

**STATE OF MINNESOTA  
CAMPAIGN FINANCE AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE BOARD**

**PRIMA FACIE  
DETERMINATION**

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPLAINT OF IMMANUEL JONES AND MADISON SCHOLL REGARDING BETH COMMERS

On February 17, 2025, the Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board received a complaint submitted by Immanuel Jones and Madison Scholl regarding Beth Commers. The complaint asserts that Ms. Commers is the Co-Deputy Director of the City of Saint Paul's Department of Human Rights & Equal Economic Opportunity (HREEO).

The complaint includes documents stating that the complainants filed a complaint with the HREEO on October 25, 2022, alleging housing discrimination and retaliation by Wellington Management, LLC. Documents included with the complaint show that a finding of no cause was issued on February 13, 2024, the complainants appealed shortly thereafter, and the finding of no cause was affirmed by the HREEO on March 13, 2024.

The complaint asserts that the HREEO investigator initially assigned to the housing discrimination complaint was removed from the matter without explanation, and that "Ms. Commers unilaterally assumed control of the investigation and removed the senior investigator with a newly hired investigator and designated herself as the mediator between the two parties. . . ." The complaint states that Ms. Commers issued a finding of no cause, then was promoted and "proceeded to review—and ultimately uphold—her own determination. This improper procedure circumvents due process, violates basic fairness standards, and severely compromises the integrity of the appeals process."

The complaint alleges that "Ms. Commers maintains personal and professional relationships with Steve Wellington, owner of Wellington Management, LLC, which includes active social media connections." The complaint includes a video with screenshots showing that Ms. Commers is "friends" with an individual named Steve Wellington on Facebook.

The complaint alleges that the spouse of Ms. Commers, "Jon Commers, owns Visible City and Donjek, both consulting firms with existing or prior business ties to Wellington Management." The complaint includes documentation showing that Mr. Commers is the manager and registered agent for Visible City, LLC.<sup>1</sup> The complaint includes a screenshot of a webpage from Visible City's website indicating that Wellington Management was a client of Visible City.<sup>2</sup> The complaint includes documentation showing that Mr. Commers is the chief executive officer

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<sup>1</sup> [mbplsportal.sos.state.mn.us/Business/SearchDetails?filingGuid=8dc7013f-eace-e711-8189-00155d01c6c6](https://mbplsportal.sos.state.mn.us/Business/SearchDetails?filingGuid=8dc7013f-eace-e711-8189-00155d01c6c6)

<sup>2</sup> [visible.city/where-we-ve-worked](https://visible.city/where-we-ve-worked)

(CEO) of Donjek Reinvestment Strategies, Inc. (Donjek).<sup>3</sup> The complaint includes a screenshot from x.com containing two posts from “Jon Commers” from 2010 and 2011 indicating that Wellington Management was a client of Donjek.<sup>4</sup> The complaint includes a copy of a webpage showing that when Mr. Commers was a public official as a result of his service on the Metropolitan Council, he filed an economic interest statement (EIS) with the Board in 2019.<sup>5</sup> The EIS of Mr. Commers stated that his occupation was “consultant,” that his employer was “Donjek, Inc.,” that he was an owner of “Donjek Reinvestment Strategies” and a member of “Visible City, LLC,” and that one his business or professional activity categories was “real estate.” The complaint also includes a copy of a 2010 Finance & Commerce article, which quotes Mr. Commers stating that Donjek “provides ‘public finance and strategic services to clients involved in urban planning, development, engineering and public work.’”<sup>6</sup>

The complaint alleges that “Wellington Management’s political donations align with contributions to organizations and campaigns that Ms. Commers or her husband’s firms supported or oversaw,” and that “companies Mr. Commers has represented—including Wellington Management—contributed to entities for which Ms. Commers acted as a fundraiser.” The complaint asserts that “Ms. Commers engaged in political consulting activities involving significant fundraising efforts.” In support of those allegations the complaint includes a copy of a campaign finance report showing that Mr. Wellington and another individual jointly made a \$500 contribution in October of 2024 to, and Ms. Commers received payment of \$1,015 in December of 2024 for consulting services from, the campaign committee of Ramsey County Attorney John Choi. The complaint includes a copy of a campaign finance report showing that in 2018 Ms. Commers made a \$100 contribution, and Mr. Wellington made a \$600 contribution, to the campaign committee of Saint Paul City Council candidate Mitra Jalali. Additionally, the 2010 Finance & Commerce article included with the complaint states that Ms. Commers is “a political organizer who’s heading John Choi’s campaign for Ramsey County Attorney.”

