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Mayor Reed to Hold Community Hearings on Ethics and Open Government

SAN JOSE, CALIF. – Mayor Chuck Reed announces the first of a series of community hearings on ethics and open government leading up to the fall Mayor’s Biennial Ethics Review. The first meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, June 24 in Room 120 at San José City Hall.

On April 29, Mayor Reed announced a series of issues that the 2009 Mayor’s Biennial Ethics Review may consider, including:

- Should penalties for violation of the lobbyist ordinance be criminalized?
- Should Council Committees take action or consider late memos?
- Should the Elections Commission accept anonymous complaints?
- Is the definition of lobbyist too narrow and are there too many exceptions?
- Should there be a penalty for releasing confidential Elections Commission complaints?
- Should the prohibition banning political activities of Elections Commissioners be expanded to other commissions?
- What is the appropriate cure for violations of the Brown Act?
- Should there be a penalty for failure to maintain calendars?
- What level of interaction with City/Agency staff should trigger lobbyist reporting requirements?
- Should a two day notice be required for lobbyist campaign contributions and fundraising activities?

The community meetings will allow the public to share ideas for improving the current lobbyist ordinance, campaign finance regulations, and other regulations governing ethical behavior by elected officials, lobbyists, and city employees.

“As recent events demonstrate, the current complaint process offers opportunities for wealthy individuals and special interests to manipulate the process for their own political agendas and personal vendettas,” said Mayor Reed. “We need to close loopholes and strengthen our ethics and lobbyist ordinances to ensure honesty and open government in San José. The right to make anonymous complaints should be reserved to protect whistleblowers, not individuals with access to high-priced lawyers and political consultants.”

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