



MONTGOMERY COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSION

Public Meeting of November 15, 2012

Minutes

IN ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners:	Nina Weisbroth, Chair Stuart Rick, Vice Chair Kenita Barrow Rachel Brown Mark L. Greenblatt
Staff Member:	Robert Cobb, Chief Counsel
Dept. of Tech. Services Rep.:	Christopher Daniel
Member of Public:	Denise Solomon

Item 1. The Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Item 2. Christopher Daniel of the Department of Technology Services demonstrated the online Lobby Registration and Reporting System. The Commission consensus was that the system would substantially advance the program objectives, and the Commission greatly appreciated the work of DTS on the project. There were some observations and recommendations made for the project going forward. As the current program does not have online payment and signature capability resulting in the requirement of manual paper and pen execution, there was a general consensus that electronic execution of these functions would be desirable in the future. Chris indicated that echeck could be instituted, but that implementation will involve the dedication of resources and that those resources are not available at the current time. He expressed that this could be done later in calendar year 2013. As for e-signature, this is complicated by the necessity for more than one signature on the form. This will be given some additional thought as to whether there is a technical fix that makes sense. In addition, it may be that there is a suitable legislative fix to the logistical challenge associated with the requirement for multiple signatures.

Montgomery County Ethics Commission

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The Commission also indicated that it would be very helpful if the system could retain information to facilitate subsequent year filings. Mr. Daniel indicated that this feature could be built into the system for the CY2014 filing year (e.g. the first year the feature would be needed.) There was discussion about the utility of the edit feature, and Mr. Daniel suggested that the feature would be useful especially where the EC staff can contact a registrant to suggest correction of minor deficiencies so that the EC can then approve the preregistration.

Item 3. The Commission addressed the draft of an advisory opinion concerning charging each lobbyist a fee for each registration filed, including other lobbyists identified on a lobbying registration. A suggestion was made to include a reference to the authority to charge a fee at the beginning of the opinion. Discussion was held about the opinion and then a motion was made to approve the issuance of the opinion with an edit to be made to address the reference to authority. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted unanimously to issue the opinion.

Item 4. The minutes from the 9/11/12 meeting which had been held over from the 10/17/12 meeting were approved with a minor edit. The minutes from the 10/17/12 meeting were approved as written.

The meeting Adjourned at 8:25.

Respectfully Submitted,



Robert W. Cobb
Chief Counsel