

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION

Complaint of Adrean Rodriguez, East Hartford

File No. 2012-233

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Complainant filed this complaint with the Commission pursuant to General Statutes § 9-7b alleging that a website maintained by the Connecticut Property Owners Alliance, Inc. or the Pinnacle Development Group, LLC failed to include the attribution required by General Statutes § 9-621 and that the solicitation of funds through such website violated election law.

After an investigation of the complaint, the Commission makes the following findings and conclusions:

1. At all times relevant hereto, Connecticut Property Owners Alliance, Inc., incorporated in 1995, (the "Respondent") maintained a website named "savenewbritain.com" (the "Website").
2. The Website included issue advocacy, also known as municipal lobbying, regarding the governance of the City of New Britain (e.g., "We need your help to repeal these bad ordinances.")
3. The Respondent solicited contributions for itself through the Website. The funds were not identified as being solicited for electoral purposes rather than for the general mission of the Respondent.
4. Aside from the broad ranging and expansive issue advocacy described above, the Website also included an apparently singular and isolated example of a potential political solicitation to vote in an upcoming municipal election scheduled for November 5, 2013. Specifically, such communication read, "Countdown to election day. Sanity gets restored to City Hall in [date from countdown clock]." (the "Countdown Clock"), which statement fails to meet any threshold established under General Statutes § 9-621 requires an attribution to attach.
5. Promptly upon receipt of the instant complaint in December of 2012, the Respondent voluntarily and out of caution, removed the material and links at issue from the Website and returned any funds solicited through the Website, which amounted to less than \$500.00.

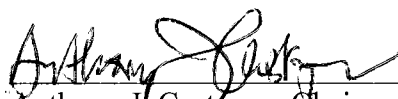
6. The Respondent has cooperated fully with the instant investigation and has no record of committing an elections law violation since its incorporation in 1995.
7. While the Complainant alleges that the Pinnacle Development Group, LLC is associated with the Website, the Respondent has confirmed its control over the Website.
8. Following a complete and thorough investigation the Commission makes no finding of an elections violation in this matter and recommends that the matter be dismissed.

ORDER

The following is ordered on the basis of the aforementioned findings:

That the matter be dismissed.

Adopted this 18th day of September of 2013 at Hartford, Connecticut.


Anthony J. Castagno, Chair
By Order of the Commission