

Mississippi Ethics Commission Opinion Resulted in Hattiesburg Realtor Chris Price Dropping Out of Ward 4 Council Race



Hattiesburg
Realtor Chris
Price is
employed at
Vines Realty
and is a
close friend
and Realtor
for Mayoral
Candidate and
Ward 4
Councilman
Dave Ware.

A March 8th, 2013 Mississippi Ethics Commission opinion determined that Realtor Chris Price could not serve as a councilman and also collect a real estate commission related to the city's Land Application Project; and doing so would not be ethical. Price was securing options to purchase land for Dr. Bennett York's Land Application group while he was also campaigning for city council. When asked if he had a comment

as to why he (Price) submitted a request for an ethics opinion so far into his candidacy Price responded, "No, I don't have a comment on that." Submitters of ethics opinions are anonymous. It is not clear whether Price submitted the request himself, or if it was submitted by someone else in the 1st person. What's interesting is on the same day the ethics opinion was handed down Mr. Price filed his qualifying paperwork to run for city council.

Price is also a close personal friend and Realtor for Councilman Dave Ware. Ware was supporting Price via social media in Price's bid to become Councilman for the Ward 4 seat that Ware was vacating in his bid to run for mayor. Ware has called Modern Mechanical waste water treatment "impractical" and has been bias in favor of Land Application. Ware and Price also partnered in the tornado recovery effort and were covered on WDAM for their joint effort to replace books for DREAM in their selfless act of charity. It is not clear who called WDAM to report this selfless act of charity. It should come as no surprise to readers here that Ware will likely support Price making his commission in the land deal, given the opportunity.

Price also endorsed Mary Dryden for city council. Dryden's daughter is married to [Joseph F. Tatum III](#). The Tatum family owns a large amount of land in Lamar county that is part of the land which would be used by the city under Dr. York's land application group. It is not clear if Price himself was the one that optioned the Tatum land plot, but his motive for endorsing Dryden is dubious. If elected as Ward 4's councilwoman Dryden could likely be a deciding vote on which land group to choose. Dryden's family (daughter and grandchildren) might stand to benefit of inherit or make a small fortune on the land deal. Dryden is an outspoken advocate of land application. It is not clear if Mrs. Dryden would be facing a similar conflict of interest that Price faced. The Hattiesburg Patriot has been informed that an ethics opinion will also be requested for Dryden in the matter

if she doesn't voluntarily submit a request of her own. This whole land deal project smells of good old boy politics and reeks of numerous conflicts of interests.

Below is the ethics opinion provided to the Hattiesburg Patriot by an anonymous source. Section III includes the analysis. Below that document is the official statement Price released to the media two weeks after the ethics opinion was issued.

http://www.mississippimedianetwork.com/wp-content/blogs.dir/94/files/2013/05/Chris_Price.pdf

March 22, 2013

I began campaigning for Councilman for Ward4 because I wanted the opportunity to part of the solutions that can improve quality of life for people of Hattiesburg. In the past year, I got that opportunity through my business and the land application project.

I have gone to great lengths to preserve the integrity of such a dynamic project. However, because of the nature of my profession, I feel that where I can most effectively serve the community now is by continuing with this work, which is a critical part of Hattiesburg's future.

With a heavy heart, the blessings of my family, and the advice of my wisest advisers, I must withdraw from this campaign. No matter the results on June 4th, I will continue to be the voice of action for Ward 4 and the Hattiesburg community. As I have for many years, I will commit myself to doing what I can to address whatever challenges that our city faces. Ward 4 is fortunate to have Mary Dryden as a candidate, and I encourage all of my supports to rally behind her as we continue to grow as a Ward and become an example for the City of Hattiesburg. I look forward to celebrating the progress we can make together.

Sincerely,

J. Christopher Price