

Roxanne Maher

From: William D. Saums <bsaums@centechsolutions.com>
Sent: Monday, February 10, 2025 5:40 PM
To: Roxanne Maher
Subject: Ethics commission

Dear Councilors:

As you know, I served on the Town Council for many years, and I've learned that the Admin Commission is once again considering forming an ethics commission.

Speaking as a citizen with experience, I do not support the formation of an ethics commission. Such a commission will waste commissioners' and Town employees' time, it could result in unnecessary legal fees for the Town, and it would duplicate controls already in place: laws, ordinances, regulations, and the Town employee code of conduct.

If Town employees break the law, they should be prosecuted. If the existing laws don't work, fix them; but don't introduce an uncontrollable element like this into our system of government.

Here is an excerpt from just one study on the effectiveness ethics commissions:

"Even so, the raw correlations and point estimates that we present indicate that state ethics commissions have only very weak, and possibly perverse, effects on public corruption. Consequently, while we cannot rule out some small beneficial impact of state ethics commissions, our results do imply that this outcome is no more likely than a harmful effect of similar or larger magnitude. As such, it is reasonable to conclude that there is no support for claims that state ethics commissions, including bipartisan and nonpartisan commissions, serve to reduce political corruption."

Source:

https://capi.law.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/content/practitioner_toolkits/do_state_ethics_commissions_reduce_political_corruption_an_exploratory_investiga.pdf

In the event this proposal makes it onto the Town Council agenda, please read this statement into the minutes of the Town Council meeting.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

-Bill Saums
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