



**ETHICS REVIEW COMMISSION
MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, July 12, 2011**

The Ethics Review Commission convened in a regular meeting on Tuesday, July 12, 2011, at 6:00 p.m. at Austin City Hall, 301 W. 2nd Street, Room 1029 in Austin, Texas

Chair James Henson called the Commission meeting to order at 6:24 p.m.

Board Members in Attendance:

Chair James Henson, Velva Price, Abu Hafiz, James Sassin

Staff in Attendance: Assistant City Attorney Sabine Romero, James Cousar (present to end of Agenda item 3(b) but left before 3(a))

Commission members Vice-chair Lisa Tsai and Susan Morrison were absent (unexcused).

1. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION.

Agenda item 1: No citizen communication.

2. APPROVAL OF APRIL 12, 2011 MINUTES.

Agenda item 2: Approval of minutes for April 12, 2011 was left pending for a future meeting. No objection was made by present commission-members.

3. NEW BUSINESS

Agenda item 3(a): After examination by commission working group composed of commission-members Price and Sassin, the working group presented their recommendations to the commission regarding a number of issues including the following:

- The Ethics Review Commission should have jurisdiction over and handle Chapter 2-2 and 2-7 violations. However, the commission would not be empowered to dispense any punitive punishment other than to refer the issue to the appropriate court.
- Members of the Ethics Review Commission do not have to recuse themselves when dealing with issues involving City Council or the position of Mayor except under a purely voluntary basis.
- The issue regarding 'bundling' was returned to the commission for further review.

- Regarding the Fair Privileges Act, the working group recommended the stance that non-participants should not have standing to complain about others who were not participating.
- The procedures for filing a complaint should be reasonably simplified to avoid situations where the complainant is required to re-file the same complaint with a different city-office.

Regarding the commission's desire to possess limited jurisdiction over Chapter 2-2 and 2-7, commission-member James Sassin moved to formalize a draft letter to City Council after preparation by a working group. The working group would be composed of commission-members James Sassin, Velva Price, and Chair James Henson. Final draft would be sent to Chair Henson by the 25th of July, 2011 who would then be authorized to sign on behalf of the commission and then presented to City Council. Commission-member Price seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Agenda item 3(b): The commission discussed possible action regarding email received from Ken Martin regarding statement of financial information. The email requested that the commission consider exercising the Ethics Review Commission's discretion to self-initiate Chapter 2-7 investigations. The commission decided to take no action taken with direction to return to this issue when seven commission members are present.

4. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Agenda item 4: Commission-member Price urged the commission without objection to review the Lyons Municipal Golf course complaint at the next meeting. Additionally, pending communication from the City Clerk, review of financial forms were added to the next meeting's agenda.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Commission member Price moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:43 p.m. Commission member Sassin seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0.