



MONTGOMERY COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSION

Public Meeting of March 13, 2012

Minutes

IN ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners:	Nina Weisbroth, Chair Stuart Rick, Vice Chair Kenita Barrow Antar Johnson
Staff Members:	Robert Cobb, Chief Counsel

Item 1. The Meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Item 2. The Minutes from the February 13, 2012, meeting were approved with one minor edit.

Item 3. Robert Cobb reported on several matters.

- Cobb reported on the County Executive's proposed budget as regards the Ethics Commission, and particularly, the dedicated funds for the advancement of an online filing system for lobbying disclosure. Some discussion followed about the lobbying program, including informal concerns expressed by the Inspector General's office about checks and balances regarding lobbying fee receipts. Cobb discussed improvements in internal controls but acknowledged a lack of segregation of duties that creates at least a theoretical vulnerability. Cobb described the fee deposit process, and a question was raised as to whether the checks were made to Montgomery County or the Montgomery County Ethics Commission.
- Status of Legislative Project. Cobb reported that he had scheduled a meeting for Thursday of this week with legislative and executive counsel to further the project to revise the ethics laws in accordance with state requirements. There was brief discussion of the latest proposed changes to the Ethics Law which address the equivalency requirements imposed by State law. Cobb is to report to the Commission with the results of the Thursday meeting with counsel.
- Draft Annual Report. The sense of the Commission was that the draft report addresses topics that extend well beyond what is statutorily expected in an annual report. The

Montgomery County Ethics Commission

report needs to be edited to be more limited. As a separate matter, the Commission discussed that some of the topics in the draft might be appropriate for a letter to the County Executive with a copy to the County Council in the form of an internal assessment of programs and operations of the Commission. This should be considered by Mr. Cobb as a possible separate project.

- Mr. Cobb informed the Commission that the Inspector General had identified that minutes in prior years did not reflect extensions of time issued by the Ethics Commission for filers of financial disclosure reports to file their reports beyond the April 15 deadline. The Ethics Commission by vote authorized Mr. Cobb to grant an extension of time to all annual filers of 2011 reports of between 30 and 45 days as Mr. Cobb thinks appropriate. Mr. Cobb indicated that the launch date for filing reports has not yet been determined and that staff is still identifying and resolving issues on the launch list of employees.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Robert W. Cobb
Chief Counsel