



Reinvent Albany Calls for Stronger Ethics Rules for Community Boards at Conflicts of Interest Board Hearing

COIB Finalizing Rules on Community Board Ethics Derived from Past Advisory Opinions

At a Conflicts of Interest Board (COIB) hearing today on draft rules, [Reinvent Albany called on COIB to strengthen ethics rules for community boards](#). [Media reports](#) and public testimony to the 2018 New York City Charter Revision Commission have highlighted how community boards are often unaware of, and do not comply with ethics requirements.

Reinvent Albany testified that community board members with conflicts should be barred from discussing matters in which they are conflicted, except at a public meeting where they disclose their conflict. COIB has proposed these members only be barred from voting but remain free to discuss and persuade other community board members of their position, even if they have a conflict, as long as they disclose the conflict. Reinvent Albany also called on COIB to require in its rules that community boards report any disclosure of conflicts and recusals from voting in board minutes. Community board members can have conflicts when they also serve a government agency or if they may personally financially benefit from a matter before the board.

Reinvent Albany also believes community board members serving on a local development corporation should not be able to vote on matters before the board related to their local development corporation (LDC), like a recommendation regarding a budgetary allocation to the LDC. COIB [Advisory Opinion 1993-3](#) allows voting even with this conflict. Reinvent Albany also called on COIB to require community board members also serving on a Community Education Councils (CEC) to disclose any conflicts at board meetings, and be prevented from chairing any education-related community board meetings to ensure community boards perspectives on education remain distinct from local CECs.

To address noncompliance and lack of awareness of ethics rules by boards, Reinvent Albany called on COIB to conduct more training of board members and district managers, as well as monitor boards more closely. The COIB should also consider creating a database of conflicts disclosed and voting recusals to determine the number and types of conflicts community board members have across the city.