

Wilmington, Delaware  
~~April 4, 2024~~  
April 18, 2024

#0407

Sponsor:

Council  
Member  
Darby

**WHEREAS**, as legislative representatives elected by the citizens of Wilmington, members of City Council are held to a higher standard in the way they conduct themselves in the public light, as well as the manner in which they conduct public business; and

**WHEREAS**, elected officials should strive to represent their constituents rather than their own interests; and

**WHEREAS**, in July 2022, Councilwoman Zanthia Oliver, 3<sup>rd</sup> District (“Councilwoman Oliver”), sponsored an event called “Love Is in the Air,” at Brown/Burton/Winchester Park. The usage fee was \$610.00. Councilwoman Oliver agreed to pay the usage fee out of her City Council discretionary funds. At her request, the City issued a \$610 check made out to the City of Wilmington. On August 1, 2022, Councilwoman Oliver endorsed the check and deposited it into her personal checking account; and

**WHEREAS**, on August 29, 2022, Councilwoman Oliver was notified of the improper endorsement. She promptly repaid the City; and

**WHEREAS**, in August 2022, Councilwoman Oliver, in partnership with the Eastside Community Association (“ESCA”), began coordinating an event called “A Salute to Women Veterans” to be held at the Chase Center on the Riverfront in September 2022; and

**WHEREAS**, on or about August 22, 2022, Councilwoman Oliver requested from the City a \$4,900.00 check, payable to ESCA, to pay the Chase Center’s required deposit; and

**WHEREAS**, Councilwoman Oliver endorsed the check and deposited into ESCA’s bank account. Councilwoman Oliver was able to do this because she had been “on and off [ESCA’s] Board for years.” Councilwoman Oliver’s required financial disclosures in 2021

and 2022 did not mention service on *any* corporate or non-profit boards; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Wilmington Ethics Commission (“Ethics Commission”) received a complaint regarding these purported ethical violations; and

**WHEREAS**, on September 10, 2022, the Ethics Commission voted to refer the matter for investigation; and

**WHEREAS**, on September 13, 2023, after an investigation, the Ethics Commission received a Statement of Alleged Violation that Councilwoman Oliver’s abovementioned conduct violated Wilmington City Code Sections 2-341(a) and 2-345.1(c)(1)(a)(8); and

**WHEREAS**, on November 13, 2023, Councilwoman Oliver agreed to an “Agreed Disposition” of a public reprimand for violating the aforementioned City Code Sections; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commission approved the Agreed Disposition on November 14, 2023.

**WHEREAS**, this was the second public reprimand Councilwoman Oliver received in 2023; and

**WHEREAS**, in response to this Ethics Commission investigation, City Council requested the City Auditor to accelerate its scheduled audit of all Council grant funds. The Audit should be complete by the end of March 2024; and

**WHEREAS**, City Council has updated its internal money-handling policies to ensure no Councilperson has the ability to receive a direct payment to a vendor; and

**WHEREAS**, Councilmembers voluntarily agreed to undergo further ethics training, which was complete in February 2024; and

**WHEREAS**, it is in this spirit that the City Council feels compelled to recognize improper behavior manifest in the actions of one of its members, and reprimand that behavior

to set the tone that appearances of impropriety shall not be tolerated; and

**WHEREAS**, it is in this spirit that the City Council wishes to inform the public that it takes these violations seriously, and must continue to work to maintain public trust.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON** that Council seeks to reprimand Councilwoman Zanthia Oliver following the public reprimand imposed by the City of Wilmington Ethics Commission.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Council renews its resolve to the principles outlined in the City Code upheld by its members, and the Oath of Office taken by its members. This Council stands at the ready to move forward, and to collaborate around matters of community importance to our City.

Passed by City Council,

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

**SYNOPSIS:** This Resolution issues a public reprimand of Councilmember Zanthia Oliver, following the City of Wilmington Ethics Commission's second public reprimand in a calendar year.