



MONTGOMERY COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSION

Public Meeting of October 14, 2014

Minutes

IN ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners:	Kenita V. Barrow, Chair Mark L. Greenblatt, Vice-Chair Steve Rosen
Staff Member:	Robert W. Cobb, Chief Counsel

Item 1. The meeting was called to order at 7:25 p.m.

Item 2. The minutes from the 9/9/2014 meeting were approved as presented.

Item 3. Robert Cobb gave an overview of the status of the pending ethics legislation, recapping the session before the County Council on September 16. He indicated that the Government Operations session that was scheduled for September 22 was postponed to October 13 and then postponed again to January 2015. Cobb indicated that the County Council seemed concerned with the elimination of exceptions to the solicitation prohibition that would limit Council members' ability to participate in charitable fundraising activities.

Item 4. Cobb discussed a draft list of suggestions for legislative change. The list includes several minor changes to the County's ethics law to address language anomalies in current law. The list also includes some major suggested changes that Cobb believes are worthy of discussion. In particular, Cobb suggests that the requirement that the Ethics Commission be involved in outside employment approvals should be dropped.

This is particularly so with respect to the Montgomery County Police Department, where a regimen has been established that is inconsistent with the public ethics law -- the ethics regulations that replicate what has been negotiated between the Fraternal Order of Police and the department are permissive of activities that involve the use of public office for private gain, which is inimical to the ethics regime. If this is an activity that the County believes is worthwhile, the ethics law should be changed to except the activity and the activity should be taken outside the purview of the Ethics Commission. The Ethics Commission did not adopt or reject any portion of Cobb's list of potential legislative items. Cobb is to organize the materials in such a way as to facilitate discussions with legislative counsel and the County Attorney on ways to improve the County's ethics laws.

The meeting adjourned at 7:45.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert W. Cobb".

Robert W. Cobb