

ST. MARY'S COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSION

MINUTES OF JUNE 21, 2004

St. Mary's County Governmental Center, Rm. 14

Members Present: M. Martha Neal, Ph.D., Chair
George Baroniak, Member
Zora Siemasko, Member
Shirley Baldwin, Executive Secretary
John Norris, III, County Attorney

Members Absent: David Deaderick, Vice Chair
Viola Gardner, Member

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Neal at 2:00 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

At the next meeting to be held July 12, there will be an election of officers for Chair and Vice Chair.

REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES:

Minutes of June 7, 2004. The motion was made by Ms. Siemasko and seconded by Mr. Baroniak to approve the minutes as written. The motion carried.

Executive Session Minutes for June 7, 2004: Mr. Baroniak made the motion to accept the Executive Session Minutes for June 7, 2004, as written. This was seconded by Ms. Siemasko. Motion carried.

REVISIONS TO THE ETHICS ORDINANCE

The motion was made by Ms. Siemasko to go out of order of the agenda in order to allow Mr. Norris to speak to the Commission. This was seconded by Mr. Baroniak and the motion carried.

With regard to revisions to the Ethics Ordinance Mr. Norris said he would like to hear from Commission members as to what their objectives are. Dr. Neal pointed out that several things came to light recently when going through an investigation; those being, in the penalty phase, there are no teeth in the Ordinance; and there are conflicts between the Open Meetings Act and the Ordinance. An ongoing list of items from previous meetings is available and this will be forwarded to Mr. Norris. Mr. Norris explained that the Open Meetings Act can only be revised in Annapolis but we could prepare something for the County Commissioners to submit to Annapolis in their Legislative Package. Because of the election of officers at the July 12 meeting, it was felt we should wait until the July 19 meeting to fully discuss this. At the July 12 meeting, Mr. Norris will provide a marked-up copy of the Ordinance and we will provide the list of items that the Ethics Commission has discussed in the past.

The motion was made by Ms. Siemasko that the Ethics Commission table this discussion today and resume the discussion on July 19. Motion seconded by Mr. Baroniak and the motion carried.

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENTS

Status of 2003 Outstanding There are still seven members who have not filed. Dr. Neal updated the Commission on progress she has made in making phone calls and the responses received. Additional phone calls will be made prior to the next meeting. A letter was sent to one individual who sent in his 2002 Federal Financial Disclosure Statement; however, no response has been received.

Review Session: Two Financial Disclosure Statements were reviewed and two were approved.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Calendar Year 2003 Annual Report The draft annual report was discussed and some amendments made. It will be available for final signature on July 12, 2004.

Membership: Dr. Neal reported her conversation with Mr. Forrest telling him because of personal family matters, she will be unable to serve as a member again when her term is up. The alternate previously appointed is not a viable alternate and she told Mr. Forrest she would serve as an alternate and the Ethics Commission needs to have a member appointed. Mr. Forrest assured her that he would make this a priority.

NEW BUSINESS

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Baroniak made the motion to adjourn at 2:33 p.m., seconded by Ms Siemasko. Motion carried.