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City Administrator

Dennis Whitley III, Esq.
Legal Counsel

Laura Christoplos
Administrative Assistant II

CITY OF LAUREL ETHICS COMMISSION

8103 Sandy Spring Road, Laurel, Maryland 20707

**Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 28, 2024
Virtual Meeting via Zoom**

The Ethics Commission Meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Chairman James Hester.

Roll was called, with Chair James Hester, Vice Chair Maxene Bardwell, Commissioners Toni Drake, Karen Lubieniecki, and Robert Scaggs, and Alternate Lynne Sport present. Also present were Ethics Commission Counsel Dennis Whitley III, City Administrator Christian L. Pulley, and Administrative Assistant II Laura Christoplos.

Chair Hester added "Continuation and Conclusion of the January 23rd Meeting" to agenda item 6. The agenda was unanimously approved with those changes.

The minutes from the November 1, 2023, regular meeting and Executive Session were unanimously adopted as written.

Chair Hester and Vice Chair Bardwell had several suggestions for edits to the minutes from the January 23, 2024, meeting. The minutes were approved with those revisions. Vice Chair Bardwell and Commissioner Lubieniecki abstained since they had not been at the meeting.

The minutes from the Executive Session of January 23, 2024, were approved as written, with Vice Chair Bardwell and Commissioner Lubieniecki abstaining.

Chair Hester was unanimously re-elected as Chair. Chair Hester abstained from the vote.

Vice Chair Bardwell was unanimously re-elected as Vice Chair. Vice Chair Bardwell abstained from the vote.

The General Public Hearing began at 6:19 pm. Chair Hester began the Public Hearing by fulfilling the motion approved at the end of the January 23, 2024, meeting, which was to continue and conclude that meeting. Commissioner Lubieniecki recused herself from this portion of the meeting, and Alternate Sport filled in.

Staff advised the Commission that Director Barnes had submitted the amendment to her 2022 Financial Disclosure Statement (FDS), and it was attached to the original FDS as an amendment. There were no additional questions. The amendment was accepted by unanimous vote.

Chair Hester explained that even if an elected, appointed, or hired official is no longer with the City, they need to fill out the 2023 FDS if they were with the City at any time during 2023. Staff informed the Commission that there were three elected officials and three appointed officials who were no longer with the City. All have been informed that they need to fill out the 2023 FDS.

There were no members of the General Public who wished to comment, so the General Public Meeting was closed at 6:28 pm.

Chair Hester asked for volunteers for the FDS subcommittee. Vice Chair Bardwell suggested that one of the new members and one of the experienced members volunteer to review the FDS forms as a way of learning the process. Alternate Sport and Commissioner Drake volunteered to be on the subcommittee. They will coordinate with staff to come in and review the statements when they are ready.

Chair Hester offered a refresher session about the Ethics Ordinance and FDS for members of the City Council. Administrator Pulley will discuss this with Mayor Sydnor and follow up with Chair Hester.

The next meeting was set for May 20, 2024, by Zoom at 6:00 pm. Counsel Whitley asked if it was appropriate to discuss the FDS on Zoom. Chair Hester stated that the results of FDS reviews have been discussed via Zoom for the past few years, unless something comes up that requires an in person meeting. The meeting was scheduled as a Zoom meeting unless something comes up that requires an in-person meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 pm.