

July 10, 2002
Re: IO-02-83

You inquired whether you may request that developers provide your office with pictures, plans or renderings of their projects in Anne Arundel County, to hang in your conference room for decoration. Under §3-106(a) of the Public Ethics Law, employees may not solicit gifts from controlled donors in the circumstances you describe. However, you may certainly ask people if they would like to provide pictures of their projects for you to hang up with the understanding that they will retain ownership of the items, and that they will be returned upon request. If you are borrowing these pictures, you will have no concerns with the gift provisions of the ethics law. If the lenders offer these pictures as gifts, without having been solicited to give them as gifts, you may accept them on behalf of the county. I believe that there is an Admin Pro about gifts given to the county, and you may want to review this information. Also, if you are interested, the ethics commission has issued a number of opinions on gift solicitations. This letter expresses only my opinion, and not the opinion of the ethics commission. If you would like the consideration of the full commission on this matter, please let me know.

Thank you for your inquiry.

Sincerely,

Betsy K. Dawson
Executive Director