

CITY OF STAMFORD

Board of Ethics
Stamford Government Center
March 13, 2017

Present

Cheryl Bader, chair

Allan Lang, member

Monica Smyth, member

The meeting was called to order by Chair Bader at 7:10 p.m. in the Safety Training Room.

1. Tabled approval of minutes from November 14, 2016. Administrative Assistant to locate minutes from Adam Vandervoort.
2. Jonathon Jacobson's March 10, 2017 Request for An Advisory Opinion letter was read into the record. He serves on the Board of Representatives and also practices law with the Law Offices of David W. Rubin. Mr. Jacobson answered questions about the potential Writ of Mandamus action he might litigate in Stamford Superior Court where the City of Stamford might be named as a Defendant in a zoning matter. Mr. Jacobson made clear that he did not anticipate that this legal matter would ever come before the Board of Representatives on which he serves. The matter might come before the Zoning Board, but the Zoning Board and Board of Representatives have no overlap. The matter would be most likely litigated primarily in state court. The Board praised Mr. Jacobson on his initiative in soliciting this advisory opinion.
3. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously stated: An officer of the Board of Representatives representing a client in his law practice in state court to compel the City of Stamford Zoning Board to issue a permit does not violate the Stamford Code of Ethics as long as an officer does not use his position on the Board of Representatives to give his client unfair advantage. Further, if his law firm matter ever came before the Board of Representatives, the officer would be required to recuse himself. The Board will be happy to consider any additional requests for ethics advice that may arise based upon additional facts as the referenced matter proceeds to litigation. The written Advisory Opinion will be ruled on at the next meeting.
4. Discussion. There was additional discussion on the question of ethics training within city government and the Board's role in that training. The Board reviewed several power point trainings currently used. We need additional information about these trainings which our administrative assistant will secure. As part of our Annual Report we will prepare a recommendation about type of training, frequency, who should conduct it, etc. Suggestions and comments about ethics training should be sent as soon as possible to our administrative assistant, Kristopher Bottoni. Kris will prepare a summary of these comments for discussion at the May 8 meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business, upon motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Monica Smyth, Acting Secretary