



CITY OF BOSTON
Municipal Lobbying Compliance Commission

Minutes
Wednesday, July 31, 2019, 4:00 P.M.
Boston City Hall – Piemonte Room – 5th Floor
One City Hall Square, Boston, MA 02201

Commission Members Present: Sammy Nabulsi, Chair; Stephanie Everett; Vivien Li; Christine O'Donnell representing City Council President Andrea Campbell and City Clerk Maureen Feeney

Others Present: Assistant City Clerk Alex Geourntas, Clerk to the Commission

Call to order at 4:13 P.M.

Sammy Nabulsi, Chair of the Commission, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone in attendance and first order of business was to review and approve the minutes of the July 17, 2019 Commission Meeting.

Motion to approve the July 17, 2019 Meeting Minutes was offered by Vivien Li and seconded by Stephanie Everett. Amendment was offered by Vivien Li to amend the language on Page 2 relative to the Boston Society of Architects. This was seconded by Stephanie Everett. July 17, 2019 Meeting Minutes were approved as amended. All in favor.

Update on First Reporting Period

City Clerk Maureen Feeney updated the Commission Members on processing of reports filed by Lobbyists, Entities and Clients that were due on July 20th. Reports are currently being reviewed by City Clerk's office staff for informational clarity between entities and clients. Public access to these reports will hopefully be available by August 10, 2019. Vivien Li spoke to the growing pains of a new system and thanked the City Clerk's Office for all of their hard work.

Update: Timeline of Adoption of Regulations

Sammy Nabulsi updated Commission Members about regulations being developed by the city's Law Department and a draft to be available for review by the end of August. The objective is to have the regulations ready by December with a public comment period taking place prior to the adoption of the regulations.

Vivien Li spoke to the December 15, 2019 deadline that is part of the city ordinance relative to registration for the 2020 Calendar Year and the timeline for adoption of regulations.

Stephanie Everett agreed that a public comment period be flexible and possibly schedule a Commission Meeting in September to review regulations. Sammy Nabulsi suggested that reviewing and approving of regulations would also incorporate a public comment period.

Vivien Li reiterated her concerns about the draft regulations being ready by the end of August and asked the Chair to be in contact with Law Department staff to ensure that a draft be ready by this time.

City Clerk Maureen Feeney expressed concern about the length of time it has taken to create regulations and are these regulations going to redefine language in the city ordinance? These regulations need to clarify language and address items that are silent in the city ordinance.

Amending the city ordinance should be pursued by the City Council or the Mayor and creating regulations for the current legislation are two different tracks. Commission cannot wait for amendments to the legislation.

Vivien Li referred to the Foley Hoag Letter stating that the city ordinance goes beyond the federal and state requirements e.g., 4 times per year city reporting requirement compared to state and federal are twice a year. It would appear that this was deliberate. City ordinance was unanimously approved by City Council. Commission can only enforce what is currently in effect.

City Clerk Maureen Feeney suggested that the Foley Hoag Letter is a framework for either the Mayor and/or City Council to file amendments to this city ordinance. Amendments would clarify language and address issues such as, the 4 times per year report filings, creating thresholds and professional testimony.

Sammy Nabulsi discussed issues with the October 20th reporting requirement and suggested that a "Bulletin" be issued to clarify city ordinance language.

Stephanie Everett suggested that Commission create a timeline for reviewing regulations by the end of August and early September and a "Bulletin" would be beneficial to assist those filing reports by the October 20th deadline. A "working session" in August could be held to discuss issues with the reporting process and information gathered would assist in creating the "Bulletin" to address concerns and post online for guidance on October 20th reporting requirements.

Vivien Li is of the mindset that transparency must be our overall goal in discussing draft regulations and Sammy Nabulsi agreed that discussion about the draft regulations would be in open sessions not in executive sessions of Commission meetings.

Process of Written Public Comments

Sammy Nabulsi suggested that there be a dedicated area on the city's Lobbying web pages online for anyone to submit feedback about the city ordinance and its implementation.

City Clerk Maureen Feeney agreed that written opinions are more useful as we could refer back to them in the future and the city's dedicated email address for Lobbying has been a helpful tool.

Vivien Li and Stephanie Everett agreed that a public comment period would be beneficial and setting meeting parameters could be avenue to pursue at future Commission Meetings. This feedback would greatly benefit the Commission in its process of finalizing regulations.

Motion was offered by Sammy Nabulsi to prepare items and language for a public comment period and seconded by Stephanie Everett. All in favor.

City Clerk Maureen Feeney agreed that working together will assure we get this right.

Motion to adjourn offered by Stephanie Everett and seconded by Maureen Feeney. All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 5:33 P.M.

Minutes approved by the Commission at its meeting of September 11, 2019.