



CITY OF LAREDO ETHICS COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT

**FEBRUARY 1, 2018 THROUGH
JANUARY 31, 2019**

I. Introduction

On September 4, 2012, City Council passed Ordinance 2012-O-126 which adopted a new Code of Ethics establishing standards of conduct for all city officials, employees, board members and persons doing business with the City of Laredo. The Ethics Commission is charged with reviewing all alleged violations of its Ethics Code and City Charter and making findings in accordance with the laws under its jurisdiction. This Ethics Commission is pleased to present this Annual Report to the Mayor and City Council pursuant to the requirements set out in §8.11 of the Code.

II. Ethics Commission Members

The Ethics Commission consists of nine members each of which is nominated by the Mayor or a City Council Member. Pursuant to §12.02 of the City Charter, the term of the commission member shall be for the term of the officeholder who made the nomination. The Ethics Commissioners and their respective terms of service are as follows:

COMMISSIONER	APPOINTED BY	TERM EXPIRES
Sigfredo Perez III <i>Mayor</i>	<i>Mayor</i> <i>Pete Saenz</i>	March 2020
Adriana Alexander <i>District I</i>	<i>Council Member</i> <i>Rudy Gonzalez</i>	October 2019
Hector Lee Patiño <i>District II</i>	<i>Council Member</i> <i>Vidal Rodriguez</i>	August 2020
Mirta Piña <i>District III</i>	<i>Council Member</i> <i>Alex Perez</i>	February 2019
Sabas Zapata, III <i>District IV</i>	<i>Council Member</i> <i>Albert Torres</i>	January 2019
Mark C. Pease <i>District V</i>	<i>Council Member</i> <i>Nelly Vielma</i>	July 2020
Manuel J. Sanchez, Jr. <i>District VI</i>	<i>Council Member</i> <i>Charlie San Miguel</i>	February 2020
Henry Hereford <i>District VII</i>	<i>Council Member</i> <i>George Altgelt</i>	July 2020
Elsa Galvan <i>District VIII</i>	<i>Council Member</i> <i>Robert Balli</i>	February 2019

III. Support Staff

City staff members assist the Ethics Commission. They prepare agendas, meeting minutes, and provide relevant information and advice during deliberations. Staff currently assigned to work with the Ethics Commission includes:

- ❖ Kristina Laurel Hale, City Attorney;
- ❖ Lisa M. Paul, Assistant City Attorney (Ethics Compliance Officer);
- ❖ Ryan Henry, (Ethics Compliance Officer – outside counsel); and
- ❖ Cynthia L. Ruiz, Paralegal (Ethics Staff Liaison)

IV. Activities

The Commission met a total of six (6) times in the year 2018 to review alleged violations of the code or for other purposes directly related to its responsibilities. A summary of these activities are as follows:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Discussion</u>	<u>Decision or Action</u>
02/14/18	Discussion with possible action of consider proposed amendments to the Code of Ethics to provide an exception to the prohibition of Section 2.09 (a) ("Prohibited Interests in Contracts") to allow for certain economic development agreements, such as Chapter 380 Agreements, Tax Abatement Agreements, and Neighborhood Empowerment Zone Agreements, with certain individuals and/or entities listed in Sections 2.09(c)(2)-(4), and any other matters incident thereto.	Motion passed to not accept proposed amendments to the Code of Ethics.
03/14/18	No meeting.	No meeting.
04/11/18	Discussion with possible action by the Commission to recommend changes to the text or administration of the Laredo Code of Ethics, and any other matters incident thereto. Cancelled due to lack of quorum.	Cancelled due to lack of quorum.
05/09/18	Discussion with possible action by the Commission to recommend changes to the text or administration of the Laredo Code of Ethics, and any other matters incident thereto; and Discussion with possible action on the Ethics Report submitted by outside independent counsel acting as the Ethics Compliance Officer pursuant to Section 2.11 of the Code related to the coordinated inspection that occurred on March 29, 2018 at the business owned by Victor Gomez located at 1420 Clark Boulevard.	Commission moved that the City Attorney's Office research 8.03, Section 5 "Referral". Commission passed to suspend the hearing for V (B) until formal Complaint is filed and for the parties to have reasonable time to respond.
06/13/18	No meeting.	No meeting.
07/11/18	Discussion with possible action by the Commission on ethics complaint filed by Victor Gomez against Councilmember Alex Perez, Jr. (District III). Cancelled due to lack of quorum.	Cancelled due to lack of quorum.

08/22/18	<p>Selection of Vice Chair with possible action; and</p> <p>Discussion with possible action by the Commission on ethics complaint filed by Victor Gomez against Councilmember Alex Perez, Jr. (District III).</p>	<p>Mark C. Pease elected as Vice Chair.</p> <p>Commission dismissed complaint against Alex Perez for lack of submission of evidence.</p>
09/12/18	<p>Pursuant to the ordinance 2016-O-12, Ethics Compliance Officer suspended the September hearing for the parties to have reasonable time to respond.</p> <p>Cancelled due to lack of quorum.</p>	<p>Cancelled due to lack of quorum.</p>
10/10/18	<p>Preliminary hearing on ethics complaint filed Consuelito Martinez on September 5, 2018 against various public officials; and</p> <p>Evidentiary hearing on ethics complaint filed by Victor Gomez on May 17, 2018 which includes allegations against Ramon Chavez (Executive Director of Public Services).</p>	<p>Complaint dismissed against City Officials; Complaint fails to meet qualifications; it alleges matters that are not within this commission's court.</p> <p>Commission ordered Mr. Chavez to attend training by the City Attorney's Office and upon completion of this training the complaint may be dismissed. <u>Mr. Ramon Chavez completed the Code Enforcement training on October 12, 2008.</u></p>
11/14/18	<p>Discussion with possible action on the presentment of an Ethics Report pursuant to Section 2.11 in response to the written allegation of a possible Ethics violation by a City Official from the attorney for Abaft, L.L.C.</p>	<p>Commission moved to proceed with ethics violation on Mr. Jorge Dominguez.</p>
12/12/18	<p>Discussion with possible action by the Commission on ethics allegation filed by attorney for Abaft, LLC against Jorge Dominguez, District 1 Planning and Zoning Commissioner; and</p> <p>Discussion with possible action on the presentment of an Ethics Report pursuant to 2.11 in response to written allegation of an Ethics Code allegation by a City employee.</p>	<p>Complaint dismissed upon completion of ethics training by Mr. Jorge Dominguez. <u>On December 28, 2018, Mr. Jorge Dominguez sent notice of completion of Ethics training.</u></p> <p>Complaint dismissed against employee, Jose H. Gonzalez; issue addressed by employee's supervisor.</p>

V. Conclusion

The City of Laredo Code of Ethics promotes integrity in public service for the benefit of all citizens.