



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

RHODE ISLAND ETHICS COMMISSION

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<https://ethics.ri.gov>

NOTICE OF OPEN MEETING

AGENDA

3rd Meeting

DATE: Tuesday, February 9, 2021

TIME: 9:00 a.m.

TO ATTEND: Pursuant to Governor Gina Raimondo's Executive Order No. 20-46, as extended by No. 21-10, this meeting will not be conducted in-person at the Rhode Island Ethics Commission. Rather, it will be conducted remotely in Zoom webinar format in order to minimize any possible transmission of COVID-19. Any member of the public who wishes to attend and view this video meeting may do so by:

- Clicking this link to join the webinar:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86062467040>
and using Webinar ID: 860 6246 7040
- Or using iPhone one-tap US:
 - +16465588656,, 86062467040#or
 - +13017158592,,86062467040#
- Or by Telephone, Dial (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location) US:
 - +1 646 558 8656 or
 - +1 301 715 8592 or
 - +1 312 626 6799 or
 - +1 669 900 9128 or
 - +1 253 215 8782 or
 - +1 346 248 7799 or
 - 833 548 0276 (Toll Free) or
 - 833 548 0282 (Toll Free) or
 - 877 853 5247 (Toll Free) or
 - 888 788 0099 (Toll Free)
- International numbers available:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kdgg6wMZHf>
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1. Call to Order.
2. Discussion of Remote Meeting Format; Identifying and Troubleshooting any Remote Meeting Issues.
3. Motion to approve minutes of Open Session held on January 26, 2021.
4. Director's Report: Status report and updates regarding:
 - a.) Discussion of impact of COVID-19 crisis on Ethics Commission operations and staffing;
 - b.) Complaints and investigations pending;
 - c.) Advisory opinions pending;
 - d.) Access to Public Records Act requests since last meeting;
 - e.) Financial Disclosure, update on 2019 and 2020 filing years.
5. Advisory Opinions (petitioners may participate remotely):
 - a.) Vahid Ownjazayeri, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank, requests an advisory opinion regarding whether the Code of Ethics restricts his participation in various Board matters, given that his son is employed by the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank.
 - b.) Mary Meagher, a member of the State Housing Appeals Board, requests an advisory opinion regarding whether she is prohibited by the Code of Ethics from participating in a matter currently before the State Housing Appeals Board in which the appellant is represented by legal counsel who once provided legal services to the Petitioner.
 - c.) William E. McIntosh, a former member of the Richmond Planning Board, requests an advisory opinion regarding whether he qualifies for a hardship exception to the Code of Ethics' prohibition against appearing before one's own board within a period of one year following his official severance from said board, for purposes of appearing before the Planning Board, whether individually or through legal counsel, relative to applications involving the development of two pieces of property, both of which were purchased by the Petitioner prior to his appointment to the Planning Board.
 - d.) Cody W. Clarkin, a member of the Charlestown Town Council, requests an advisory opinion regarding: (1) whether he may serve as the Town Council's liaison to the Parks and Recreation Commission while his father is employed by the Parks and Recreation Department as a seasonal employee and what limitations, if any, the Code of Ethics places upon the Petitioner in carrying out his public duties; and (2) whether he may participate in the Town Council's vote

on the Town's budget, which includes funds for the Parks and Recreation Department.

- e.) Peter Brent Regan, Esq., the Town Solicitor for the Town of Middletown, requests an advisory opinion regarding whether the Code of Ethics prohibits him from participation in the Middletown Town Council discussions regarding the proposed revision of an ordinance relative to Short-Term Residential Leases, given that the Petitioner and his spouse own property regulated by said ordinance.
 - f.) John Edwards, a member of the Tiverton Budget Committee, requests an advisory opinion regarding what restrictions, if any, the Code of Ethics places upon him in carrying out his Budget Committee duties, specifically relative to the Budget Committee's discussions and voting on the Tiverton School Department's Budget, given that his spouse is an employee of said School Department.
- 6. Review of Exemption for Navindra Seeram, Ph.D., pursuant to the R.I. Public/Private Partnership Act, R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-59-26.
 - 7. New Business proposed for future Commission agendas and general comments from the Commission.
 - 8. Motion to go into Executive Session, to wit:
 - a.) Motion to approve minutes of Executive Session held on January 26, 2021, pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-46-5(a)(2) & (4).
 - b.) Motion to return to Open Session.

NOTE ON REPORTING OUT OF ACTIONS TAKEN IN EXECUTIVE SESSION: *After the Commission votes to go into Executive Session, the Open Session Zoom meeting will temporarily close and viewers will not be able to join the Executive Session which is being held in a separate Zoom meeting. At the conclusion of the Executive Session, which has no set duration, the Commission will reconvene in the Open Session meeting solely for the purpose of reporting out any actions taken in Executive Session and sealing the executive session minutes. You may rejoin the Open Session by following the same instructions on Page 1 of this agenda that you followed to join the original Open Session meeting. If you attempt to rejoin the Open Session Zoom meeting while the Executive Session portion is occurring, you will see a message that the meeting host is in another meeting. Eventually, once the Executive Session meeting concludes, the host will reconvene the Open Session meeting and you will be able to view the Commission Chair report out any actions taken in*

Executive Session. Alternatively, it may be more convenient for you to view a written report of any actions taken in Executive Session by visiting our website (<https://ethics.ri.gov/>) later in the day.

9. Report on actions taken in Executive Session.
10. Motion to adjourn.

ANYONE WISHING TO ATTEND THIS MEETING WHO MAY HAVE SPECIAL NEEDS FOR ACCESS OR SERVICES SUCH AS A SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER, PLEASE CONTACT THE COMMISSION BY TELEPHONE AT 222-3790, 48 HOURS IN ADVANCE OF THE SCHEDULED MEETING. THE COMMISSION ALSO MAY BE CONTACTED THROUGH RHODE ISLAND RELAY, A TELECOMMUNICATIONS RELAY SERVICE, AT 1-800-RI5-5555.

Posted on February 4, 2021