

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
BEFORE THE RHODE ISLAND ETHICS COMMISSION**

**In re: Harold G. Morgan Jr.,
Respondent**

Complaint No. 2023-1

ORDER

This matter having been heard before the Rhode Island Ethics Commission on March 7, 2023, pursuant to 520-RICR-00-00-3.16 Informal Disposition (1011), and the Commission having considered the Complaint herein, the Respondent's Answer, the arguments of the parties, and the proposed Informal Resolution and Settlement, which is incorporated by reference herein, it is hereby

ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED

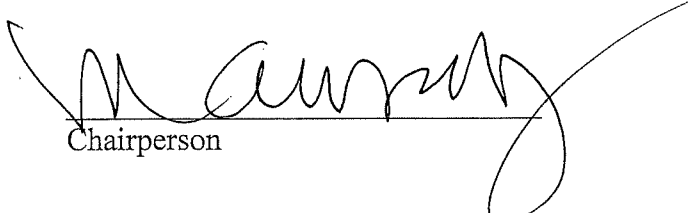
THAT, the Commission approves the Informal Resolution and Settlement as submitted;

THAT, the Commission incorporates by reference herein the Findings of Fact and Admissions, and the Conclusions of Law, set forth in the Informal Resolution and Settlement;

THAT, the Respondent violated Rhode Island Gen. Laws § 36-14-16(a)(4) by failing to timely disclose on his 2016-2021 Financial Disclosure Statements his ownership interest in real property designated as 0 Woody Hill Road (lot number 41-1-1), Exeter, Rhode Island;

THAT, the Respondent is ordered to pay a civil penalty in the amount of Three Hundred Dollars (\$300.00).

ENTERED as an Order of this Commission,


Chairperson

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
BEFORE THE RHODE ISLAND ETHICS COMMISSION

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Respondent

Complaint No. 2023-1

INFORMAL RESOLUTION AND SETTLEMENT

The Respondent, Harold G. Morgan, Jr., and the Ethics Commission Prosecutor, representing the People of the State of Rhode Island, hereby agree to a resolution of the above-referenced matter as follows, subject to the approval of the Rhode Island Ethics Commission (“Ethics Commission”):

I. FINDINGS OF FACT & ADMISSIONS

1. The Respondent is the Zoning Inspector for the Town of Exeter, a municipal elected position, and has served continuously in that position since he was first elected in November 2004.¹

2. Since 1976, the Respondent has been the sole owner of a 67.7-acre lot of undeveloped farm/forest land designated as 0 Woody Hill Road in Exeter (lot number 41-1-1). Lot number 41-1-1 is adjacent to 255 Woody Hill Road (lot number 41-1-3), a separate 24-acre property also owned by the Respondent and on which his primary residence is located.

3. The Respondent receives separate tax bills from the Town of Exeter for lot number 41-1-1 and lot number 41-1-3.

4. The Respondent was required to, but did not, disclose his ownership interest in lot number 41-1-1 in response to the Real Estate question on his 2016-2021 Financial Disclosure Statements (“2016-2021 Statements”) filed with the Ethics Commission.

¹ Although the Complaint refers to the zoning inspector as a municipal *appointed* position, pursuant to the Town of Exeter’s Charter, the zoning inspector is elected at a general election for a two-year term. See Exeter, RI, Charter art.VI, § 608 (2021).

5. The instant Complaint was filed with the Ethics Commission on January 18, 2023.

6. On January 30, 2023, the Respondent amended his 2016-2021 Statements to disclose his ownership interest in lot number 41-1-1 in response to the Real Estate question. He also amended his 2016-2019 Statements² in response to the Family Income Sources question to disclose that he received gross income in excess of \$1,000 in each year of those years from his sale of forest products.³

7. On February 14, 2023, the Ethics Commission initially determined that, with respect to the Respondent's failure to disclose lot number 41-1-1 on his 2016-2021 Statements, the Complaint states facts that, if true, are sufficient to constitute violations of the Financial Disclosure mandate and authorized an investigation. The Ethics Commission also found that the other allegations of the Complaint did not state sufficient facts to constitute violations of the Code of Ethics.

8. The Respondent presented to the Ethics Commission's office on February 15, 2023, to discuss the allegations raised in the Complaint and to ensure full compliance on his 2016-2021 Statements. The Respondent met with the Prosecution to review his statements and identify all required disclosures.

II. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. As the Zoning Inspector for the Town of Exeter, a municipal elected position, the Respondent was subject to the Financial Disclosure mandate of R.I. Gen. Laws § 36-14-16(a)(4).

² On his originally filed 2020-2021 Statements, the Respondent had previously and timely disclosed that he derived income in excess of \$1,000 in each of those years from the sale of forest products. In an interview with the Prosecution, the Respondent represented that he had inadvertently failed to disclose such income on his 2016-2019 Statements.

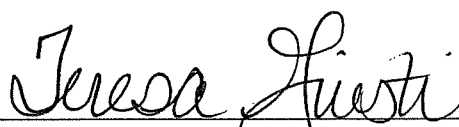
³ In discussing the bases for his amendments, the Respondent disclosed to the Prosecution that he derived the following amounts in gross income from the sales of forest products, such as cords of wood, wood chips, and laurel harvesting, from 2016-2019: (1) In 2016, he derived \$9,914; (2) in 2017, he derived \$13,102; (3) in 2018, he derived \$12,126; and (4) in 2019, he derived \$10,340.

2. Pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 36-14-17(b)(3), the Respondent was required, but failed, to timely disclose his ownership of the real property designated as 0 Woody Hill Road (lot number 41-1-1) on his 2016-2021 Statements filed with the Ethics Commission.

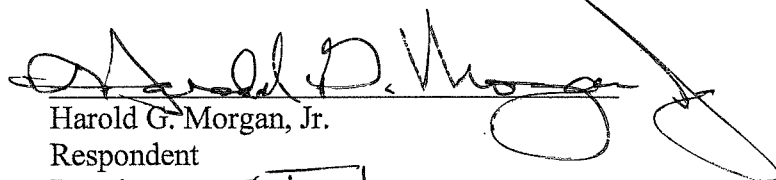
III. SETTLEMENT

Pursuant to the above Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, the Respondent and the Commission Prosecutor agree, subject to the approval of the Rhode Island Ethics Commission, pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 36-14-13(d) and Commission Regulation 520-RICR-00-00-3.16 Informal Disposition (1011), to the following:

1. The Ethics Commission shall enter an Order and Judgment adopting the Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and terms of the Settlement herein.
2. The Respondent agrees that the Ethics Commission will impose a civil penalty in the amount of Three Hundred Dollars (\$300) which the Respondent agrees to pay.
3. The above terms represent the full and complete Informal Resolution and Settlement relative to the conduct set forth herein and in Complaint No. 2023-1.



Teresa Giusti, Esq. (Bar No. 8006)
Commission Prosecutor
Dated: *March 1, 2023*



Harold G. Morgan, Jr.
Respondent
Dated: *25 Feb 23*