



The Board of Ethics

November 28, 2001

Alderwoman Rosa Cameron
200 East Wells St.
Milwaukee, WI 53202

rec. from
ATTY McGraw
5/7/02

Dear Alderwoman Cameron

Thank you for meeting with the Board of Ethics this morning to explain your request for a confidential advisory opinion and answer our questions relating to this opinion. After considering your explanation and the information you provided with your request, the Board offers the following opinion:

- 1) There is technically no violation of the City of Milwaukee Code of Ethics if you vote on issues related to funding for the Williamsburg Heights Community Association. This determination is based on the following two issues presented to us as fact.
 - a) You have one daughter currently employed by the Williamsburg Heights Community Association as Executive Director and another may be taking a position with the organization as a project coordinator. While these are your daughters, they are not part of your Immediate Family as defined in Section 303-3(5).

303-3 (5) IMMEDIATE FAMILY means:

- (a) An individual's spouse; and
- (b) An individual's relative by marriage, lineal descent or adoption *who receives, directly or indirectly, more than one-half of his or her support from the individual or from whom the individual receives more than one-half of his or her support.* (emphasis added)

You stated that your daughters are living independent of you, not receiving the majority of their support from you and not supporting you.

- b) While you were personally involved in founding the Williamsburg Heights Community Association, you are no longer associated with the organization as defined in 303-3 (2) of the City of Milwaukee Code of Ethics.

303-3 (2) ASSOCIATED, when used with reference to an organization, includes any organization in which an individual or a member of his or her immediate family is a director, officer or trustee, or owns or controls, directly or indirectly, and severally or in aggregate, at least 10% of the outstanding equity or of which an individual or a member of his or her immediate family is an authorized representative or agent.

While we do find that there is technically no violation of the Code of Ethics, we do recognize the very real appearance of a conflict of interest. This appearance is the result of your past association with the Williamsburg Heights Community Association, and the employment of your family members by the organization. The appearance of a conflict of interest can be as troublesome as any conflict of interest as defined in the Code of Ethics.

While we cannot require it, we do find your past actions of recusing yourself from discussing or voting on issues related to the Williamsburg Heights Community Association, and making public disclosure of your relationship with the organization, as set forth in the requirements of HUD, to be very helpful in minimizing the apparent conflict of interest. We recommend following those practices.

We hope that this opinion letter addresses the questions you presented to us. Please feel free to consult with us if you have any other questions relating to the City of Milwaukee Code of Ethics.

Sincerely,



Joseph G. Chambers,
Chair

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