



December 19, 2024

Sent Via Email: Michael.Gates@surfcity-hb.org  
Michael Gates, City Attorney  
O/B/O Tony Strickland

**Advisory Letter Re: FPPC No. 2023-00287; In the Matter of Tony Strickland**

Dear Michael Gates:

The Enforcement Division of the Fair Political Practices Commission (“Commission”) enforces the provisions of the Political Reform Act.<sup>1</sup> This letter is in response to a sworn complaint alleging Tony Strickland, in the capacity of the Mayor of Huntington Beach, failed to properly recuse themselves by failing to identify the reason they recused from a Huntington Beach City Council (“Council”) vote on an Agenda item on February 21, 2023, regarding an affordable housing agreement for Bonanni Development Project, in violation of the Act’s conflicts of interest manner of disqualification procedures. The Enforcement Division has decided to close its file on this matter without prosecution.

The Act provides that when certain public officials, including mayors and members of city councils, have a conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest in a governmental decision, they must take the following steps immediately prior to consideration of the matter:

1. Publicly identify the financial interest that gives rise to the conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest in detail sufficient to be understood by the public;
2. Recuse themselves from participating in the decision; and
3. Leave the room for the duration of the discussion and/or vote on the item.<sup>2</sup>

For each financial interest identified that is real property, the public official is required to provide the address, assessor’s parcel number, or state that the property is the official’s personal residence.<sup>3</sup>

The Enforcement Division has reviewed the facts of this case and found that, while Strickland recused themselves and left the room at the above referenced Council Meeting, they failed to publicly identify their financial interest that caused them to recuse themselves from participating in the governmental decision. However, there is insufficient evidence to support there was a conflict of interest in this matter. As such, we are closing this case with this Advisory Letter.

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<sup>1</sup>The Political Reform Act is contained in Government Code sections 81000 through 91014, and all statutory references are to this code. The regulations of the Fair Political Practices Commission are contained in Sections 18104 through 18998 of Title 2 of the California Code of Regulations, and all regulatory references are to this source.

<sup>2</sup> Section 87105.

<sup>3</sup> Regulation 18707, subd. (a)(1)(A)(ii).

Although we are closing our file, please be advised of the provisions of the Act and regulations regarding conflict of interest manner of disqualification. If additional guidance is needed in the future, the Commission's Advice team can be reached by sending an email to [advice@fppc.ca.gov](mailto:advice@fppc.ca.gov). There is also information available regarding conflicts of interests and manner of recusal procedures available at the FPPC website, [www.fppc.ca.gov](http://www.fppc.ca.gov).

If you have questions regarding this letter, please feel free to contact me at [bcastillo@fppc.ca.gov](mailto:bcastillo@fppc.ca.gov) or (279) 237-3764.

Sincerely,

***Bridgette Castillo***

Bridgette Castillo  
Senior Commission Counsel  
Enforcement Division