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Long Beach Ethics Commission - Notes from 12/28/2020 and 1/06/2021 telephone meetings of “Values” subcommittee – Chair Susan Wise & Commissioner Luke Fiedler

- The subcommittee agrees on a principal value to propose to full Commission: promoting and developing **public confidence** in our City government
- The subcommittee discussed the following principles that will allow the Commission to promote and develop that public confidence. These principles will apply to the operations and work of this Commission and what the Commission will advocate for in the operation and work of our entire City government:
  - Commitment/Loyalty to public good above all
  - Impartiality
  - Independence
  - Fairness
    - Diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility
    - Due process for those issuing complaints and those accused of wrongdoing
  - Honesty, Truth
  - Transparency
    - Making sure Commission serves the public throughout its dealings; to promote public confidence in City government, the subcommittee discussed the importance of first building and promoting public confidence in the Commission’s own work
      - e.g.: This may include examining how the Ethics Commission publicizes topics on meeting agendas, summarizes topics discussed during meetings, reports to the public, and/or provides and allows for meaningful public comment on specific agenda items or prior to making formal Commission votes
- In light of these values and principles, the subcommittee considered the desired work of the Commission falling into several divisions:
  - Education
  - Accountability
    - The subcommittee discussed the need, as demonstrated in the Harvey Rose audit, for the Commission to address the unwillingness/discomfort/confusion of City Staff to ask about or report possible ethical infractions. How could the Commission encourage and support questions and reporting from staff about questionable conduct they observe?

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- How can the Commission better report its own work to the public?
- The subcommittee discussed whether and to what extent the Commission loses credibility with the public if it cannot commence audits and investigations, in addition to issuing penalties and making recommendations to law enforcement or the City Council
- Engagement
  - Measurements of this could include number of persons voting, number of candidates, attendance at public hearings, use of City website, number of applications for commissions
- Compliance
  - Compiling and synthesizing required disclosures for the public to engage with on Commission website
    - Expanding the ways in which the Commission can act as a recipient, auditor, and distributor of financial disclosure statements filed by political candidates, committees, campaign and permit consultants, developers, lobbyists, and designated City employees and officers
    - As an example, the subcommittee discussed a service provided by the San Francisco Ethics Commission in which that commission compiled publicly accessible information to show the major funders of political committees established to support or oppose City ballot measures, and assembled that information to mimic a “nutrition facts” label commonly seen on food items:  
<https://sfethics.org/disclosures/campaign-finance-disclosure/campaign-finance-disclosure-november-3-2015-election-dashboards/san-francisco-democracy-facts-label-november-4-2014-election>
  - Expanding the ways in which the Commission can confidentially investigate complaints of ethics violations from both the public and from City employees
    - The subcommittee discussed how other ethics commissions in California have posted detailed procedures outlining its enforcement responsibilities, and whether this Commission can or should consider requesting that the City Council institute similar authority for this Commission
  - Increasing the required disclosures as a way to foster compliance