

Wilmington, Delaware
July 13, 2023

#0333

Sponsor:

**Council
Member
Darby**

WHEREAS, as legislative representatives elected by the citizens of Wilmington, members of City Council are held to a higher standard in the way they conduct themselves in the public light, as well as the manner in which they conduct public business; and

WHEREAS, elected officials should strive to represent their constituents rather than their own interests; and

WHEREAS, on May 14, 2020, Councilwoman Zanthia Oliver, 3rd District, attended and participated in the City of Wilmington’s Community Development and Urban Planning Committee Meeting (“CDUP Meeting”); and

WHEREAS, one item on the CDUP Meeting’s Agenda was a 196-page resolution identifying City grant beneficiaries for the City’s FY 2021 action plan (the “Plan”); and

WHEREAS, one of the Plan’s potential beneficiaries was Our Youth, Inc., an organization run by Councilwoman Oliver’s brother; and

WHEREAS, Section 2-340(a)(1) of the City Code states: “No ... elected official ... may participate on behalf of the city in the review or disposition of any matter pending before the city in which ... she has a personal or private interest[.]”

WHEREAS, Section 2-340(f)(2) of the City Code states: “No elected official shall vote for, or promote in any manner whatsoever, legislation affecting any subject matter in which he or she has a personal or private interest. Any such interest shall be disclosed by said elected officer prior to a vote on any such legislation, and elected official shall vote ‘present’ when called upon to vote.”

WHEREAS, on May 28, 2020, City Council voted on the Plan; and

WHEREAS, Councilwoman Zanthia Oliver voted in favor of the Plan; and

WHEREAS, on April 14, 2022, the City of Wilmington Ethics Commission received a notarized affidavit regarding this ethical violation; and

WHEREAS, the City of Wilmington Ethics Commission began investigating; and

WHEREAS, after investigation, on April 18, 2023, the City of Wilmington Ethics Commission imposed a public reprimand on Councilwoman Zanthia Oliver; and

WHEREAS, it is in this spirit that the City Council feels compelled to recognize behavior manifest in the actions of one of its members, and censure that behavior to set the tone that appearances of impropriety shall not be tolerated; and

WHEREAS, it is the position of this 108th Session of the Wilmington City Council that Councilwoman Zanthia Oliver has engaged in behavior that has an appearance of impropriety; and

WHEREAS, in light of this appearance of impropriety, this Council resolves that Councilwoman Zanthia Oliver has engaged in conduct unbecoming of her office, which constitutes a detriment to the office of a Member of Council, as well as Council as a whole.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON that Council seeks to formally censure and admonish Councilwoman Zanthia Oliver following the public reprimand imposed by the City of Wilmington Ethics Commission.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Council seeks to renew its resolve to the principles outlined in the City Code upheld by its members, and the Oath of Office taken by its members. This Council stands at the ready to move forward, and to collaborate around matters of community importance to our City.

Passed by City Council,

ATTEST: _____
City Clerk

SYNOPSIS: This Resolution issues a public censure of Councilmember Zanthia Oliver, following the public reprimand issued by the City of Wilmington Ethics Commission.