



Honesty - Integrity - Character

**Palm Beach County
Commission on Ethics**

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News Release

For Immediate Release

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February 2, 2017

Mark E. Bannon, Executive Director
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Summary of Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics Meeting Held on February 2, 2017

The Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics (COE) took the following actions at its monthly public meeting held on February 2, 2017.

Executive Director Mark Bannon presented the COE's 2016 Annual Report.

Two complaints were heard in executive session. The complete files are published on the COE website at: <http://www.palmbeachcountyethics.com/complaints.htm>.

C16-008: The COE reviewed and considered the investigative report, the probable cause recommendation, and the statements of the COE advocate and respondent. The COE found that probable cause did not exist and dismissed the case.

C16-010: The COE reviewed and considered the investigative report, the probable cause recommendation, and the statements of the COE advocate and respondent. The COE found that probable cause did not exist and dismissed the case.

Two advisory opinions were approved. The full opinions are published and available at: <http://www.palmbeachcountyethics.com/opinions.htm>

RQO 17-001: A Palm Beach County employee asked if the county may redeem its Snack Reward credits from Betty Mills, a vendor of the county, and donate the redeemed snacks to the Senator Philip D. Lewis Center, a local homeless center.

The COE opined as follows: The Code of Ethics does not prohibit the county from accepting these generally offered Snack Rewards accrued in conjunction with purchasing products from Betty Mills. The code also has no prohibition regarding the donation of these Snack Rewards to the homeless center because the Code of Ethics is not implicated in such an instance. Once received, the Snack Rewards become county property and, thus, can be disposed of in any manner allowed by county policy.

RQO 17-003: The city attorney for the Town of Juno Beach asked if the Code of Ethics prohibits a councilman from participating in discussions and voting on the future use of a vacant property owned by the Town of Juno Beach when the councilman owns a unit in the condominium complex which is located across the street from the vacant property.

The COE opined as follows: The Town Council will be discussing and voting on whether to leave the vacant property "as is," convert the vacant property into a park, or declare the vacant property as surplus real property and offer it for sale. The matter before the Town Council does not involve any specific development application; it only involves a preliminary determination of future use. Therefore, although the councilman lives in a condominium complex across the street from the vacant property, whether any of the proposed uses of the vacant property would result in a special financial benefit to him is remote and speculative. Because the vote has no direct and immediate financial benefit to the councilman, he is not prohibited from participating in and voting on the future use of the vacant property under the circumstances listed.

A detailed explanation of all agenda items is available at <http://www.palmbeachcountyethics.com/meetings.htm>.

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