Report of the Administration of the
Howard County Ethics Law
Calendar year 2020

Pursuant to General Assembly amendments to §5-807 of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, local ethics boards are required to provide the local governing body an annual report on the administration of the local ethics law. This report summarized the work of the Howard County Ethics Commission for the calendar year of 2020.

Commission Overview

The Commission is responsible for administering the Howard County Public Ethics Law, Subtitle 2, of Title 22 of the Howard County Code, with respect to all public officials, officers and employees. The Commission consists of five (5) members. The 2020 Commission members were:

Charles Fuller, Chairperson
Joanne Drielak, Vice Chairperson
Jonathan Kromm
Joseph Markwordt
Jean Xu

The Commission meets on an as-needed basis in both open and closed session.

Meetings

For the calendar year 2020, the Commission held four (4) meetings (February 10, 2020; June 17, 2020; August 18, 2020; and November 9, 2020). As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, all but the February 10, 2020 meetings were held virtually. In compliance with State law, notice of all meetings and agendas for such meetings are posted on the County’s website in advance of each meeting. Further, copies of the approved minutes from each open meeting are also posted on the County’s website. Copies of the Agendas and Minutes for the Commission’s 2020 open meetings are attached to this Report. The Minutes include a list of all members who participated in each meeting.

Advisory Opinions and Conflict Waiver Requests

The Commission issued two (2) formal Advisory Opinions during this reporting period. Public copies of Advisory Opinions, with the identities of the subject deleted, are made available by the Commission upon request.

The Commission issued two (2) formal Conflict Waiver Decisions during this reporting period. Any employee or official may seek a waiver from the Commission from the conflict of interest prohibitions pursuant to Section 901(b) of the Charter. The hearings on conflict waiver
requests are published at least two weeks prior to the public hearing in a newspaper of general circulation in the County.

**Legislative and Regulatory Matters**

The Commission is responsible for determining whether any legislative changes to the Ethics Law are necessary to ensure compliance with State law requirements. During the reporting period, no legislative changes were required. The Commission did work on editing the Rules of Procedure (final adoption of amended Rules were finalized in 2021).

**Financial Disclosures**

Certain officials, employees, and members of certain boards are required to file financial disclosures. Financial Disclosures are due by April 30 of each year. The Commission, with the assistance of its Executive Secretary, provides assistance to ensure that officials, employees, and board members are able to complete their disclosures. The vast majority of disclosures are filed electronically. Members of the public may contact the Executive Secretary to view and/or copy a financial disclosure statement after providing all information required by the County Code.

**Lobbying**

The Commission is required to maintain all lobbying registrations and reports filed pursuant to the Ethics Law. A listing of all registrations is kept on the Commission’s County website.
Howard County Ethics Commission Meeting
George Howard Building
Ellicott City/Columbia Room
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043
February 10, 2020; 6:00 PM

This is a public meeting unless otherwise indicated. All inquiries should be made to: 410-313-3073. Reasonable accommodations will be provided for people with disabilities upon request three working days prior to the day of the meeting. Materials are available in alternative formats upon request.

Open Meeting Agenda

I. Call Meeting to Order

II. Approve Agenda

III. Conflict waiver request filed by Edward Glawe pursuant to Howard County Code §22.205

IV. Approve Minutes from November 13, 2019 Commission Meeting

V. Discussion Regarding Amending Policies and Procedures

VI. Closed Session-Confidential matters; Pending legal advice

VII. Discussion of next meeting

VIII. Adjournment

NOTE: A part, or all, of a meeting may be conducted in closed session. The Commission may vote in an open session, pursuant to its Rules of Procedure and in accordance with the Howard County Code and the Maryland Open Meetings Act, Md. Code Ann., General Provisions §3-305, to go into closed session for any enumerated purpose.

