



Ethical Standards

12/19/2006

Preamble

The residents and businesses of Altadena are entitled to fair, ethical and accountable local representation. Such representation requires that members:

- Comply with all statutory laws, and the rules and bylaws of the Altadena Town Council.
- Be independent, impartial and fair in their judgment and actions.
- Use their public office for the public good, not for personal gain.
- Conduct themselves in a manner that brings credit to the Council and to Altadena
- Conduct their deliberations and processes openly in an atmosphere of respect and civility.

1.0 Scope

1.1 These standards shall apply to all members of the Town Council and members of all Committees established by the Town Council.

1.2 A member must observe the Altadena Town Council Ethical Standards whenever he/she:

- a. Conducts the business of the Council or Committee
- b. Acts as a representative of the Council or Committee
- c. Identifies himself/herself as, or is referenced as, a member of the Council or Committee.

2.0 Implementation

2.1 All members before entering office, and all potential candidates for a seat on Town Council before qualifying as a candidate, shall sign a statement affirming they have read, understand and agree to abide by the Altadena Town Council Code of Ethics.

2.2 A member who becomes aware of any conduct by another member which he or she reasonably believes involves a failure to comply with these Ethical Standard must submit a written statement describing the allegations to the executive committee as soon as it is practicable to so.

3.0 Conducting Council Business

3.1 All member duties shall be performed in accordance with the processes and rules of order established by the Town Council.

3.1.1 At all official meetings, members shall abide by the Roberts Rules of Order and will respect all legitimate rulings of the Chair.

3.2 Members shall inform themselves of the Council's rules and on the public issues that come before the Council or its Committee and be prepared for all meetings.

3.3 All Council decisions must serve the public interest and shall be based upon the merits and substance of the matter at hand.

3.4 Members shall not knowingly and intentionally withhold substantive information relevant to the matter under consideration, received from sources outside of the public decision-making process, from any other member, or from the public prior to taking action on the matter.

3.5 Members shall refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges or verbal attacks upon the character or motives of other members of the Council, Committees, or the public.

3.6 Members shall maintain a welcoming, non-confrontational, non-threatening environment for all guests and work to encourage maximum public participation.

4.0 Public Communications

4.1 A member shall always conduct himself/herself in a respectable manner and never in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing his office, the Council, or Altadena into disrepute.

4.2 A member must never misrepresent the Council or a Committee and/or its members.

4.3 Members shall represent only the official policies or positions of the Town Council or Committee, when designated to speak for the Council or Committee.

4.4 No member may take a vote on an issue at an Altadena Town Council meeting and then either by letter, personal appearance or other communication, alter or change or appear to change that vote in any way, outside of an Altadena Town Council meeting.

4.5 When appearing before another governmental agency, or any public hearing dealing with any issue that has been before or may come before the Council, a member must first state the Council's official position or absence of a position, before expressing an opinion or taking a personal position.

4.6 When presenting their individual opinions and positions on matters which may come before the Council, or on matters already decided by the Council, members shall explicitly state they do not represent the Town Council, nor will they allow such an inference.

4.7 Members shall make no promises of any kind on behalf of the Council.

4.8 The Town Council letterhead or logo shall not be displayed or used except as expressly authorized by the Town Council.

5.0 Conflict of Interest

5.1 Members shall take no action that could be construed as, or create the appearance of, using public office for personal gain.

5.2 Members shall not appear on behalf of, or as a representative of, the private interest of a third party during any proceeding of the Council or its Committees.

5.3 When representing the private interests of a third party to outside boards, committees, commissions or governmental agency, members must do so as a private citizen, publicly stated, and not as a member, unless authorized to do so by the Council.

5.4 No member shall vote, appoint a person, participate in the decision making, advise, make recommendations, or attempt to influence the Council or a Committee directly or indirectly when a qualifying conflict of interest exists.

5.5 A member with a qualifying conflict of interest may appear before the Council to represent himself/herself with respect to a proposed project. His or her appearance will be only as a member of the public, and is limited to appearing at the public meeting, at the podium to address the Council or Committee. The member may not contact or discuss the matter with other members apart from the public meeting.

5.6 A member has a qualifying conflict of interest when he or she stands to materially benefit, or the public may reasonably be lead to believe the member will benefit from a decision of the Council or a Committee. This will include:

- a. A direct financial or personal interest in the decision.
- b. A familial, marital, or substantial personal relationship to a person or organization affected by the decision.
- c. An employment, ownership, directorship, partnership or management relationship with person or organization affected by the decision.

6.0 Gifts and Favors

6.1 Members shall not take any special advantage of services or opportunities for personal gain by virtue of their office, which are not available to the public in general. They shall not accept any gift, favor or promises of future benefits which might compromise their independence of judgment or action or give the appearance of being compromised.

6.2 Members shall not accept a gift, favor or hospitality from anyone or any organization who is an applicant seeking, or who may seek, a decision from the Council or a Committee.

7.0 Political Activities

7.1 Being a non partisan entity, members shall not use their office or title to support or oppose any political campaign as a member of the Council or a Committee, but may do so only as a private citizen.

7.2 Unless authorized by the Council, no member shall actively use his office or title to seek or accept signatures to any petition for or against any issue, but may do so only as a private citizen.

8.0 Enforcement

8.1 These Ethical Standards are meant as a guide for members' conduct in office and as standards for the Council in disciplining members when required. These Standards are not intended to be absolutes or as a substitute for the judgment of the Council.

8.2 Failure to comply with these Ethical Standards may result in sanctions as prescribed in the by-laws of the Altadena Town Council including censorship and removal from office.