

**CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD  
ETHICS REFORM TASK FORCE  
MINUTES  
THURSDAY, JUNE 4, 2015  
WEST HOLLYWOOD CITY HALL – COMMUNITY CONFERENCE ROOM  
8300 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD**

**ORGANIZING MEETING  
4:00 P.M.**

**CALL TO ORDER** - Assistant City Attorney Christi Hogin called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

**ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS** - Task Force members present: Joseph Guardarrama, Elizabeth Ralston and Robert Stern. Staff members present: Assistant City Attorney Christi Hogin, Assistant to the City Manager Janet Jimenez and Administrative Specialist Guy Vespoint.

**SELECTION OF A CHAIR FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONDUCTING MEETINGS:**

By consensus of the Ethics Reform Task Force (“Task Force”), the Chair will rotate among the members for each meeting. Elizabeth Ralston was designated as Chair for the June 4, 2015 meeting. Joseph Guardarrama will be the chair for the July 11<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** None.

**DEFINING THE TASK AND DEVELOPING AN APPROACH:**

Assistant City Attorney Hogin indicated that the Task Force is a body that falls within the scope of the Brown Act (“Act”) and provided an overview of the Act to the Task Force.

Robert Stern inquired about the types of concerns the public has expressed that prompted the Council’s creation of the Task Force.

Ms. Hogin responded that recent constituent concerns are related to the City’s recent Municipal and Special Elections. However, she further indicated that Councilmember D’Amico and Mayor Horvath would like for the Task Force to consider a holistic approach to Ethics Reform.

Joseph Guardarrama stated that the Task Force needs to conduct two public meetings in locations that allow participation by both the East and West sides of the City. He proposed that one meeting be held in Council Chambers and the other at Plummer Park.

Mr. Stern commented that some public concerns may be related to campaign finance and that the Task Force’s recommendations may be limited by law. Mr. Guardarrama stated that the City is viewed as progressive, and that this is an opportunity for the Task Force to advance

new types of reform. Mr. Guardarrama further stated that he believes that the concerns of the West Hollywood constituency are similar to those of other jurisdictions. Also, he commented that running for office in the City is expensive and remarked on the City of Los Angeles' practices. He stated that the City does not have electronic filing of campaign disclosure forms. Finally, he commented on City lobbyists.

Mr. Stern inquired about the reporting of gifts received by legislative members. Ms. Hogin provided information regarding the City's gift policy. Mr. Guardarrama commented that it is his experience that gifts are not common.

Mr. Stern inquired about the City's lobbyist registration policy. Ms. Hogin responded that the lobbyist registration allows decision makers the ability to differentiate between lobbyists speaking on behalf of their client or project from other citizens during public comment at meetings. Mr. Stern responded that it is important for the public to know how much money is being spent and what gifts are being given relative to lobbying activity in the City which is currently not addressed in the City's municipal code.

The Task Force discussed upcoming meeting dates, times, locations, and provided direction for the type of information the Task Force seeks from the public. They recommended inviting City Council candidates from the last three or four City elections, current and former Councilmembers, current and former Planning Commissioners, registered lobbyists, as well as local media representatives to participate in the upcoming "listening meetings".

Staff agreed to furnish the Task Force with links to Mr. Guardarrama's opinion pieces from [www.wehoville.com](http://www.wehoville.com).

The Task Force reached consensus that their first recommendation to the City is the acquisition of electronic filing software for Fair Political Practice Commission (FPPC) forms.

Ms. Ralston inquired about officeholder accounts and asked for confirmation that the reports were timely filed with the City Clerk's. Assistant to the City Manager Janet Jimenez responded that the semi-annual reports (FPPC Form 460) are due July 31, 2015. The Task Force further discussed the legal requirements for officeholder accounts.

The Task Force had further discussion regarding the scope of their upcoming meetings, discussion points, and information that would like from the public.

The Task Force discussed City Administrative Regulation (AR) 414 and suggested various changes to it for clarity.

The Task Force discussed potential meeting dates and locations. They intend to promote these meetings as an Open Community Forum to discuss lobbying, ethics and campaign finance in the City. Staff will create Task Force meeting speaker slips providing speakers five minutes to speak. In addition, staff will create promotional materials for the Task Force that provide information to the public regarding the topics that will be covered during the "listening meetings".

The Task Force briefly discussed municipal elections including candidate statements and candidate forums.

Mr. Guardarrama suggested that the Task Force meet after the "listening meetings" to begin working on three (3) possible recommendations to the City Council for new ordinances that would address campaign finance, lobbying, and a governmental ethics ordinance.

Ms. Hogin stated that she has sufficient information to proceed, but was concerned that there may be insufficient time to prepare publicity for the meetings and recommended that the "listening meetings" be scheduled at West Hollywood Park on July 11<sup>th</sup> and Plummer Park on July 14<sup>th</sup>.

The Task Force reached consensus for two (2) additional "deliberation meetings" to be held on Tuesday, August 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 and Monday, August 31<sup>st</sup> at City Hall.

A brief discussion took place regarding government ethics. Ms. Hogin indicated that contributions to a charitable organizations and gifts to Councilmembers and Commissioners in the form of meals by lobbyists and applicants are resident concerns. Another resident concern is disclosure of campaign contributions in connection with City Council agenda items, which creates an impression of impropriety. She further commented that campaign contributions are protected speech, and the City cannot legally prohibit participation by a Councilmember who received a contribution.

#### **COMMENTS FROM STAFF AND PUBLIC:**

Mayor Lindsey Horvath thanked the Task Force for their time and expertise. She commented that the conversation is long overdue in the community. She encouraged the Task Force to schedule as many public meetings as necessary in order to make the proper findings and recommendations. She offered her support for the provision of additional resources, such as the creation of a dedicated e-mail address and the use of the Engage WeHo service.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The Task Force adjourned at 5:20 p.m. to its next scheduled meeting on July 11, 2015 at 1:00 p.m. at West Hollywood Council Chambers.

APPROVED BY A MOTION OF THE ETHICS REFORM TASK FORCE ON THIS 11<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF JULY, 2015.

  
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CHAIRPERSON

ATTEST:

  
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STAFF LIAISON