

May 1, 2001
Re: IO-01-62

You inquired whether it is permissible for members of the county council to participate in broadcasting 30 second public service announcements with Comcast. You advised that the contract negotiations with Comcast have ended and the franchise agreement has been signed. The county council has no administrative responsibilities involving Comcast, although the council has the authority to revoke the agreement. In AO-99-212, the ethics commission advised council members not to participate in the making of these announcements while contract negotiations were pending. The commission also suggested that in the absence of contract negotiations, the offer to broadcast these brief messages featuring council members would probably be permissible under §3-106(c)(3) as gifts of nominal value. Since the contract has been signed and since the council is not involved in the administration of the contract, or in any pending issues, disputes, or other areas of potential conflict involving Comcast, the ethics commission has concluded that council members may participate in these brief broadcasts.

Thank you for your inquiry. Please call if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Betsy K. Dawson
Executive Director

delivered by FAX and interoffice mail