

RESOLUTION NO. 2707

TRANSPARENCY RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the citizens and officials of the City of Alexandria have long maintained the highest levels of governmental transparency and ethics; and

WHEREAS, best practices in municipal governance increasingly include programs for ethics education and mechanisms to provide advice for elected and appointed officials; and

WHEREAS, the employees of the City of Alexandria have shown leadership in adopting an ethics initiative including a code of ethics; and

WHEREAS, City Council desires to affirm and establish regional and national leadership in maintaining the highest of standards for elected and appointed officials;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF ALEXANDRIA

1. That there be and hereby is established an ad hoc study group to act at the direction of City Council and to be known as the “Ad Hoc Code of Conduct Review Committee.”
 - a. The Committee shall consist of nine members, seven of which shall be designated individually by members of the City Council. The remaining two members will be residents of the City appointed by the City Manager and shall have special experiences and expertise in improving government transparency, accountability and ethics. The Mayor’s designee shall act as the convener. This composition shall include a variety of perspectives, including those in business, law, policy and homeowners.
 - b. That the following persons shall be ineligible to serve as a member of the Committee: an officer of a political party; an elected official or current member of the Planning Commission, Board of Architectural Review, or Board of Zoning Appeals; a contractor with the City of Alexandria; or a person or private entity with a pending application, contract proposal or procurement bid for official action by the City of Alexandria; anyone holding any known direct ownership or voting interest in such an application; or an employee of the City of Alexandria;
 - c. That the Committee shall present to City Council a draft “Alexandria City Council Code of Conduct” and “Ethics Pledge” for the Mayor, City Council, and appointed officials of the City of Alexandria at the April 12, 2016 Legislative Meeting;
 - d. The Committee shall review the reports of the Virginia Commission on Integrity and Public Confidence in State Government to determine whether and to what extent the findings and recommendations thereof might be incorporated in Alexandria’s law and city government practice;
 - e. Staff support for the Committee shall be provided by the City Manager’s Office and City Attorney’s Office as appropriate;
 - f. This Committee will be re-created shortly after the installation of each new Council to review and recommend revisions to the approved Code of Conduct;
2. The City Manager is requested to initiate a text amendment to amend 11-406(a) of the City’s Zoning Code to lower the ownership threshold from ten percent to three percent. This will provide for the most stringent reporting threshold in the region.
3. Section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia provides the specific legal rationale that the City Council must cite to go into executive session. Shortly after the conclusion of each fiscal year, the City Clerk is requested to publish on the City’s website a report of all executive session activity in the previous fiscal year. This report shall detail the number of executive sessions, the legal rationale for each executive session, and the Council votes to initiate and certify each executive session. This report shall also be docketed each year for Council review at the first legislative meeting in September.
4. The City shall request authority from the General Assembly to enact further limits or an outright ban on the receipt of gifts by members of the City Council.

5. The City shall support and initiate efforts by the General Assembly to give The Virginia Conflict of Interest & Ethics Advisory Council the authority and responsibility to regularly audit the Statements of Economic Interests of local elected officials.

Adopted: January 30, 2016.

ALLISON SILBERBERG MAYOR

ATTEST:

Jacqueline M. Henderson, MMC City Clerk