

Frederick County Ethics Commission
Minutes for the Public Meeting of Tuesday, May 10, 2005

Present: Ronald W. Peppe, Chairman
 G. Anthony Crook, Commission Member
 Phillip P. Killam, Commission Member
 Andrew T. Jones, Alternate Commission Member
 Linda B. Thall, Assistant County Attorney

The Frederick County Ethics Commission met at 7:00 p.m. on May 10, 2005, at the Office of the County Attorney on the 3rd floor of Winchester Hall, 12 East Church Street, Frederick, Maryland 21701.

Unfinished Business

Approval of the minutes – The Commission considered the minutes from its March 7, 2005, meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Crook made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Killam seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

New Business

Ethics Ordinance amendment – The Commission discussed whether to send to the Board of County Commissioners a recommendation that the Ethics Ordinance be amended to no longer allow acceptance of unsolicited gifts of tickets or free admission to attend professional or intercollegiate sporting events. The Commission also reviewed the letter to the Board of County Commissioners drafted by the Assistant County Attorney. Other possible recommendations for the future were also discussed.

MOTION: Mr. Crook made a motion to approve the letter to the Board of County Commissioners as drafted. Mr. Killam seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Commission's standard operating procedures and conflict of interest guidelines – The Commission discussed whether it wanted to revise its standard operating procedures, dated June 1989, and its guidelines for conflict of interest situations, dated March 1987.

MOTION: Mr. Crook made a motion to rescind the 1987 guidelines to require the Ethics Commission to address the issue in a timely manner. Mr. Peppe seconded the motion. The motion was not approved, with Mr. Crook voting in favor of the motion and Mr. Peppe and Mr. Killam voting against the motion.

Mr. Peppe and Mr. Jones favored combining the two documents into a single document. Mr. Crook preferred to have the Commission issue a new Advisory Opinion. Mr. Killam wanted to leave the 1987 guidelines alone until the Commission is ready to issue a corrected version.

MOTION: Mr. Killam made a motion to ask the Assistant County Attorney to prepare a draft of the standard operating procedures for discussion at a future meeting. Mr. Crook seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Mr. Jones requested that the draft, with suggested changes, be e-mailed to everyone for comments. Mr. Crook wanted all members of the Commission to be involved in decision making. He suggested e-mailing all Commission members as issues arise. If any Commission member wanted to meet to discuss the issue, a meeting would be scheduled. Mr. Killam noted that this would require all Commission members to respond when they receive an e-mail message. There was also a discussion of whether the Commission should require complaints to be signed and in writing and whether e-mailed complaints should be accepted.

Request for Advisory Opinion regarding a golf tournament – The Commission received a request for an Advisory Opinion from an appointed member of a County Commission. That Commission is planning to host a golf tournament to focus attention on women's health issues. Money raised would be used to pay the expenses of the golf tournament. Any money left over would be distributed to charities concerned with women's health issues in Frederick County.

Mr. Crook noted that the money raised by the tournament should not go to any charity with which any of the Commissioners were affiliated. Mr. Killam wanted the Advisory Opinion to use the wording in the County law allowing the Commission making the request to secure financial assistance from governmental and private institutions. The law does not refer to fund raising from individuals. The Commission asked that a draft Advisory Opinion be prepared for Mr. Peppe's signature.

Adjournment

MOTION: Mr. Killam moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Crook seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

The Ethics Commission adjourned its meeting at 9:00 p.m.

/s/

Linda B. Thall, Assistant County Attorney