

WILLIAM "BILL" EDDINS  
STATE ATTORNEY



P.O. Box 12726  
Pensacola, FL 32591  
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OFFICE OF  
**STATE ATTORNEY**  
FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA

August 18, 2016

**PRESS RELEASE**

State Attorney Bill Eddins announced today that four members of the Citizens Advisory Task Force, an advisory board to the Town of Century City Council, have been charged with noncriminal violations of the Florida Government in the Sunshine Law. Alfonzie Cottrell, Helen Mincy, Sylvia Godwin, and Robert Mitchell have been charged for having a public meeting that was not properly advertised. On July 26, 2016, a meeting was advertised to begin at 4:00 p.m. The meeting was actually held at 2:00 p.m. preventing the public from attending. In addition, a letter has been sent to the Town of Century recommending changes to their procedures to prevent this from happening in the future. This case is set for arraignment on September 7, 2016.

Attached to this press release are copies of the charging documents as well as the letter to the Town of Century. For further information, please contact State Attorney Bill Eddins at 595-4761.

Case Number 2016mm5003C Arrest Date \_\_\_\_\_ Agency Report# \_\_\_\_\_

RACE: B SEX: M DOB: 04/22/1938 SSN#: UNKNOWN

1) VIOLATION OF GOVERNMENT IN THE SUNSHINE LAW

IN THE NAME AND BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA  
IN THE COUNTY COURT OF ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

STATE OF FLORIDA

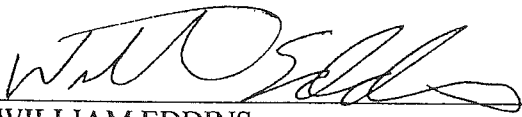
vs.

ALFONZIE COTTRELL

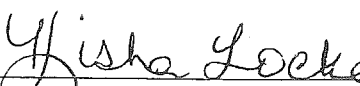
WILLIAM EDDINS, State Attorney for the First Judicial Circuit, prosecuting for the STATE OF FLORIDA, charges that ALFONZIE COTTRELL, on or about July 26, 2016, at and in Escambia County, Florida, and while a member of a board or commission of a municipal corporation or political subdivision, to wit: The Citizens Advisory Task Force, an Advisory Board to the Century City Council, did unlawfully engage in a discussion or exchange of information with other members of said Task Force, regarding a matter which foreseeably would come before said board or commission for action, outside of a properly advertised public meeting, in violation of Section 286.011(1), Florida Statutes, said violation being a noncriminal infraction in violation of Section 286.011(3)(a), Florida Statutes.

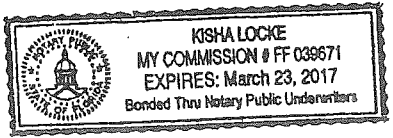
STATE OF FLORIDA  
COUNTY OF ESCAMBIA

BEFORE ME, personally appeared the undersigned State Attorney for the First Judicial Circuit of Florida, being personally known to me, and who first being duly sworn, says that the allegations set forth in the foregoing information and which if true, would constitute the offense there charged, that the Office of the State Attorney has received testimony from a material witness or witnesses for the offense and that this prosecution is instituted in good faith.

  
WILLIAM EDDINS  
State Attorney for the First Judicial Circuit

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 16 day of August, 2016.

  
Notary Public  
State of Florida



2016 AUG 17 A 9:33  
CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT  
ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FL  
FAM CHILDERS

Case Number 2016 mm 5063D Arrest Date \_\_\_\_\_ Agency Report# \_\_\_\_\_

RACE: B SEX: F DOB: 06/01/1941 SSN#: UNKNOWN

1) VIOLATION OF GOVERNMENT IN THE SUNSHINE LAW

IN THE NAME AND BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA  
IN THE COUNTY COURT OF ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

STATE OF FLORIDA

vs.


HELEN MINCY

PAH CHILDERS  
CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT  
ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FL  
2016 AUG 17 A 9:31  
DUPLICATE FILED

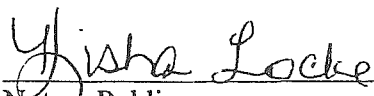
WILLIAM EDDINS, State Attorney for the First Judicial Circuit, prosecuting for the STATE OF FLORIDA, charges that HELEN MINCY, on or about July 26, 2016, at and in Escambia County, Florida, and while a member of a board or commission of a municipal corporation or political subdivision, to wit: The Citizens Advisory Task Force, an Advisory Board to the Century City Council, did unlawfully engage in a discussion or exchange of information with other members of said Task Force, regarding a matter which foreseeably would come before said board or commission for action, outside of a properly advertised public meeting, in violation of Section 286.011(1), Florida Statutes, said violation being a noncriminal infraction in violation of Section 286.011(3)(a), Florida Statutes.

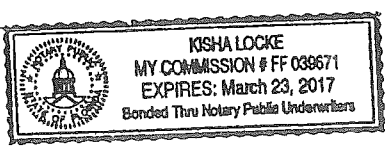
STATE OF FLORIDA  
COUNTY OF ESCAMBIA

BEFORE ME, personally appeared the undersigned State Attorney for the First Judicial Circuit of Florida, being personally known to me, and who first being duly sworn, says that the allegations set forth in the foregoing information and which if true, would constitute the offense there charged, that the Office of the State Attorney has received testimony from a material witness or witnesses for the offense and that this prosecution is instituted in good faith.

  
WILLIAM EDDINS  
State Attorney for the First Judicial Circuit

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 16 day of August, 2016.

