

CAMBRIDGE ETHICS COMMISSION

ADVISORY OPINION OPINION 01-2015

Having met on June 17, 2015 and considered the following request for an advisory opinion on two separate issues:

“On December 15, 2014 The City of Cambridge commissioners voted to change the way the City of Cambridge operates. Charter Resolutions 2014-01, 2014-02, 2014-03 and City Manager Transition Ordinance defines the way the City of Cambridge will operate, transition and begin to place the city Manager position into effect. It is with great concern that Mayor, Victoria Jackson-Stanley in her official capacity as Mayor failed to follow the changes in a legal and timely manner as spelled out in the law. It is also clear by the reading of the above mentioned documents how and when the city of Cambridge would change to a City Manager form of government.

Secondly, the City of Cambridge Mayor and Commissioners did not follow the law and continues to operated [sic] without compliance to the law.

The question to the Ethics Commissions is this, while not following the law and engaging in business without a City Manager, who’s responsibilities are clearly defined, what liability, sanctions and/or criminal charges would Mayor Victoria Jackson-Stanley possibly face. [sic] Does the City of Cambridge need to void any and all contracts and halt financial business while it was clearly not operating under the law. [sic]

The Matter before City Council regarding the PILOT RAD?HUD contracts is most disturbing as well as Mayor Victoria Jackson-Stanley engaged in the business negotiations of the Housing Authority knowing full well that her husband’s uncle, Carlton Stanley was the President of the Housing Authority Board. The payment of at least one hundred thousand dollars was owed to the City of Cambridge from prior years (PILOT) and during this heated discussion it became obvisous [sic] that most of the City Commissions did not know anything about the program or the outstanding debt to the city. Vitcoria [sic] Jackson-Stanley again did not remover herself from the discussion but engaged in the business before the public that clearly was related to her family/relatives. What if any, ethical opinions does the board render regarding the above observations and facts.[sic]”

As to the first issue, concerning the City's alleged unlawful acts, the Commission has reviewed the entire Code of Ethics to be able to render an opinion. The Commission by unanimous vote hereby states the following as the opinion of the commission:

We do not find any ethical violation in the facts as alleged in the complaint.

As to the second issue concerning the Mayor's familial relationship with the President of the Housing Authority Board, the members of the Commission are of the opinion that this request deals with an interpretation of the City Ethics Code Section 4 "Conflicts of Interests", subsection (c), which defines "immediate family". It reads as follows:

"In all sections of this ordinance, 'immediate family' means a spouse and dependent children and 'qualified relative' means a spouse, parent, child, a sibling or a spouse of a sibling of a person subject to this ordinance."

The Cambridge Ethics Commission by unanimous vote hereby states the following as the opinion of the commission:

The Mayor's husband's uncle is not "immediate family" or a "qualified relative" as defined by the City's Ethics Ordinance, therefore we find no ethical violation in the alleged set of facts.

The commission requests the Clerk of the City of Cambridge to place this opinion on the website of the City of Cambridge and make copies available to the public when requested.

Charles McFadden, Chair
On behalf of the Commission

Date: June 19, 2015