

York River Stewardship Committee
Conflict of Interest Policy
Approved 2/27/24

Purpose

The purpose of this Conflict of Interest Policy is to protect the interests of the York River Stewardship Committee (Stewardship Committee) when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement or taking other action that might benefit the private or professional interests of Stewardship Committee members or individuals or organizations with whom they may have a professional or personal relationship. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state and federal laws governing conflicts of interest. The policy of the Stewardship Committee is to establish and maintain high ethical standards through the disclosure of actual or potential conflicts by members and their recusal from debate and/or voting on matters where personal interests may affect their judgment.

Applicability

All voting members and alternates appointed by town councils or select boards shall sign the Conflict of Interest - Annual Statement and Disclosure attached hereto.

Definitions

1. *Interested Person* - Any Stewardship Committee officer, Stewardship Committee member, Stewardship Committee alternate, or Stewardship Committee employee who has a direct or indirect financial or non-financial interest, as defined below, is an interested person.
2. *Family Member* – A spouse, domestic partner, parent, child, sibling, stepchild, or stepparent, as well as mother-, father-, son-, daughter-, brother-, or sister-in-law, of an Interested Person is a family member.
3. *Transaction or Contract* - Any agreement or relationship involving the sale or purchase of goods, services, or rights of any kind, the providing or receipt of a loan or grant, or the establishment of any other type of pecuniary relationship.
4. *Financial Interest* - A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business or family, an actual or potential ownership or investment interest or compensation arrangement in or is adverse to any entity with which the Stewardship Committee has or is contemplating a transaction or arrangement or which is otherwise before the Stewardship Committee. Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial.
5. *Non-financial Interest* - A person has a non-financial interest if the interested person or a family member:
 - (i) serves as an officer or director of a non-profit corporation, or
 - (ii) serves as a member of a town board, committee or commission, or
 - (iii) has another personal interest related to an entity with which the Stewardship Committee has or is contemplating a transaction or arrangement or which is otherwise before the Stewardship Committee.

A financial or non-financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. A person who has a financial or non-financial interest has a conflict of interest only if that person or the officers of the

Stewardship Committee decide that the interest may affect the individual's judgment and therefore a conflict of interest exists.

Duty to Disclose and Recuse

Duty to Disclose

In connection with any actual or potential conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence and nature of the interest and all material facts to the officers of the Stewardship Committee. Disclosure must be made (i) as soon as the conflict or potential conflict becomes known to the interested person, and (ii) annually, during the month of July if the conflict or potential conflict of interest continues.

Duty to Recuse

An interested person who has an actual or potential conflict of interest must recuse themselves from participating in the discussion of or voting on any matter which is the subject of the conflict of interest either (i) on their own volition or (ii) if so advised by the officers of the Stewardship Committee. Any disclosure of a potential conflict of interest or recusal by an interested person shall be reflected in the minutes of the relevant meeting(s).

Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists

After disclosure of the potential conflict and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, the officers of the Stewardship Committee shall decide whether a conflict of interest exists and whether recusal is necessary.

Violations of the Conflict of Interest Policy

If the officers of the Stewardship Committee have reasonable cause to believe an interested person has failed to disclose an actual or potential conflict of interest, they shall inform the interested person of the basis for such belief and afford the interested person an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose. Based on the outcome of these discussions, the Stewardship Committee officers will determine whether further action is needed.

Additional Guidelines in Regards to RFPs, Proposal Evaluation, and Project Awards

1. Stewardship Committee members taking part in a proposal review subcommittee shall abstain from participating in the review and/or selection of proposals generated by organizations in which they have a financial or non-financial interest.
2. A Stewardship Committee member may not comment or vote on decisions affecting selection of a proposal or project for funding where there is a financial or non-financial interest.
3. Stewardship Committee members must treat all materials reviewed, developed or discussed as part of the RFP development process and proposal review process as strictly confidential. Violation of that confidentiality may constitute a conflict of interest if it gives unfair advantage to any party.

Acceptance of Policy

Each Stewardship Committee member shall sign a statement annually which affirms that such person:

1. Has received a copy of the Conflict of Interest Policy,
2. Has read and understands the policy, and
3. Has agreed to comply with the policy.

York River Stewardship Committee

Conflict of Interest - Annual Statement and Disclosure

Acknowledgement Form for _____

A Stewardship Committee Member Representative/Alternate for _____

Other than the matters, issues, or affiliations listed below, I do not believe I have any conflict of interest relative to the Stewardship Committee, as defined in the York River Stewardship Committee Conflict of Interest Policy:

I hereby acknowledge receipt and understanding of the York River Stewardship Committee Conflict of Interest Policy and agree to abide by it. I further certify that the above information is true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

(Print Name)

Date: _____

(Sign Name)