



CODE OF ETHICS FOR TRINIDAD CITY COUNCIL AND PLANNING COMMISSION

PREAMBLE

The residents and businesses of Trinidad are entitled to have fair, ethical and accountable local government. Such a government requires that public officials:

- ❖ Comply with both the letter and the spirit of the laws and policies affecting operations of government.
- ❖ Be independent, impartial and fair in their judgement and actions.
- ❖ Use their public office for the public good, not for personal gain; and
- ❖ Conduct public deliberations and processes openly, unless legally confidential, in an atmosphere of respect and civility.

To this end Trinidad City Council has adopted a Code of Ethics as follows:

PUBLIC INTEREST

Recognizing the stewardship of the public interest must be their primary concern, Council members and Planning commissioners shall work for the common good of the people of Trinidad and not for any private or personal interest. Council members and commissioners must endeavor to treat all members of the public and issues before them in a fair and equitable manner.

COMPLY WITH THE LAW

Council members and Planning commissioners shall comply with the laws of the Nation, the State of California, and the City in performance of their public duties. These laws include those pertaining to conflict of interest, election campaigns, financial disclosures, employer responsibilities and open processes of government.

CONDUCT OF MEMBERS

Council members and Planning Commissioners shall refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges or verbal attacks upon the character or motives of other members, commissioners, staff or the public.

RESPECT FOR PROCESS

Council members and Planning Commissioners shall perform their duties in accordance with the processes and rules of order established by the City Council.

CONDUCT OF PUBLIC MEETINGS

Members shall prepare themselves on public issues by reading all the information available to them prior to the meeting where these issues will be addressed. Members shall listen attentively to public discussion before the body and focus on the business at hand.

DECISIONS

Decisions shall be based upon the merits and substance of the matter at hand. Differing points of view - either of other members or the public, shall be treated with respect.

COMMUNICATION

It is the responsibility of the Council members and Planning commissioners to publicly share substantive information that is relevant to the matter under consideration and which they may have received from other sources.

USE OF PUBLIC RESOURCES

Council members and Planning commissioners shall not take advantage of services or opportunities by virtue of their public office that are not available to the public in general. They should avoid any action that could be construed as, or create the appearance of, using public office for personal gain, including use of staff time, stationery, equipment or supplies, or other City facilities of resources to promote personal purposes.

PUBLIC ADVOCACY

Members shall represent the official policies and positions of the City Council and Planning Commission. When presenting their personal opinions, members shall explicitly state they do not represent the Council or the City.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Council members and Planning commissioners shall respect and preserve the confidentiality of information provided to them concerning confidential matters of the City.

They must neither disclose confidential information without proper legal authorization nor use such information to advance the personal, financial or private interests of themselves or others.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

In order to assure their independence and impartiality on behalf of the public good, members shall not use their official positions to influence government decisions in which they have a material financial interest or where they have an organizational responsibility or personal relationship which may give the appearance of a conflict of interest.

Council members and Planning commissioners need to be above suspicion. When a public official participates in a decision that does not fall within the specific statutory guidelines for conflicts of interest but still does not "look" or "feel" right, that public official has probably encountered "the appearance of impropriety". For the public to have faith and confidence that government authority will be implemented in an even-handed and ethical manner, public officials may need to step aside, for the good of the community, even though no technical conflict exists.

INDEPENDENCE OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

Because of the value of the independent advice of commissions to the public decision-making process, members of the Council shall refrain from using their position to unduly influence the deliberations or outcomes of Planning Commission proceedings.

IMPLEMENTATION

Ethical standards shall be included in the regular orientations for newly elected and appointed officials. Members entering office shall sign a statement affirming they have read and understand the City of Trinidad Code of Ethics.

COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

All members of the City Council and Planning Commission have the responsibility to intervene when actions of members that appear to be in violation of the Code of Ethics are brought to their attention. Any member may place an allegation of Ethics Code violation on the City Council agenda, and it shall always be placed first in order on the agenda.

The Council, by at least a 4/5 vote, may impose sanctions on members whose conduct does not comply with the City's ethical standards.

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Julie Fulkerson, Mayor
Gabriel Adams, City Clerk



CITY OF TRINIDAD CODE OF ETHICS:

MEMBER STATEMENT

As a member of the Trinidad City Council or Planning Commission, I agree to uphold the Code of Ethics for elected and appointed officials adopted by the City and conduct myself by the following model of excellence. I will:

Recognize the worth of individual members and appreciate their individual talents, perspectives and contributions;

Help create an atmosphere of respect and civility where individual members, City staff and the public are free to express their ideas and work to their full potential;

Conduct my personal and public affairs with honesty, integrity, fairness and respect for others.

Respect the dignity and privacy of individuals and organizations;

Keep the common good as my highest purpose and focus on achieving constructive solutions for the public benefit;

Avoid and discourage conduct which is divisive or harmful to the best interests of Trinidad;

Treat all people with whom I come in contact in the way I wish to be treated;

I affirm that I have read and understood the City of Trinidad Code of Ethics.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Title or Office: _____