

## **TWO RIVERS-OTTAUQUECHEE REGIONAL COMMISSION**

### **CODE OF CONDUCT AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY FOR OFFICERS, BOARD AND STAFF MEMBERS**

The Two-Rivers-Ottawuechee Regional Commission is a government office whose responsibility is to provide good public service and efficient use of tax dollars to the public it serves. As such, the Regional Commission expects and requires its Officers, Board members, and employees to adhere to standards of conduct that are required for the effective functioning of the Regional Commission. These persons have a duty to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with these policies, the public interest, and the mission of the Regional Commission, and not to advance their personal interests. Thus a member or employee of the Regional Commission shall take all reasonable steps to avoid any action which might result in, or create the appearance of, a conflict of interest. This Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policy is intended to permit Regional Commission officers, Board members, and employees to identify, evaluate and address any real, potential or apparent conflict of interest that might in fact, or appearance, call into question their service to the Commission.

#### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

- I. A member of the Regional Commission has an affirmative obligation to conduct the affairs of his or her office, whether as a member of the full Regional Commission or as a member of a Committee or Sub-Committee, in such a manner as to instill public trust and confidence. Thus, a member of the Regional Commission shall take all reasonable steps to avoid any action or circumstance, whether or not specifically prohibited by this policy which might result in, or create the appearance of:
  - a) Undermining his or her independence or impartiality of action;
  - b) Taking official action on the basis of unfair considerations, unrelated to the merits of the matter;
  - c) Giving preferential treatment to any private interest, or interest of any affected State agency on the basis of unfair considerations, unrelated to the merits of the matter;
  - d) Using the office of member of the Regional Commission for the advancement of personal interest;
  - e) Using the office of member of the Regional Commission to secure special privileges or exemptions; or
  - f) Affecting adversely the confidence of the public in the integrity of the Regional Commission.
- II. A member of the Regional Commission shall not take any official action in any particular matter in which he or she has a conflict of interest or in which there is an appearance of a conflict of interest that, in the member's view, will undermine public confidence.
- III. A member of the Regional Commission shall not take any official action that advances the interest of a private entity with which he or she is actively seeking employment or a significant financial relationship.
- IV. A member of the Regional Commission shall not disclose to any private entity any confidential or privileged information for the purpose of advancing his or her, or anyone else's, pecuniary interest.

- V. A member of the Regional Commission shall not solicit or receive any payment, a gift, or favor based on any understanding that it would influence any official action.
- VI. A member of the Regional Commission shall not use or permit the use of Regional Commission property unless reasonably related to his or her official responsibilities.
- VII. The Regional Commission may, by majority vote, determine that a Regional Commission member is ineligible to participate in a matter before the Regional Commission because of a violation of this Policy.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

### **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST OR APPEARANCE OF CONFLICT**

A conflict of interest may exist when an Officer, Board member, or employee has the authority or responsibility to act on some matter in which he/she has a substantial personal or financial interest that may inhibit, or appear to inhibit, the person's ability to act in the interest of the Regional Commission. Such an interest may be financial or may result from family or social relationships.

A conflict does not exist when the person's interest is, or appears to be, no greater than that of any other person generally affected by the act for which one has authority or responsibility. Every effort should be made to avoid any real and/or appearance of a conflict of interest or impropriety in connection with any actions or inactions associated with their official duties.

Employees of the Regional Commission shall not, during work hours, engage in or purport to represent the Regional Commission in any partisan political activity. If an employee holds an elected or appointed position on a local board or commission, or is otherwise involved in policy-making or quasi-judicial responsibilities that relate to town or regional planning or relate to work performed by the Regional Commission, he/she must exercise discretion to minimize the risk of appearance of a conflict. Prior to holding public office, an Employee shall consult with the Executive Director or Officers to identify potential difficulties and means of addressing them.

### **DISCLOSURE, REFRAIN FROM INFLUENCE, AND RECUSAL**

An Officer, Board member, or employee of the Regional Commission shall disclose to the Executive Director or designee any personal interest or appearance of a conflict of interest with his or her responsibilities or obligations to the Regional Commission, including an interest in a project before Act 250 or other regulatory board where the Regional Commission is a party. The Executive Director shall decide if a conflict of interest condition exists and if it is necessary to assign the responsibilities to another staff person or if other action is appropriate. The Executive Director shall disclose such interest to the Executive Committee. If found to have a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, said person(s) must refrain from using their personal influence either by recusing themselves from further discussion with other Regional Commissioners or physically excusing themselves except to answer questions on the subject to the Regional Commission.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Regional Commission Officers, Board members, and employees shall exercise care not to disclose confidential information acquired through their connection with the Regional Commission which might be adverse to the interests of the Regional Commission. In addition, Regional Commission Officers, Board members, and employees shall not disclose or use information relating to the Commission for their own personal or family members', profit or advantage.

The Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission requires each Officer, Board member and employee to (1) review this Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policy (2) disclose any possible personal, familial or business relationship that reasonably could give rise to a conflict of interest, or appearance thereof, and (3) acknowledge by signing this Policy that they are acting in accordance with the letter and spirit of such Policy. Completing this form is required upon hiring or appointment to the TRORC Board and whenever there is a change in circumstances in any of the three questions below.

The information provided on this form will be held in confidence except if, after consultation with applicable Officers, Board members or employees, a determination is made that it is in the Regional Commission's best interest to disclose the information. If that should occur, the information provided herein shall be available for inspection by Regional Commission Officers and Board members.

**Please respond to the following:**

1. List all corporations, partnerships, associations, or other professional organizations of which you are an officer, director, trustee, partner, or employee, and briefly describe your affiliation.
  
2. List all corporations, partnerships, or other entities in which you have a material financial interest.
  
3. Are you aware of any other relationships, arrangements, transactions or matters which could create a conflict of interest or appearance of a conflict? If so, please describe.

I hereby certify that the information set forth above is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have reviewed, and agree to abide by this Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policy currently in effect.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Please print Name

This Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policy was Adopted by the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission's Executive Committee on February 10, 2021.