Meeting Notice Date: January 16, 2020
Agenda Notice Date: February 4, 2020
Howard County Ethics Commission  
3430 Courthouse Drive  
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

OPEN MEETING MINUTES

A duly advertised public meeting of the Howard County Ethics Commission was held in the Ellicott City/Columbia Room, George Howard Building, 3430 Courthouse Drive, Ellicott City, Maryland, 21043 on February 10, 2020.

Commission Members Present: Charles Fuller, Chair  
Joanne Drielak  
Joseph Markwordt  
Jonathan Kromm

Commission Member Absent: Jean Xu

Staff Members Present: Kristen Bowen Perry, Deputy County Solicitor, Executive Secretary to the Commission

Chairperson Fuller called the open meeting to order at approximately 6:14 p.m. The following items of business were discussed in open session:

1. Agenda: The Commission reviewed and approved the proposed Agenda upon a motion by Kromm seconded by Drielak, passed unanimously.

2. Waiver Request: Consideration for Waiver request filed by Edward Glawe to seek a waiver to enter into a lease agreement with the County for property owned by the County. After Edward Glawe and Brian Moody, of the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks, were sworn in and presented testimony to the Commission, upon motion by Drielak to approve waiver, seconded by Markwordt and by unanimous vote a waiver was granted.

3. Minutes: The Commission reviewed and approved the Minutes from the Open Meeting on November 13, 2019 and upon a motion by Drielak, seconded by Markwordt, the minutes passed unanimously.

4. The Commission discussed possible amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Howard County Ethics Commission. Attorney Perry circulated a redline of the Commission’s comments with respect to the Rules and discussion on the proposals will be at the next scheduled meeting.
5. Motion by Markwordt to adjourn Open Meeting and go into Closed Meeting, which was seconded by Kromm and passed unanimously. Open Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:32 p.m.

**Closed Meeting:** Pursuant to the Open Meetings Act, minutes of this open session are required to include the following:

**Date of Closed Meeting:** February 20, 2020

**Time of Closed Meeting:** Approximately 6:32 p.m.

**Place of Closed Meeting:** George/Howard Building, Columbia/Ellicott City Room, 3430 Courthouse Drive, Ellicott City, MD 21043

**Purpose:** To discuss, deliberate, and seek legal advice, on updates regarding Inquiry 2019-03, Advisory Opinion Inquiry, 2020-01, and approval of Closed Meeting minutes from November 13, 2019 meeting.

**Authority to Close:** (1) Md. Code Ann., Gen. Prov. Art. §3-305(b)(7): To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice on a legal matter; (2) Md. Code Ann., Gen. Prov. Art. §3-305(b)(13): To comply with a specific constitutional, statutory, or judicially imposed requirement that prevents public disclosures about a particular proceeding or matter; (3) To comply with the Commission's Rules of Procedure set forth in Rule 03.C, "the Commission may be in closed sessions to consider an advisory opinion request to the extent that consideration of the request would necessarily lead to identification of the subject of the request;" (4) Howard County Code §22.203(m)(3): "The Commission shall publish or otherwise make available to the public copies of the advisory opinions, with the identities of the subjects deleted;" and (5) §22.203(n)(9) (i) After a complaint is filed and until a final finding of a violation by the Commission, all actions regarding a complaint are confidential.

**Listing of topics discussed:** Advisory Opinion 2020-01: The Commission reviewed, deliberated, and sought legal advice regarding the applicability and interpretation of the Code as it applied to Advisory Opinion 2019-01.

**Persons present:** Attorney Perry; Members: Fuller, Drielak, Kromm, and Markwordt.

**Actions taken:** Deliberated, consulted with counsel, reviewed Howard County Code and Charter, and issued verbal authorization and directives to the Commission's attorney to notify the complainant with the result.

Upon motion by Drielak, and seconded by Kromm, the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the Closed Meeting and re-open the Open Meeting. The open meeting was then called to order by Fuller and re-opened.
6. Commission discussed scheduling of next meeting. Upon motion by Markwordt and seconded by Kromm, the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the open meeting at approximately 7:14 p.m.

