

## **Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission Regular Meeting**

**January 5, 2011**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission convened on January 5, 2011 in Room 4080 of the Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 Fifth Avenue. Commission Chair Robert Mahon called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. Vice-Chair Bill Sherman, Commissioners Tarik Burney, Rich Cohan, Lynne Iglitzin, and Commissioner-designate David Mendoza were present. Commissioners Michele Radosevich and Amit Ranade were absent. Executive Director Wayne Barnett and staff members Anthony Adams, Bob DeWeese, Kate Flack, and Mardie Holden, as well as Assistant City Attorney Jeff Slayton, were also in attendance.

### **1) Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

### **Action Items**

#### **2) Approval of minutes from the December 1, 2010 regular meeting.**

Commissioner Cohan motioned to approve the minutes from the December 1, 2010 regular meeting, and Commissioner Burney seconded. The minutes from the December 1, 2010 meeting were unanimously approved.

### **Discussion Items**

#### **3) Social Media Policy**

The Executive Director recapped the status of the Commission's work on social media to date, and highlighted the issues under the Ethics and Elections Codes.

Commissioner Sherman told the Commission that he felt it was important to keep in mind the big picture, which is that social media permits the public to access government in an entirely new way. He recommended that the Commission be wary of doing anything that would unnecessarily impede the proper use of social media by City officials.

On the topic of policing third-party comments, Commissioner Iglitzin was concerned about obligating elected officials to closely monitor comments, which she feared would lead to reduced use of social media. Other commissioners shared her concern, but said that officials should be permitted to remove comments that were profane or obscene. The Director said that the Commission would need to make sure that any guidance clearly spelled out what comments could be removed and what couldn't, so that officials were not in a position to delete only critical comments and leave up positive ones.

Commissioner Sherman's viewpoint drew the support of his colleagues, who directed the Executive Director to craft guidance for elected officials on what is and is not acceptable under the Ethics and Elections Codes, with the guiding principles being (1) adherence to the City's Ethics and Elections Codes and (2) allowing the use of social media to the greatest extent possible consistent with the Ethics and Elections Codes.

Commissioner Sherman moved that the Executive Director develop such a policy, Commissioner Iglitzin seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

#### **4) Executive Director's report**

The Executive Director updated the Commission on the enforcement matter regarding Teri Woods, whose settlement the Commission rejected at its October meeting. Ms. Woods was terminated by the Human Services Department in December of 2010. She is appealing her

termination. The Executive Director said that he would have a recommendation for the Commission at its February meeting.

**The January 5, 2011 Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission Regular Meeting was adjourned at 5:10 P.M.**