



CITY OF BOSTON Municipal Lobbying Compliance Commission

Minutes Thursday, September 16, 2021, 2:00 PM Virtual Meeting held remotely via Google Meet Due to COVID-19 Pandemic

Commission Members Present: Sammy Nabulsi, Linda Champion, Vivien Li, City Clerk Maureen Feeney and Christine O'Donnell representing City Council President Pro Tempore Matt O'Malley

Others Present: Assistant City Clerk Alex Geourntas

Call to order at 2:05 PM

Sammy Nabulsi, Commission Chair, opened the virtual meeting by welcoming everyone.

Motion to accept the July 22, 2021 Meeting Minutes was offered by Vivien Li and seconded by City Clerk Maureen Feeney. All in favor.

Christine O'Donnell and Sammy Nabulsi abstained as they were not present for the July 22, 2021 Commission meeting.

Online Form for Lobbying Complaints

The online form has been updated and it is ready to go live along with the text to be updated on the City Clerk's lobbying web pages on the city's website.

City Clerk Maureen Feeney discussed the investigation aspect of lobbying complaints. How these investigations would take place and who would conduct these investigations are concerns for the City Clerk's Office. Several options were discussed as possible solutions as follows:

*Hiring a law student from a local law school to conduct investigations; however, Linda Champion expressed concerns about law students conducting investigations as they may not be focused enough for this type of work.

*An Assistant Corporation Counsel from the city's Law Department may be a better option as the City Clerk's Office could be assigned Counsel for these investigations.

*Utilizing Investigators at the Boston Fair Housing Commission who are laws students on a part-time basis. A possible sharing agreement with Fair Housing would allow for research and investigations.

*Possibly a part-time position in the City Clerk's Office for a law intern to conduct investigations. A RFP may be needed or a job description to hire a law intern.

Vivien Li stated that the incoming new Mayor and City Councilors may have different priorities as it concerns the city budget and finances. Creating a proposal for the new Administration to review a budget allocation for an Investigator was also suggested.

City Clerk Maureen Feeney supports the aspect of preparing a RFP for an Investigator and discussions will be held with the city's Law Department as to next steps.

Not-For-Profit Fee Waivers

City Clerk Maureen Feeney updated Commission members regarding the new online form for Fee Waivers and the text for the lobbying web pages on the city's website. Commission members were satisfied with the draft language that was circulated.

Vivien Li suggested that the deadline date be November 1, 2021 instead of November 15, 2021 giving the City Clerk's Office staff additional time to review and approve/deny fee waiver requests.

Fee Waiver Requests do not need to be made public unless a public records request was received by the City Clerk's Office.

Vivien Li stated that since 2019, not many non-profits had requested fee waivers.

City Clerk Maureen Feeney also updated Commission members on meeting with IT to discuss options for a new application for Lobbying. The city issued a RFI soliciting informational proposals for a new application with a deadline for submissions on September 24, 2021. This is the first of many steps as we would move out of the IPS system into an independent application for all lobbying requirements.

Website Updates

City Clerk Maureen Feeney and Assistant City Clerk Alex Geourntas updated Commission members on efforts to streamline the lobbying web pages on the city's website by revamping the various lobbying sections.

Text will be updated in each section and two new sections will be created for Lobbying Complaints and Not-For-Profit Fee Waivers. Also, an updated PowerPoint will replace the current one which provides a more comprehensive step-by-step for annual registration and filing of quarterly statement reports.

After reviewing updated PowerPoint presentation, the opt-out of email alerts and the need for an additional disclaimer were two items to further review. Also, there will be a notice added stating that current email addresses are the main method of communications. All communications will be done electronically.

Sammy Nabulsi, Commission Chair, expressed his gratitude to the City Clerk's Office for all the updates and work relative to Lobbying in the City of Boston.

Discussion ensued regarding a return to in-person Commission meetings as a future option possibly for the October 21 or November 18 Commission meetings.

The Commission's next meeting will take place on Thursday, October 21, 2021.

Motion was offered by Vivien Li to adjourn meeting and seconded by Linda Champion. All in favor.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:33 PM.

Minutes approved by the Commission at its meeting of October 21, 2021