Kristen Bowen Perry  
Executive Secretary  
Date Approved: 6/17/2020
Howard County Ethics Commission Meeting

June 17, 2020; 6:00 PM

Due to the State of Emergency and to adhere to social distancing measures, this meeting will not take place at 3430 Court House Drive, Ellicott City, but will be conducted as a virtual web meeting/conference call where the public is invited to participate. Please see information below.

This is a public meeting unless otherwise indicated. All inquiries should be made to: 410-313-3073. Reasonable accommodations will be provided for people with disabilities upon request three working days prior to the day of the meeting. Materials are available in alternative formats upon request.

Open Meeting Agenda

I. Call Meeting to Order
II. Approve Agenda
III. Approve Minutes from February 10, 2020 Commission Meeting
IV. Discussion Regarding Amending Policies and Procedures
V. Discussion Regarding Affidavit Requirements for the comprehensive zoning process
VI. Discussion of next meeting
VII. Closed Session-Confidential matters; Pending legal advice / Adjournment of Open Meeting

NOTE: A part, or all, of a meeting may be conducted in closed session. The Commission may vote in an open session, pursuant to its Rules of Procedure and in accordance with the Howard County Code and the Maryland Open Meetings Act, Md. Code Ann., General Provisions §3-305, to go into closed session for any enumerated purpose.

Meeting Notice Date: June 2, 2020
Agenda Notice Date: June 9, 2020

To join the meeting:
1-650-479-3207 Call-in toll number (US/Canada)
Meeting number (access code): 160 611 2130
Howard County Ethics Commission  
3430 Courthouse Drive  
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043  

OPEN MEETING MINUTES  

A duly advertised public meeting of the Howard County Ethics Commission was held on June 17, 2020 via Webex.  

Commission Members Present: Charles Fuller, Chair  
Joanne Drielak  
Joseph Markwordt  
Jonathan Kromm (arrived at 6:19pm)  
Jean Xu  

Staff Members Present: Kristen Bowen Perry, Deputy County Solicitor, Executive Secretary to the Commission  
Rhonda Karafa, Paralegal, Howard County Office of Law  

Chairperson Fuller called the open meeting to order at approximately 6:08 p.m. The following items of business were discussed in open session:  

1. Agenda: The Commission reviewed and approved the proposed Agenda upon a motion by Drielak seconded by Markwordt, passed unanimously (Kromm was not present to vote).  

2. Minutes: The Commission reviewed and approved the Minutes from the Open Meeting on February 10, 2020 and upon a motion by Drielak, seconded by Markwordt, the minutes passed unanimously (Xu did not vote).  

3. The Commission discussed possible amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Howard County Ethics Commission. Attorney Perry circulated a redline of the Commission’s comments with respect to the Rules and discussion on the proposals will be at the next scheduled meeting.  

4. The Commission discussed updated system regarding making Advisory Opinions available.  

5. The Commission discussed updating the affidavits for the comprehensive zoning process pursuant to State law. Attorney Perry circulated the updated code provisions and redlined affidavits to comply with same. The Commission reviewed and approved the revised Affidavits and upon motion by Drielak, seconded by Markwordt, the revised Affidavits passed unanimously. The Commission further instructed Attorney Perry to forward to counsel for the Department of Planning and Zoning.
6. The Commission discussed scheduling the next meeting and instructed Attorney Perry to notify the Commission when next meeting is required and scheduling would be considered then.

7. Motion by Markwordt to adjourn Open Meeting and go into Closed Meeting, which was seconded by Xu and passed unanimously. Open Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:52 p.m.

Closed Meeting: Pursuant to the Open Meetings Act, minutes of this open session are required to include the following:

Date of Closed Meeting: June 17, 2020

Time of Closed Meeting: Approximately 6:53 p.m.

Place of Closed Meeting: Via WebEx

Purpose: To discuss, deliberate, and seek legal advice, on updates regarding Inquiry 2019-03, and legal issue raised regarding lobbyist registrations, and approval of Closed Meeting minutes from February 10, 2020 meeting.

