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CITY OF BOSTON
Municipal Lobbying Compliance Commission

Minutes
Thursday, February 25, 2021, 2:00 PM
Virtual Meeting held remotely via Google Meets
Due to COVID-19 Pandemic

Commission Members Present: Sammy Nabulsi, Chair; Vivien Li, Linda Champion, City Clerk Maureen Feeney and Christine O'Donnell representing City Council President Kim Janey

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

Call to order at 2:04 PM

Sammy Nabulsi, Chair of the Commission, opened the virtual meeting and welcomed everyone especially the newest member of the Commission, Linda Champion.

Vivien Li initiated discussion regarding status of Commission as it relates to the impending departure of Mayor Walsh to Washington as US Secretary of Labor and City Council President Kim Janey becoming Acting Mayor. Sammy Nabulsi stated that he would consult with Corporation Counsel to clarify the status of the Commission and its appointees.

Motion to approve the January 21, 2021 Meeting Minutes was offered by Maureen Feeney and seconded by Vivien Li. All in favor. Commission Member Linda Champion abstained since she was not a full member of the Commission on January 21, 2021.

Lobbying Report from City Clerk Maureen Feeney

Provided update to Commission members as to the status of the IPS upgrade which is the city's permitting application. This platform incorporates the City Clerk's forms processing including all Lobbying transactions. The current system presents many challenges to staff in terms of registration and processing of quarterly reports. To link the reports to the public database, staff must manually process each quarterly report as mandated by the city ordinance.

IT staff continue to work with our office to address issues as they develop, but the process is quite time-consuming and at times, frustrating. Of course, staff continues to respond to inquiries from Lobbyists, Lobbying Entities and Clients by phone and email. We are also in the process of reviewing lobbying information on the city's website to update text and better delineate sections.

City Clerk's Office has sent several informational emails about registration and quarterly reporting throughout 2020 and copies will be given to Commission members for review.

Next Steps

With the Lobbying Regulations approved and posted on city's website, the Commission is looking to develop a reporting system for those who are lobbying in Boston, but who are not registered.

Discussion ensued about the type of reporting system to put in place such as an online Google Form for citizens/residents to report lobbying violations as stated by the city ordinance. The form could be completed and submitted through the Lobbying web page on the city's website. Vivien Li offered to assist in creating this particular form. Suggestion was made to invite a member of the city's Web Team to the next Commission Meeting to discuss web site options.

Sammy Nabulsi also mentioned the need to develop education and training initiatives for city departments to identify lobbying scenarios and when to report suspicious activities.

Not-for-profit fee waivers are another area of concern for the Commission in terms of the process to approve/deny waivers based on the discretion of the City Clerk. Forms will need to be created to be used by not-for-profit organizations when applying for a fee waiver and stating their hardship. Linda Champion suggested that these forms also include 'signed under the pains and penalties of perjury' and include the requirement to submit financial statements.

Commission members confirmed the date of the next virtual meeting to be held on **Thursday, March 18, 2021 at 2 PM.**

Motion to Adjourn Commission Meeting was offered by Linda Champion and seconded by Maureen Feeney. All in favor.

Virtual Meeting was adjourned at 4:01 P.M.