The complaint alleges numerous deficiencies with respect to how the housing discrimination complaint and a mediation process resulting from that complaint were handled. The complaint alleges that Ms. Commers failed “to recuse herself given multiple conflicts of interest involving Wellington Management and its owner, Steve Wellington.” The complaint notes that Minnesota Statutes Chapter 10A governs “financial disclosures.” The complaint states that “Ms. Commers neither disclosed her relationships nor recused herself, thereby violating conflict of interest regulations outlined in Minnesota Statutes Sections 10A.07 and 10A.09.”

## **Determination**

Minnesota Statutes section 10A.022, subdivision 3, authorizes the Board to investigate alleged or potential violations of Minnesota Statutes Chapter 10A in addition to Minnesota Statutes

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<sup>3</sup> [mblsportal.sos.state.mn.us/Business/SearchDetails?filingGuid=9111d2c0-9dd4-e011-a886-001ec94ffe7f](https://mblsportal.sos.state.mn.us/Business/SearchDetails?filingGuid=9111d2c0-9dd4-e011-a886-001ec94ffe7f)

<sup>4</sup> [x.com/search?lang=en&q=wellington%20\(from%3Acommers\)&src=typed\\_query](https://x.com/search?lang=en&q=wellington%20(from%3Acommers)&src=typed_query)

<sup>5</sup> [cfb.mn.gov/reports-and-data/officials-financial-disclosure/official/9824](https://cfb.mn.gov/reports-and-data/officials-financial-disclosure/official/9824)

<sup>6</sup> [finance-commerce.com/2010/07/clements-commers-fights-on/](https://finance-commerce.com/2010/07/clements-commers-fights-on/)

sections 211B.04, 211B.12, and 211B.15. There may be other laws applicable to the conduct alleged in the complaint over which the Board lacks jurisdiction.

The term “local official” is defined by Minnesota Statutes section 10A.01, subdivision 22:

“Local official” means a person who holds elective office in a political subdivision or who is appointed to or employed in a public position in a political subdivision in which the person has authority to make, to recommend, or to vote on as a member of the governing body, major decisions regarding the expenditure or investment of public money.

The City of Saint Paul is a political subdivision, as that term is defined by Minnesota Statutes section 10A.01, subdivision 31,<sup>7</sup> and is also a metropolitan governmental unit, as that term is defined by Minnesota Statutes section 10A.01, subdivision 24. Minnesota Rules 4501.0400, subpart 1, requires each metropolitan governmental unit to annually provide to the Board a list of its local officials. The City of Saint Paul’s list of local officials includes the position of Human Rights and Equal Economic Opportunity Director.<sup>8</sup>

Minnesota Statutes section 10A.09, subdivision 1, provides that an “individual must file a statement of economic interest . . . within 60 days of accepting employment as . . . local official in a metropolitan governmental unit. . . .” Minnesota Statutes section 10A.09, subdivision 6a, provides that “A local official required to file a statement under this section must file it with the governing body of the official’s political subdivision.” The complaint appears to allege that Ms. Commers failed to file an EIS with the City of Saint Paul within 60 days of becoming a local official, and includes evidence that Ms. Commers is a local official employed by a metropolitan governmental unit. The chair therefore concludes that the complaint states a prima facie violation of Minnesota Statutes section 10A.09.