Authority to Close: (1) Md. Code Ann., Gen. Prov. Art. §3-305(b)(7): To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice on a legal matter; (2) Md. Code Ann., Gen. Prov. Art. §3-305(b)(13): To comply with a specific constitutional, statutory, or judicially imposed requirement that prevents public disclosures about a particular proceeding or matter; (3) To comply with the Commission’s Rules of Procedure set forth in Rule 03.C, “the Commission may be in closed sessions to consider an advisory opinion request to the extent that consideration of the request would necessarily lead to identification of the subject of the request;” and (4) §22.203(n)(9) (i) After a complaint is filed and until a final finding of a violation by the Commission, all actions regarding a complaint are confidential.

Listing of topics discussed: Advisory Opinion 2019-03: The Commission dismissed status of Inquiry 2019-03; discussed legal issues raised regarding lobbyist registrations in certain circumstances; discussed Code with respect to same.

Persons present: Attorney Perry; Paralegal Karafa; Members: Fuller, Drielak, Kromm, Markwordt and Xu.

Actions taken:Consulted with counsel.

Upon motion by Xu, and seconded by Marquardt, the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the Closed Meeting and re-open the Open Meeting. The open meeting was then called to order by Fuller and re-opened.
8. Upon motion by Xu and seconded by Markwordt, the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the open meeting at approximately 7:00 p.m.

Kristen Bowen Perry
Executive Secretary
Date Approved: 8/17/2020
Howard County Ethics Commission Meeting

August 17, 2020; 6:00 PM

Due to the State of Emergency and to adhere to social distancing measures, this meeting will not take place at 3450 Court House Drive, Ellicott City, but will be conducted as a virtual web meeting/conference call where the public is invited to participate. Please see information below.

Join by phone
1-650-479-3207
Access Code 160 425 9813

This is a public meeting unless otherwise indicated. All inquiries should be made to: 410-313-3073. Reasonable accommodations will be provided for people with disabilities upon request three working days prior to the day of the meeting. Materials are available in alternative formats upon request.

Open Meeting Agenda

I. Call Meeting to Order
II. Approve Agenda
III. Approve Minutes from June 17, 2020 Commission Meeting
IV. Discussion Regarding Amending Policies and Procedures
V. Discussion of next meeting
VI. Closed Session-Confidential matters; Pending legal advice/ Adjournment of Open Meeting

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Meeting Notice Date: August 10, 2020
Agenda Notice Date: August 10, 2020
Howard County Ethics Commission  
3430 Courthouse Drive  
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043  

OPEN MEETING MINUTES

A duly advertised public meeting of the Howard County Ethics Commission was held virtually on August 17, 2020 via Webex.

Commission Members Present:  
Charles Fuller, Chair  
Joanne Drielak  
Joseph Markwordt  
Jonathan Kromm  
Jean Xu

Staff Members Present:  
Kristen Bowen Perry, Deputy County Solicitor, Executive Secretary to the Commission

Chairperson Fuller called the open meeting to order at approximately 6:03 p.m. The following items of business were discussed in open session:

1. Agenda: The Commission reviewed and approved the proposed Agenda upon a motion by Drielak seconded by Kromm, passed unanimously.

2. Minutes: The Commission reviewed and approved the Minutes from the Open Meeting on June 17, 2020 and upon a motion by Kromm, seconded by Markwordt, the minutes passed unanimously.


4. The Commission discussed scheduling the next meeting and instructed Attorney Perry to notify the Commission when next meeting is required and scheduling would be considered then.

5. Motion by Xu to adjourn Open Meeting and go into Closed Meeting, which was seconded by Markwordt and passed unanimously. Open Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:16 p.m. As indicated on the Agenda, and in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, the Commission stated that the body would not reconvene in open session after the conclusion of the Closed Meeting.
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