



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
PRESS RELEASE

Ethics Commission

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CONTACT:

Stacey Fulhorst
San Diego Ethics Commission
(619) 533-3476

**ETHICS COMMISSION ANNOUNCES SETTLEMENTS
WITH TWO CITY OFFICIALS CONCERNING
ECONOMIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS**

Stacey Fulhorst, Executive Director of the City of San Diego Ethics Commission, announced today the Commission's approval of stipulated settlement agreements with two City Officials in connection with the failure to properly report their economic interests on disclosure forms filed with the City Clerk. The first agreement involves Art Castro, a principal of Tucker Sadler Architects, who was hired by the City to provide architectural consulting services on the main library project. Mr. Castro has agreed to pay a fine in the amount of \$3,000 for failing to disclose six sources of income to his architectural firm and two sources of income to his property management company on his 2006 and 2007 annual Statements of Economic Interests. Mr. Castro was required to report these sources of income because they were engaged in development and construction in the same area as the downtown main library project, and could therefore present a potential conflict of interest in his work as a City consultant.

The second agreement involves Michael Mueller, a college student and former member of the College Community Project Area Committee. Mr. Mueller has agreed to pay a fine in the amount of \$2,000 for not timely filing his 2007 annual Statement of Economic Interests, and for failing to disclose income from an entity that was engaged in construction and development in the College Community Redevelopment Project Area. However, in Mr. Mueller's case, the Commission has agreed to waive the fine on the condition that Mr. Mueller appears with Commission staff at training sessions for five

of the City’s redevelopment project area committees. Ms. Fulhorst explained that, although the Commission has never previously agreed to waive a fine in exchange for some type of “community service,” the Commission determined that it was appropriate in this case in light of Mr. Mueller’s demonstrated inability to pay the fine.

The Commission Chairman, Gil Cabrera, commented that the disclosure of economic interests is the foundation of the City’s ethics laws. He added that, “Without timely and accurate disclosure of personal financial interests, the public has no way of knowing whether City Officials are using their positions to influence decisions that could benefit their personal investments or sources of income.” Chairman Cabrera noted that the Commission’s investigations did not produce any evidence indicating that either Mr. Castro or Mr. Mueller participated in any decisions involved their economic interests, and he pointed out that the fines would have been substantially higher in the event that the City’s conflict of interest laws had been violated.

Ethics Commission fines are paid to the City of San Diego’s General Fund. The stipulated settlements approved by the Commission resolve all factual and legal issues without the necessity of holding an administrative hearing.

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