

January 9, 2007

By Electronic and Interoffice Mail

Re: AO-07-03

You inquired whether the county executive may accept two complimentary tickets to attend the 9th annual Mardi Gras Gala held by the Arts Council of Anne Arundel County, Inc. The ethics commission advises that the tickets may be accepted by the county executive for his use and the use of his guest. Under §7-5-106(c)(2)(vii), tickets or free admission extended to an elected employee from the person sponsoring or conducting a charitable, cultural, or political event, as a courtesy or ceremony to the office may be accepted as an exception to the general gift prohibition. There is no monetary limit placed on this exception.

According to the announcement for the gala, available on the art council's website at <http://www.annearundelartscouncil.org/mardigras.html>, the purpose of the event is "to benefit area arts organizations & Arts-in-Education." Since the county executive appoints members to the council's board, it is customary and appropriate for the arts council to invite the county executive "as a courtesy to the office."

This event is precisely the type of event for which this exception to the gift prohibition was designed; a charitable function that will benefit the citizens of the county.

Thank you for your inquiry.

By Anne Arundel County Ethics Commission

By: _____
Betsy K. Dawson, Executive Director