STACEY FULHORST, Executive Director  
City of San Diego Ethics Commission  
450 B Street, Suite 780  
San Diego, CA  92101  
Telephone: (619) 533-3476  

Petitioner  

BEFORE THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
ETHICS COMMISSION  

In re the Matter of:  
WENDY WHEATCROFT,  
Respondent.  

STIPULATION  
THE PARTIES STIPULATE AS FOLLOWS:  

1. Petitioner Stacey Fulhorst is the Executive Director of the City of San Diego Ethics Commission [Ethics Commission]. The Ethics Commission is charged with a duty to administer, implement, and enforce local governmental ethics laws contained in the San Diego Municipal Code [SDMC] relating to, among other things, the provisions of the Election Campaign Control Ordinance [ECCO], SDMC section 27.2901, et seq.  

2. Wendy Wheatcroft is, and was during all times mentioned herein, a candidate for City Council District 7 in the 2020 election cycle. The Wendy Wheatcroft for SD City Council 2020 committee (Identification No. 1414776) [Committee] is a campaign committee registered with the State of California established to support Ms. Wheatcroft’s candidacy. At all relevant times herein, the Committee was controlled by Ms. Wheatcroft within the meaning of the California Political Reform Act, California Government Code section 82016. Ms. Wheatcroft is referred to herein as “Respondent.”
3. This Stipulation will be submitted for consideration by the Ethics Commission at its next scheduled meeting, and the agreements contained herein are contingent upon the approval of the Stipulation and the accompanying Decision and Order by the Ethics Commission.

4. This Stipulation resolves all factual and legal issues raised in this matter by the Ethics Commission without the necessity of holding an administrative hearing to determine Respondent's liability.

5. Respondent understands and knowingly and voluntarily waives any and all procedural rights under the SDMC including, but not limited to, a determination of probable cause, the issuance and receipt of an administrative complaint, the right to appear personally in any administrative hearing held in this matter, the right to confront and cross-examine witnesses testifying at the hearing, the right to subpoena witnesses to testify at the hearing, and the right to have the Ethics Commission or an impartial hearing officer hear this matter. Respondent agrees that the terms of this Stipulation constitute compliance with the provisions of SDMC section 26.0450 in that the Stipulation includes a recitation of facts, a reference to each violation, and an order.

6. Respondent agrees to hold the City of San Diego and the Ethics Commission harmless from any and all claims or damages resulting from the Commission's investigation, this stipulated agreement, or any matter reasonably related thereto.

7. Respondent acknowledges that this Stipulation is not binding upon any other law enforcement or government agency and does not preclude the Ethics Commission from referring this matter to, cooperating with, or assisting any other law enforcement or government agency with regard to this or any other related matter.

8. The parties agree that in the event the Ethics Commission refuses to accept this Stipulation, it shall become null and void. Respondent further agrees that in the event the Ethics Commission rejects the Stipulation and a full evidentiary hearing before the Ethics Commission becomes necessary, no member of the Ethics Commission or its staff shall be disqualified because of prior consideration of this Stipulation.
Summary of Law and Facts

9. Because Respondent’s Committee was formed for the purpose of supporting a City of San Diego candidate, Respondent was required to comply with ECCO’s advertising disclosure provisions. In this regard, the Committee was required to clearly identify to the public that it was paying for the campaign advertisements it disseminated. SDMC § 27.2970.

10. In particular, ECCO requires all committees that publicly display campaign signs and banners to include the words “Ad paid for by” followed by the name of the committee in a contrasting typeface at least 5% of the height of the sign or banner. ECCO also requires that committees printing and distributing individual pieces of campaign literature include the words “Ad paid for by” followed by the name of the committee in a contrasting typeface at least 10 points in size. The type size requirements ensure that the disclosure is clearly visible and readily apparent to members of the public.

11. In March of 2019, Respondent paid for a campaign banner that was subsequently displayed at campaign-related events. The banner did not include an “Ad paid for by” disclosure.

12. From November 2019 through January 2020, Respondent printed 950 campaign flyers for three different “meet and greet” events that were subsequently distributed. Although the flyers included the requisite disclosure, it was printed in a 6-point typeface.

Counts

Counts 1 and 2 - Violations of SDMC section 27.2970

13. Respondent violated SDMC section 27.2970 by producing, disseminating, and displaying the banner and campaign literature described above in paragraphs 11 and 12 without an “Ad paid for by” disclosure, or with a disclosure printed in a typeface smaller than required.

Factors in Mitigation

14. Respondent has fully cooperated with the Ethics Commission investigation.

Factors in Aggravation

15. Commission staff contacted Respondent on October 31, 2019, to advise her that the Commission was conducting an investigation into her alleged failure to comply with the City’s campaign advertising disclosure rules, and to remind her of the specific disclosure requirements.
After this reminder, Respondent prepared and disseminated campaign literature that did not comply with the City’s disclosure rules concerning type size, as described above in paragraph 12.

**Conclusion**

16. Respondent agrees to take necessary and prudent precautions to ensure compliance with all provisions of ECCO in the future.

17. Respondent acknowledges that the Ethics Commission may impose increased fines in connection with any future violations of the City’s campaign laws.

18. Respondent agrees to pay a fine in the amount of $500 for violating SDMC section 27.2970. This amount must be paid no later than March 13, 2020, by check or money order payable to the City Treasurer. The submitted payment will be held pending Commission approval of this Stipulation and execution of the Decision and Order portion set forth below.

DATED: __________________   [REDACTED]

Stacey Fulhorst, Petitioner
SAN DIEGO ETHICS COMMISSION

DATED: __________________   [REDACTED]

WENDY WHEATCROFT, Respondent

**DECISION AND ORDER**

The Ethics Commission considered the above Stipulation at its meeting on June 11, 2020. The Ethics Commission hereby approves the Stipulation and orders that, in accordance with the Stipulation, Respondent pay a fine in the amount of $500.

DATED: __________________   [REDACTED]

Sid Voorakkara, Chair
SAN DIEGO ETHICS COMMISSION