



**Palm Beach County
Commission on Ethics**
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News Release

For Immediate Release

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Summary of Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics Meeting Held on October 1, 2015

The Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics (COE) took the following actions at its monthly public meeting held on October 1, 2015.

Two complaints were heard in executive session. All documents pertaining to both complaints are published on the COE website at <http://www.palmbeachcountyetics.com/complaints.htm>.

C15-007: The COE reviewed and considered the investigative report, statement and probable cause recommendation of the COE advocate, and the statement made by the respondent. The COE found no probable cause and issued a public report and final order of dismissal.

C15-008: The COE reviewed and considered the investigative report, statement and probable cause recommendation of the COE advocate, and the statement made by the respondent. The COE found no probable cause and issued a public report and final order of dismissal.

Two advisory opinions were approved. The full opinions are published and available at:

<http://www.palmbeachcountyetics.com/opinions.htm>

RQO 15-042: An employee of Palm Tran asked if her husband's employment at Maruti Transit, a vendor of Palm Tran Connection, created a prohibited conflict of interest for her.

The COE opined as follows: Her husband's employment would not create a prohibited conflict of interest for her as long as she does not wrongfully use her official position or influence others to take any action to corruptly secure a special benefit, including a benefit that is not financial in nature, for her husband's outside employer (Maruti Transit). However, although there may be no per se prohibited conflict of interest under the Code of Ethics, there may be an appearance of impropriety, especially if any discretionary actions are involved, since the person who oversees the complaint process for Palm Tran Connection reports directly to her.

RQO 15-043: An appointed official asked (1) if his membership on the West Palm Beach Downtown Action Committee (DAC) prohibits him from interviewing persons on his radio show who have previously appeared, who may appear, or who will be appearing before the DAC and (2) if the Code restricts who he solicits to be advertisers or sponsors of his show.

The COE opined as follows:

(1) His membership on the DAC does not prohibit him from interviewing persons who have previously appeared, who may appear, or who will be appearing before the DAC as long as he does not use his official position to give a special financial benefit to any prohibited person or to corruptly secure a special benefit, including a benefit that is not financial in nature, for anyone.

(2) However, the official, and anyone soliciting indirectly on his behalf, is prohibited from soliciting advertising or sponsorships from members of the public in his official capacity as a DAC member. He is not prohibited from soliciting advertisers or sponsors for his radio show in his personal capacity, so long as he does not solicit or accept donations in excess of \$100 from any vendor, lobbyist, or any principal or employer of a lobbyist who lobbies the DAC. He must take great care not to use his official position to benefit an advertiser or sponsor appearing before the DAC.

A detailed explanation of all agenda items is available at

<http://www.palmbeachcountyetics.com/meetings.htm>.

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