



OFFICE OF THE ETHICS COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE CHESAPEAKE BEACH ETHICS COMMISSION MEETING NOVEMBER 1, 2023

Commission Members Present: Peter Feuerle, Chair
Farhad Safaie
Greg Kernan – Absent

Staff Members Present: Frederick Sussman, Commission Counsel
Sharon L. Humm, Commission Clerk

The meeting convened at 1:00 p.m., a quorum being present. Those listed as present participated in all portions of the meeting unless otherwise noted. If other individuals participated in aspects of the meeting, they will be identified in the specific line item where their participation occurred.

Item 1: **Approval of Agenda.**

Discussion: The draft agenda was presented.

Decision: The Commission unanimously approved the agenda as presented.

Item 2: **Approval of the minutes of the September 11, 2023 Ethics Commission Meeting.**

Discussion: The draft minutes of the September 11, 2023 Ethics Commission meeting were presented.

Decision: The Commission unanimously approved the September 11, 2023 Ethics Commission meeting minutes.

Item 3: **Review public disclosure statements from newly appointed officials.**

Discussion: Chair Feuerle stated there has been two recently appointed officials and two officials that have left office during this year. The Commission first reviewed the disclosure statements of the two officials that left office and unanimously agreed to accept the one-page forms submitted by both of these officials. With respect to future filings of officials after leaving office, the Commission noted that this form needs a clear instruction to alert the filer how to complete the final disclosure statement if there is any change from the statement for the most recent full year.

Discussion: The Commission then reviewed the disclosure statements from the two recently appointed officials and found a number of omissions and other deficiencies in each.

Decision: The Clerk will contact the filers and have them correct or complete their disclosures.

Item 4: **Discuss possible amendments to improve the public disclosure statement forms for the 2023 reporting period.**

Discussion: Chair Feuerle commented he provided to the Commission a revised version of the disclosure statement incorporating recommendations provided to him by the Counsel and members. The Commission agreed to the recommended revisions. The Clerk will make the recommended modifications and send out a clean copy to the Commission for their final review.

Discussion: The Commission discussed Schedule H (requiring disclosure of financial transaction arising out of the filer's relationship with government agencies, as required under the Town's Ethics Ordinance). It was noted that this requirement would principally apply to certain service providers, such as legal advisors, zoning consultants and engineering firms. Based on its review of the latest disclosure statement filed, the Commission has concluded that these requirements are deemed burdensome by the filers and believes that the Town's imposition of this burden is not justified by a commensurate public benefit. It was, therefore, proposed to limit the scope of the disclosures to financial information with respect to the Town only and no other local government entity. It was noted that such limitation would require an amendment of the Town's Ethics Ordinance, since the Town's public disclosure forms may not contradict the Ordinance. Counsel Sussman suggested to seek informal guidance on this matter from legal counsel of the State Ethics Commission.

Decision: Counsel Sussman will present the Commission's proposal to the State for comments and then advise the Commission.

Item 5: **Any additional matter for discussion.** There were no additional matters for discussion.

Item 6: **Schedule the next Meeting.** No meeting was scheduled at this time.

Item 7: **Comments by Commissioners and members of the public.** No comments.

The meeting adjourned at 2:17 pm.

Submitted by:

Sharon L. Humm
Town Clerk