

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
COUNTY OF RICHLAND)

BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

IN THE MATTER OF:)

Complaint ~~2013-071~~)
2014-006)

Nathaniel A. Shaffer,)
Respondent.)

State Ethics Commission,)
Complainant.)

CONSENT ORDER

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This matter comes before the State Ethics Commission by virtue of a complaint filed by the Commission on July 23, 2013. The complaint against the Respondent, Nathaniel A. Shaffer, was considered by the Commission on September 18, 2013 and probable cause found to warrant an evidentiary hearing.

Prior to the call of the case Respondent agreed to entry of the following statements of fact, conclusions of law, admission, and disposition in this matter follows.

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STATEMENT OF FACTS

1. The Respondent, Nathaniel A. Shaffer, is the Mayor of the Town of Varnville in Hampton County.

2. Respondent's administrative assistant, Mrs. Amy Roberts, advised that she never was involved in receiving payments or writing out payment receipts for Respondent's real estate business. Mrs. Roberts said that there were a few occasions when Respondent's customers visited Varnville Town Hall (Town Hall) to make a rent payment. Mrs. Roberts stated that if someone arrived at Town Hall to meet with Respondent with any type of correspondence, and Respondent was not in his office, she

advised them to drop off any paperwork in Respondent's mail box located outside of his office.

3. The Clerk of Court for the Town of Varnville, Ms. Renee Bennett, said that she was never involved with accepting rental payments for Respondent. Ms. Bennett said that she did remember that on a few occasions people visited Town Hall to meet with Respondent to pay their rent. She said that one person got upset at her because she would not write out a receipt for their rent payment. Ms. Bennett said Respondent never asked her to accept rental payments for his real estate business.

4. A former Town of Varnville Water Department Administrative Assistant, Ms. Sophia Magwood, said that she never wrote out receipts for the people that visited Town Hall with rent payments for Respondent. Ms. Magwood said that in 2013, approximately three of Respondent's real estate customers visited Town Hall every month to make a rent payment for Respondent's business. She said that people brought in cash or an envelope. Ms. Magwood stated that until Respondent got a mail box in front of his office, she occasionally accepted payments from Respondent's rental customers and then placed the payment on Respondent's desk. Ms. Magwood said that Respondent did not ask her to take rental payments from his customers. Ms. Magwood said that in March or April of 2013, Respondent had a casual conversation with her about placing rental applications for his business at the front desk. She said Respondent did give her several applications and she placed them at her work station. Ms. Magwood said that in March or April of 2013, five or six people came into Town Hall and asked for rental application for Respondent's business. Ms. Magwood stated that she did give out the applications.



6. Respondent stated that between January and April of 2013, approximately five of his rental property customers, did drop off their rental payments at Town Hall every month. Respondent said that he did not instruct his customers to drop off their rental payments at Town Hall; however, his customers knew he worked at Town Hall. Respondent advised that allowing his customers to drop off their rental payments at Town Hall was an unintentional violation of the ethics rules. Respondent said that in March of 2013, he did place five or six rental applications for his rental property business at the customer service counter at Town Hall. Respondent said that placing the rental agreements at the front desk was not a good decision. Respondent stated placing the rental agreements at Town Hall was an unintentional violation of the ethics rules.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Based upon the foregoing Statement of Facts, the Commission concludes, as a matter of law:

1. During all times relevant, the Respondent, Nathaniel A. Shaffer, was a public official, as defined by S.C. Code Ann. § 8-13-100(27)(Supp. 2012).
2. The State Ethics Commission has personal and subject matter jurisdiction.
3. Section 8-13-700(A) prohibits a public official from using his official position to obtain an economic interest for himself or a business with which he is associated.
4. Section 8-13-100(4) states:

'Business with which he is associated' means a business of which the person or a member of his immediate family is a director, an officer, owner, employee, a compensated agent, or holder of stock worth one hundred thousand dollars or more at fair market value and which constitutes five percent or more of the total outstanding stock of any class.

ADMISSIONS



The Respondent, Nathaniel A. Shaffer, admits he violated Section 8-13-700(A) of the Ethics Reform Act.

DISPOSITION

The State Ethics Commission hereby finds Nathaniel A. Shaffer in violation of Section 8-13-700(A) of the Ethics Reform Act and hereby adopts the Statement of Facts, Conclusions of Law, Admissions, Discussion, and Disposition as agreed upon by the Respondent.

THEREFORE, the State Ethics Commission hereby issues a public reprimand to Nathaniel A. Shaffer for his violation of Section 8-13-700(A) of the Ethics Reform Act,

AND, orders Respondent to pay an administrative fee of \$500.00 within 30 days of receipt of the signed order,

AND IT IS SO ORDERED THIS 21st DAY OF May 2014.

STATE ETHICS COMMISSION


James H. Burns
Chairman


Nathaniel A. Shaffer
Respondent

