

## COMMISSION MEMBERS

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Karen Lubieniecki

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Toni D. Drake, Esq.

Lynne Sport, Alternate



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Christian L. Pulley, CPM  
*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 June 20, 2024 Virtual Meeting via Zoom

The Ethics Commission Meeting was called to order at 6:06pm by Chairman James Hester.

Roll was called. In attendance were Chair James Hester, Commissioners Toni Drake, Karen Lubieniecki, and Alternate Lynne Sport. Also present were Ethics Commission Counsel Dennis Whitley III, City Administrator/Ethics Commission Executive Officer Christian L. Pulley, CPM, Administrative Assistant II Laura Christoplos, and guest Maria Gonzales Jackson.

The June 20, 2024, Agenda was approved, as written.

One edit was made to the May 20, 2024, Minutes. The Commission approved, and the minutes were approved, as amended.

Chair Hester requested that Alternate Sport participate as a full Commissioner since the full Commission was not present. Commissioner Sport enthusiastically agreed.

Commissioner Lubieniecki asked if there would be a follow up on the action items from the last meeting. Chair Hester replied that the action items would be taken up at a later meeting. Today's meeting is only to discuss, and vote, on the Financial Disclosure Statements (FDS) submitted by the four candidates for the open Ward 1 City Council seat.

Chair Hester explained that the Subcommittee (made up of Chair Hester and Commissioner Drake) reviewed the candidates' FDS. During the first review, two of the FDS were filled out thoroughly and correctly, and were approved. The other two were not filled out in an acceptable manner. These two were returned to the candidates to be corrected.

After they were corrected and re-submitted for review, the Subcommittee found that the substantive deficiencies had been corrected. Now, all four of the FDS have been approved.

The next step is to write a memo that goes to the Board of Election Supervisors through the Clerk's Office. Administrator Pulley said that she will send it immediately after the meeting since there is a meeting of the Board of Election Supervisors tomorrow.

Chair Hester suggested that the Subcommittee make a recommendation to the full Ethics Commission that they go forward with a memorandum under Chair Hester's signature, saying that the Ethics Commission has now reviewed the four FDS submitted by the candidates. Chair Hester wanted it to be stated that two of the FDS originally had substantive issues that were corrected and now all four FDS were deemed acceptable.

Commissioner Lubieniecki felt that it was not necessary to mention that two of the FDS had been sent back, since that is within the normal procedure. That would put a certain level of prejudice against those two candidates. The two candidates whose FDS were approved, initially, had run for Council in November, so they had prior experience filling out the FDS. The two who needed to amend their forms were filling them out for the first time.

Chair Hester felt it was an indicator of how seriously the candidates took the process. Commissioner Drake stated that the deficiencies in the two FDS were the same issues that come up repeatedly. Commissioner Lubieniecki stated that it is not our job to judge the candidates. Our job is to evaluate their FDS. She would like to see a more neutral conveyance of their acceptability.

Commissioner Sport asked if the initial submission is part of the Public Record. Commissioner Drake felt it was not fair since other people have made these same mistakes and resubmitted their corrected FDS in the past. The corrections are part of the official document if someone wants to look at it.

Commissioner Sport clarified her question. Is the fact that certain FDS had to be corrected part of the Public Record? It can be discovered if someone wants to look at the documents.

Chair Hester stated that he would bow to the majority and asked that the memorandum state that all four candidates have submitted sufficient FDS.

A motion was made, seconded and passed, to go forward with a simple memorandum stating that the Ethics Commission has reviewed the FDS of the four candidates and, as of now, all four meet the requirements for an acceptable FDS.

Administrator Pulley will write the memo and sign off on it.

The General Public Meeting was opened and closed at 6:34pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35pm.