

**APPROVED Minutes Economic Development Reform Panel  
June 4, 2021, 2pm- 3:30 p.m.**

- I. Call to Order: Chair Ann Marie Tracey  
Panelist in attendance: Tim Burke, Alicia Bond-Lewis, Bobbi Dillon, Guy Guckenberger, Dan Schimberg, and Bernadette Watson
  
- II. Approval of 5.27.21 minutes was held until next meeting.
  
- III. Solicitor's Office Report on Outstanding issues/questions (Attached)
  - A. **Whistle Blower Protections:** ORC 4113.52 and Cincinnati Municipal Code 308-79 both provide protections for whistleblowers. Under the Ohio Attorney General whistle blower identity disclosures are subject to public records.
    - i. Law will check on anonymity stipulations Ohio Ethics Commission.
    - ii. [City has internal fraud hotline](#); records are discoverable under state law. For complainants seeking to remain anonymous, their identity does not have to be provided.
  - B. **Disclosures** ORC 3517.13 prohibits the award of unbid Government contracts over >\$500.00 where the contractor made contributions to public officer holder of more than \$1,000 – not able to be award a government contract more than \$500.00.
    - i. This is not applicable to the City, as the City Manager has sole authority to bind the City to a contract not City Council.
    - ii. City Council could enact ordinance restricting acceptance of donations by any persons doing business with the City
  - C. **PACs** Political Action Committees, "PACs": federal provisions, registration w/federal elections commission, Ohio leadership pacts – FSL pacts – local ORC 35-17-017?
    - i. Fed election commission, requires PACs spending money locally to file w/ Ohio secretary of state. Captured correctly? YES
    - ii. Currently there is not a requirement for PACs to disclose with the City as well.
  - D. **EDRP – Code of Conduct for City Council.** The Panel can make a recommendation to City Council to self-regulate, with a category of recommendations to the administration.
  
- IV. **Continuing Discussion: Tasks and Recommendations** Summary of recommendations (Attached). The members present began discussions of various practices and recommendations that had come to the attention of the panel.
  - A. Ethics
    - i. Ethics Commission or Officer/Office. Ethics training and Elections Commission services are already available through the City Solicitors office. Majority of the panel opposed a new ethics office or officer, as there were provisions already in place and to do so would add unnecessary bureaucracy. Any additional scope of services to existing structures requires funding.

- ii. Ethical code of conduct(s)? Majority of the panel supports the creation of a code of conduct for Council, and is interested in a code of conduct or ethics training for the development community, and for those running for Council or mayor. Panel recommends a clarification if a code of conduct is aspiration or comes with criminal penalty.
- iii. Confidential hotline. Internal audit hotline vs a new hotline? Members would like to continue discussing further,
- iv. Mandatory training. Majority of the panel supports pursuing further training while noting support for the City Manager's new council training opportunities.
- v. Panel would like to further discuss how a whistle blower program differs from a hotline

B. Contributions Topics discussed

- i. Transparency of contributions (Panel seeks to explore further)
- ii. Limits on contributions 24months before a vote. (mixed response, not in favor)
- iii. Developer/contract lobbyist
- iv. Prohibit contract awards 24months – take the incentive out of if you want to make contributions, Philly, LA has it as a law

C. Development Topics discussed, to be discussed.

- i. Simplifying/clarify process – keep on the table
- ii. Community approval not taken up by panel as there are many opportunities now for community engagement
- iii. City Council can develop own rules for engagement in development.
- iv. Charter & development
- v. Tax exemptions
- vi. Charter review
- vii. Summarize efforts made to date

D. General topics

- i. Pledge to be submitted by candidates running for office
- ii. Issue 2 – Charter requirements Ethics training within 60days of being elected

V. Planning and Other Business

- i. Additional meetings: June 11, June 25 at 1pm
- ii. Next mtg. agenda. Review topics and email Ann Schooley with any additional Items to consider.

Meeting adjourned 3:20pm

**The Next Meeting is Friday June 11, 2021, at 1pm**