Minnesota Statutes section 10A.01, subdivision 5, defines the term “associated business” to include “an association, corporation, partnership, limited liability company, limited liability partnership, or other organized legal entity from which the individual or the individual’s spouse receives compensation . . . or whose securities the individual or the individual’s spouse holds worth more than \$10,000 at fair market value,” or “a lobbyist, principal, or interested person by whom the individual is compensated . . . for providing services as an independent contractor or consultant.” Paragraph (c) of that subdivision provides that:

“Interested person” means a person or a representative of a person or association that has a direct financial interest in a decision that the individual receiving the compensation is authorized to make as a public or local official or will be authorized to make if the individual becomes a public or local official. To be direct, the financial interest of the person or association paying the compensation to the individual must be of greater consequence to the payer than

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<sup>7</sup> See Minn. Stat. § 471.345, subd. 1.

<sup>8</sup> [cfb.mn.gov/reports/current-lists/#/MGU-positions/all/](http://cfb.mn.gov/reports/current-lists/#/MGU-positions/all/)

the general interest of other residents or taxpayers of the individual's governmental unit.

Under Minnesota Statutes section 10A.07, subdivision 1:

(a) A public official or a local official elected to or appointed by a metropolitan governmental unit who in the discharge of official duties would be required to take an action or make a decision that would substantially affect the official's financial interests or those of an associated business, unless the effect on the official is no greater than on other members of the official's business classification, profession, or occupation, must take the following actions:

(1) prepare a written statement describing the matter requiring action or decision and the nature of the potential conflict of interest;

(2) deliver copies of the statement to the official's immediate superior, if any; and

(3) if a member of the legislature or of the governing body of a metropolitan governmental unit, deliver a copy of the statement to the presiding officer of the body of service.

If a potential conflict of interest presents itself and there is insufficient time to comply with clauses (1) to (3), the public or local official must orally inform the superior or the official body of service or committee of the body of the potential conflict.

(b) For purposes of this section, "financial interest" means any ownership or control in an asset that has the potential to produce a monetary return.

Minnesota Statutes section 10A.07, subdivision 2, paragraph (a), generally provides that when a potential conflict of interest has been disclosed by a nonelected local official, "the superior must assign the matter, if possible, to another employee who does not have a potential conflict of interest." Minnesota Statutes section 10A.07, subdivision 2, paragraph (d), provides:

If an official is not permitted or is otherwise unable to abstain from action in connection with the matter, the official must file a statement describing the potential conflict and the action taken. A public official must file the statement with the board and a local official must file the statement with the governing body of the official's political subdivision. The statement must be filed within a week of the action taken.

The complaint alleges that Ms. Commers is a local official. The complaint alleges that Ms. Commers both failed to disclose a potential conflict of interest and failed to abstain from making decisions regarding the housing discrimination complaint as required by Minnesota Statutes section 10A.07. The complaint includes evidence that decisions made by Ms. Commers regarding the housing discrimination complaint may have had the potential to affect the financial interests of Ms. Commers, or those of an associated business. Specifically, the complaint provides evidence of business relationships between the spouse of Ms. Commers

and Wellington Management, which was the respondent to the housing discrimination complaint. The complaint also provides evidence that the campaign committee of Ramsey County Attorney John Choi was an associated business of Ms. Commers during the same time period that Steve Wellington and his spouse made a campaign contribution to that committee. The chair therefore concludes that the complaint states a prima facie violation of Minnesota Statutes section 10A.07.

Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes section 10A.022, subdivision 3, this prima facie determination is made by a single Board member and not by any vote of the entire Board. This prima facie determination does not mean that the Board has commenced, or will commence an investigation or has made any determination of a violation by any of the individuals or entities named in the complaint.

Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes section 10A.022, subdivision 3 (d), within 60 days of the date of this determination, the Board will make findings and conclusions as to whether probable cause exists to believe that a violation of Minnesota Statutes sections 10A.07 or 10A.09 has occurred and warrants a formal investigation. The complainants and the respondent named in this prima facie determination will be given an opportunity to be heard by the Board prior to any decision on probable cause.

Until the Board makes a public finding or enters into a conciliation agreement, this matter is subject to the confidentiality requirements of Minnesota Statutes section 10A.022, subdivision 5.

  
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Faris Rashid, Chair  
Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board

Date: February 28, 2025