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PRESS RELEASE

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TALLAHASSEE—February 10, 2021—Meeting in Tallahassee on February 5th in closed session, the Florida Commission on Ethics took action on 17 matters, Chair JoAnn Leznoff announced today. A finding of probable cause is not a determination a violation has occurred. Such a determination is made only after a full evidentiary hearing on the allegations.

The Commission found probable cause to believe Broward County Housing Authority Interim General Counsel **DAVID N. TOLCES** misused his position to benefit his law firm by addressing the Broward County Housing Authority, during a cone of silence, regarding his law firm's application to provide legal services.

In a complaint against filed against **MOLLY JEAN HANNIGAN**, a write-in Candidate for the Lee County Commission, the Commission rejected the recommendation of its Advocate and found no probable cause to believe she failed to

adequately disclose investment products held in investment portfolios on her 2019 Form 6 when she qualified to run for office.

The Commission found no probable cause on two allegations regarding Daytona Beach City Commissioner **CARL W. LENTZ, IV**: that he misused his public position to threaten to shut down a business owner's club if he did not receive sexual favors and that he involved the Police Chief by calling his private line. No probable cause also was found on an allegation he disclosed information relating to a renewable energy project, during the club interaction, that was not available to the general public but gained through his public position for his and/or another's personal gain or benefit.

No probable cause was found to believe City of Hollywood Commissioner **CARYL SHUHAM** misused her position by attempting to circumvent City procedures to revoke a City permit for a boat dock as a favor to a citizen.

Likewise, the Commission dismissed a complaint, with a finding of no probable cause, alleging City of Hollywood City Attorney **DOUGLAS GONZALES** misused his position to provide false information in an effort to oppose a licensing application for a dock.

The Commission found no probable cause to believe City of North Miami Councilmember **MARY C. ESTIME-IRVIN** failed to report the free use of property as a gift.

The Commission found no probable cause on an allegation regarding Town of Redington Shores Commissioner **JEFF NEAL** misusing his official position in interactions with the Deputy Town Clerk, in an attempt to coerce her into issuing incomplete permits in the permitting application process.

In a complaint against filed against **CRISTOV DOSEV**, a Candidate for the Florida House of Representatives, the Commission found no probable cause to believe he failed to accurately list assets on his 2019 Form 6 filed when he qualified to run for office.

No probable cause was found to believe **JERRY LYNN PRINCE**, a Candidate for the Sumter County Commission, filed an inaccurate 2019 Form 6 when he qualified to run for office.

The Commission reviewed 8 complaints for legal sufficiency. These reviews are limited to questions of jurisdiction and determinations as to whether the contents of the complaint are adequate to allege a violation of the Code of Ethics or other laws within the Commission's jurisdiction. As no factual investigation precedes the reviews, the Commission's conclusions do not reflect on the accuracy of the allegations made in these complaints. The Commission dismissed the following complaints for lack of legal sufficiency: **J. ADAM ALBRITTON**, Special Magistrate for Gulf County; **NANDYRKA KING ALBERT**, City Council Member, City of Midway; **BARBIE HIGGINBOTHAM**, Clerk of Courts for Dixie County; **JEANNE BASS**, Planning and Zoning Board for Madison County; **DAVID ANDREW ARONBERG**, Palm Beach County State Attorney; **JORGE CASTILLO**, Supervisor, Cory Lakes Community Development District; **AMY LOCKHART**, County Commissioner for Seminole County; **GREG TONY**, Sheriff for Broward County.

PUBLIC SESSION

During its public session meeting, the Commission adopted a settlement agreement in a complaint filed against Heritage Landing Community Development

District Board member **THOMAS LANCE CLYCE**. The settlement indicates Mr. Clyce violated Florida's Ethics Code by filing an inaccurate 2017 Form 1 Statement of Financial Interests. The Commission recommended a civil penalty of \$500, and public censure and reprimand, to the Governor for imposition.

A formal opinion adopted by the Commission provides guidance to a police officer regarding his acceptance of an offer from the landlord of an apartment complex, exchanging a reduction in rent for part-time, off-duty work as a courtesy officer. The opinion explored prohibitions related to the solicitation and acceptance of gifts, unauthorized compensation, and the conflicting employment statute, finding that the arrangement would not violate those standards of conduct. The opinion also finds the acceptance of the rent reduction does not indicate the wrongful intent required for a violation of the misuse of public position statute or the constitutional amendment prohibiting an abuse of office where an official receives a disproportionate benefit.

The Florida Commission on Ethics is an independent nine-member commission formed in 1974 to review complaints filed under the statutory Code of Ethics and to answer questions from public officials about potential conflicts of interest through its issuance of advisory opinions.

If the Ethics Commission believes a violation of the law may have occurred, it may decide to hold a public hearing. If it concludes a violation has been committed, it may recommend civil penalties including removal from office or employment and fines up to \$10,000 per violation.