  
Notary Public  
State of Florida



Case Number 2016 mm 5063A Arrest Date \_\_\_\_\_ Agency Report# \_\_\_\_\_

RACE: W SEX: F DOB: 11/27/1942 SSN#: UNKNOWN

1) VIOLATION OF GOVERNMENT IN THE SUNSHINE LAW

IN THE NAME AND BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA  
IN THE COUNTY COURT OF ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

STATE OF FLORIDA

vs.

SYLVIA GODWIN

2016 AUG 17 A 9:31  
CLERK OF COUNTY COURT  
ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

WILLIAM EDDINS, State Attorney for the First Judicial Circuit, prosecuting for the STATE OF FLORIDA, charges that SYLVIA GODWIN, on or about July 26, 2016, at and in Escambia County, Florida, and while a member of a board or commission of a municipal corporation or political subdivision, to wit: The Citizens Advisory Task Force, an Advisory Board to the Century City Council, did unlawfully engage in a discussion or exchange of information with other members of said Task Force, regarding a matter which foreseeably would come before said board or commission for action, outside of a properly advertised public meeting, in violation of Section 286.011(1), Florida Statutes, said violation being a noncriminal infraction in violation of Section 286.011(3)(a), Florida Statutes.

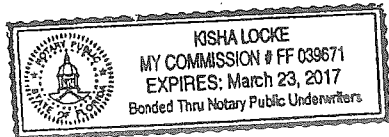
STATE OF FLORIDA  
COUNTY OF ESCAMBIA

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William Eddins  
WILLIAM EDDINS  
State Attorney for the First Judicial Circuit

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 16 day of August, 2016.

Kisha Locke  
Notary Public  
State of Florida



Case Number 2016mm 5063B Arrest Date \_\_\_\_\_ Agency Report# \_\_\_\_\_

RACE: B SEX: M DOB: 09/23/1939 SSN#: UNKNOWN

1) VIOLATION OF GOVERNMENT IN THE SUNSHINE LAW

IN THE NAME AND BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA  
IN THE COUNTY COURT OF ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

2016 AUG 17 A 9:31  
PAM CHILDFERS  
CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT  
ESCAMBIA COUNTY FL

STATE OF FLORIDA

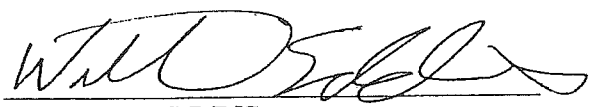
vs.

ROBERT MITCHELL

WILLIAM EDDINS, State Attorney for the First Judicial Circuit, prosecuting for the STATE OF FLORIDA, charges that ROBERT MITCHELL, on or about July 26, 2016, at and in Escambia County, Florida, and while a member of a board or commission of a municipal corporation or political subdivision, to wit: The Citizens Advisory Task Force, an Advisory Board to the Century City Council, did unlawfully engage in a discussion or exchange of information with other members of said Task Force, regarding a matter which foreseeably would come before said board or commission for action, outside of a properly advertised public meeting, in violation of Section 286.011(1), Florida Statutes, said violation being a noncriminal infraction in violation of Section 286.011(3)(a), Florida Statutes.

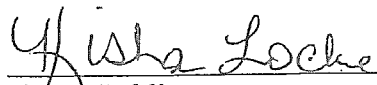
STATE OF FLORIDA  
COUNTY OF ESCAMBIA

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WILLIAM EDDINS  
State Attorney for the First Judicial Circuit

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 16 day of August, 2016.



Notary Public  
State of Florida



WILLIAM "BILL" EDDINS  
STATE ATTORNEY



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OFFICE OF  
**STATE ATTORNEY**  
FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA

August 17, 2016

Mayor Freddie W. McCall, Sr.  
Town of Century  
7995 N. Century Blvd.  
Century, FL 32535

Dear Mayor McCall:

This office has completed its review of allegations that members of the Citizens Advisory Task Force violated the Florida Government in the Sunshine Law by holding a public meeting at a time other than what was advertised in the public notice. Based upon our review, we have determined that a Sunshine Law violation has occurred. As a result of that decision, we have filed noncriminal infraction charges against the members of that task force. We have also determined that the Town of Century bears considerable responsibility in this matter.

In this case, public notices were advertised on NorthEscambia.com and in the Tri-City Ledger that the Citizens Advisory Task Force would hold a public meeting on July 26, 2016, at 4:00 p.m. The time listed on the notice was incorrect and should have stated 2:00 p.m. The meeting was held at 2:00 p.m. and concluded before 4:00 p.m. As a result, this meeting was held outside the Sunshine and without proper notice to the public. It is unclear if the problem with the erroneous time was ever discussed at the meeting. To avoid this issue occurring in the future, we recommend that at the beginning of all public meetings, the advertised notice be clearly reviewed on the record to determine that the meeting has been properly advertised.


It is also apparent that the members of the Citizens Advisory Task Force were not sufficiently educated as to their responsibilities under the Florida Government in the Sunshine Law. We recommend that the Town of Century immediately establish training programs for all individuals serving on Sunshine boards or committees. We recommend that an outside agency such as the First Amendment Foundation be used for the training.

Finally, concerns have been raised that the Town of Century has not adequately advertised the dates and times of public meetings. We recommend that the Town follow the suggestions of the Attorney General's Office regarding public notices. These recommendations indicated that all meetings, with the exception of emergency or special meetings, should be advertised at least seven days prior to the meeting. Special meetings should be given notice of no less than 24

hours but preferably at least 72 hours notice should be given to the public. Emergency meetings should be afforded the most appropriate and effective notice under the circumstances. This notice should contain the date, time, and place of the meeting, as well as a copy of the agenda or statement of the general subject matter to be considered.

Should you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Marcille", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gregory A. Marcille  
Chief Assistant State Attorney

GAM/kll