



BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

Committee on Government Operations
Ricardo Arroyo, Chair

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REPORT OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

March 15, 2023

Dear Councilors:

Docket #0319, notice from the Mayor of the appointment of Vivian Leonard as a member of the Municipal Lobbying Compliance Commission; Docket #0320, notice from the Mayor of the appointment of Sammy Nabulsi as a member of the Municipal Lobbying Compliance Commission; and, Docket #0321, notice from the Mayor of the appointment of Vivien Li as a member of the Municipal Lobbying Compliance Commission, were referred to the Committee on January 25, 2023, and sponsored by Mayor Michelle Wu. The Committee held a hearing on March 9, 2023.

Summary of Legislation As Filed:

Dockets #0319, #0320 and #0321 are Mayor Michelle Wu's appointments to the Municipal Lobbying Compliance Commission. These appointments will serve coterminous with the Mayor.

Information Gathered at the March 9, 2023 Hearing:

The Chair provided opening remarks explaining that the Mayor has the authority pursuant to City of Boston Code, Ordinances, Chapter 2 Section 15 to appoint members of the Municipal Lobbying Compliance Commission (Commission). The Mayor appoints the three commissioners and they serve coterminous with the Mayor. The Mayor fills any vacancies for the unexpired term. The Commission may create regulations for the administration and implementation of the lobbying ordinance. The Commission has the authority to investigate and make findings related to compliance with the lobbying ordinance. The Chair stated that this hearing is an opportunity for the Committee to hear from the Mayor's appointees.

The appointees described their experience, qualifications, and willingness to serve on the Commission. Ms. Leonard stated that she is a lifelong resident of Boston. Ms. Leonard described her educational and work experience. Ms. Leonard stated that the lobbying ordinance is crucial to ensure transparency and accountability in government and that she is honored to serve on the Commission.

Mr. Nabulsi and Ms. Li are reappointments to the Commission and they also expressed their willingness to remain on the Commission. Mr. Nabulsi stated that he is an attorney and partner in a Boston law firm that specializes in environmental, land use, zoning, and real estate matters. Attorney Nabulsi explained that he currently serves as Chairperson of the Commission and that the Commission served an important role in the implementation of the original lobbying

ordinance. Attorney Nabulsi highlighted the accomplishments of the Commission which included the promulgation of regulations that clarified lobbying activities and established a process for violations. The Commission also created a process for public access to information and an online reporting process working with the Clerk's Office and the Department of Innovation and Technology. The Commission also focused on the educational aspect of the ordinance and the City's Office of Human Resources will include compliance with the lobbying law training with the current compliance training. Attorney Nabulsi expressed his willingness to serve on the Commission and emphasized the importance of the Commission's role in carrying out the spirit of the lobbying ordinance.

Ms. Li stated that she has lived for 35 years in the Back Bay. Ms. Li referred to her experience working with the Boston Harbor Association. Ms. Li stated that as a non-attorney on the Commission that she brings a focus of a public advocacy and transparency lens looking at how the public can best access information. Ms. Li explained that as a current Commissioner she worked on the implementation of the regulations and technology upgrades which made the registration and filing process easier. Ms. Li stated that now the compliance is at 99.9% compared to the initial process that was very burdensome for the Clerk's Office. Ms. Li explained that the online filing and reporting system has made the process easier for all parties. Ms. Li expressed her willingness to serve on the Commission.

Councilors thanked the appointees for their willingness to serve and expressed their support for all of the appointees. Councilors discussed the importance of institutional continuity, public advocacy, and information sharing expertise of the Commission. Councilors asked the Commission if they would be willing to brief the Councilors about the requirements of the ordinance and regulations. The Committee discussed that having briefings by the Commission will be helpful for Councilors and staff. Councilors inquired if anything needed to be tweaked in the ordinance, if the portal issues have been resolved, the quarterly reporting requirements, and the difference between advocacy and lobbying activity that requires registration.

Rationale and Recommended Action:

The City Council is required to have a hearing on the Mayor's appointees to the Commission under the express terms of the *Lobbyist Registration and Regulation Ordinance, See CBC 2-15.4*. The Committee held the public hearing and heard from all of the appointees. The Committee also discussed the purpose and goals of the Commission. The Committee supports the Mayor's appointments and looks forward to the work of the Commission in implementing the lobbying law and providing accessibility and transparency to the public. Having held the public hearing, I will be recommending that these dockets be placed on file so that the appointees may be sworn in and continue the important work of the Commission.

By the Chair of the Committee on Government Operations, to which the following was referred:

Docket #0319, notice from the Mayor of the appointment of Vivian Leonard as a member of the Municipal Lobbying Compliance Commission; Docket #0320, notice from the Mayor of the appointment of Sammy Nabulsi as a member of the Municipal Lobbying Compliance Commission; and, Docket #0321, notice from the Mayor of the appointment of Vivien Li as a member of the Municipal Lobbying Compliance Commission,

submits a report recommending that these dockets **be placed on file**.

For the Chair:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ra" with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ricardo Arroyo, Chair
Committee on Government Operations