vendor relations shall complete a long form Financial Disclosure Statement annually." Ms. Huberty added that it was also the expectation that the Ethics Commission and Board of Code Appeals would file Long Form Financial Disclosure Statements. Mr. Sussman stated that the inclusion of the Ethics Commission and Board of Code Appeals did not need to be in the position statement and could be considered annually.

Mr. Sussman suggested that the topic be tabled until the next meeting. By consensus, the Commission accepted the proposal to table the draft position statement to the next meeting.

4. Discussion of Long Form Financial Disclosure Statements and recommended changes

The Ethics Commission deferred the discussion of the Long Form Financial Disclosure Statements to the next meeting in order to allow for additional time to review the Financial Disclosure Statements and examples provided by Town Attorney Sussman.

Hearings

There were no hearings scheduled for the September 29, 2021, Ethics Commission meeting.

New Business

There was no New Business to be discussed.

Other Business

There was no Unfinished Business to be discussed.

Next Meeting

The Ethics Commission will meet virtually on Wednesday, October 27th at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment

By consensus, the meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.