



STATE OF MAINE
COMMISSION ON GOVERNMENTAL ETHICS
AND ELECTION PRACTICES
135 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0135

To: Commission
From: Jonathan Wayne, Executive Director
Date: July 20, 2022
Re: Videos of Commission Meetings

Since May 22, 2020, the Commission staff has incorporated remote participation and live streaming into the Commission's meeting procedures. Video recordings of the meetings are saved to the Commission's YouTube channel. In keeping with an informal agreement of the Commission members in 2020, members of the public cannot see the videos unless they call or email the Commission staff to request access to a video, in which case we change the privacy setting for the video and email a link to the requesting party. We adopted these procedures in 2020 because at least one former Commission member had concerns about their likeness being available on the internet at all times.

This arrangement is consistent with the requirements of the Maine Freedom of Access Act but it has resulted in some confused emails from local news reporters who expect that the videos will publicly available. Some public boards in Maine (even at the municipal level) publicly post videos of all their meetings.

The Commission received the attached letter from the Maine Freedom of Information Coalition and the Maine Citizens for Clean Elections asking the Commission to revisit the policy and make the videos publicly available as a matter of routine, rather than upon request. The Commission staff is supportive of the request. It would require no additional work for us and would make the Commission's decisions and deliberations more accessible. If you are open to the proposal, it might make sense to make the meeting videos public beginning when the current combination of Commission members began serving on May 6, 2022.

Thank you.

JOHN BRAUTIGAM

Esq. LLC

June 22, 2022

William J. Schneider, Esq., Chairman
Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices
45 Memorial Circle, 2nd Floor
Augusta, Maine 04330

Emailed to: ethics@maine.gov

Dear Chairman Schneider:

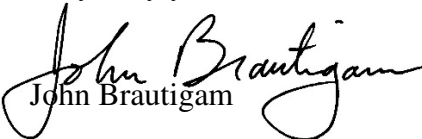
I am writing on behalf of the Maine Freedom of Information Coalition and Maine Citizens for Clean Elections – two organizations with an interest in public access to the public meetings of the Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices.

We understand that Commission meetings are recorded on YouTube and available for viewing at a later date. We appreciate that the Commission has taken steps to ensure that the public can follow its proceedings. And we thank the Commission for making these videos available on an “upon request” basis.

We have a modest suggestion which we believe is consistent with the mission of the Commission and which would serve the public interest. We ask whether it might be possible to post a link to the video record as a matter of routine. Many governmental bodies around the state post video links following conclusion of their proceedings, either in conjunction with posting minutes or on a dedicated location on the website. We believe this would be a public service to those who are unable to attend meetings at the time they are held or for whatever reason wish to review comments and deliberations at a later date.

Thank you for your consideration, and for your service on the Commission.

Very truly yours,


John Brautigam

cc: Jonathan Wayne, Esq. Executive Director
Anna Kellar, Executive Director, Maine Citizens for Clean Elections
Jim Campbell, Maine Freedom of Information Coalition