

2016 ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSION

The 2016 annual report, which is mandated by [§7-2-104](#) of the Public Ethics Law, provides a summary of the work conducted by the ethics commission during the calendar year just ended. This and other information about the commission is available on its [website](#). A copy of this report is also available in print upon request. The information provided in this report refers to calendar year 2016, unless otherwise indicated.

2016 MEMBERS

Name	Party	Dates of Appointment and Reappointment	Date of Term Expiration
Karl J. Appel	Republican	May 1, 2016	April 30, 2020
Michael S. Botsaris* Resigned Dec. 15, 2016	Republican	May 1, 2016	April 30, 2020
Vanessa Carter	Democrat	Jan 19, 2016	April 30, 2019
Katherine Cawood	Democrat	Aug. 20, 2012 May 1, 2016	April 30, 2020
Emerson C. Davis Chair	Republican	November 18, 2013	April 30, 2017
Jonathan P. Kagan	Democrat	July 21, 2014 May 1, 2015	April 30, 2019
Craig A. Reynolds* Chair	Democrat	May 1, 2008 May 1, 2012	April 30, 2016
J. Adger Stokes	Republican	July 6, 2015	April 30, 2019
Lawrence W. Ulvila, Jr.*	Republican	November 16, 2105	April 30, 2016

* Term expired or
resigned during 2016

The commission's staff includes Michael S. Botsaris, Esq., the director, and Gina Scerbo, the commission secretary. Ms. Scerbo is a part-time employee. Mr. Botsaris was a former commission member and was appointed to the position of director by the commission on December 15, 2016.

The commission met 12 times during the year.

2016 UPDATE INFORMATION:

The commission sadly reports the untimely death of its Executive Director, Betsy Dawson, in August of 2016. Ms. Dawson served the commission for more than 20 years and her dedication, knowledge and experience will be missed by everyone on the commission and in County government.

INQUIRIES

The commission received 43 ethics inquiries as well as many lobbying, financial disclosure, and other types of inquiries. (Inquiries from lobbyists and other filers are not numbered or summarized unless they result in an administrative decision from the ethics commission.) The sources and primary issues raised in these inquiries were:

TOTAL INQUIRIES: 43

Employees	21
Appointed Officials	0
Elected Officials	5
Citizens	4
Covered Volunteers	3
Lobbyists	2
Anonymous	3
Outside Agency	4
Other	1

The primary issue raised in these inquiries break down as follows:

Gifts	10
Prestige of office	8
Secondary employment	4
Non-participation	4
Other	6
Asst/Representation	4
Lobbying	3
Financial Disclosure	0
Post-employment	1
Political Activity	3

ADVISORY OPINIONS

The commission issued 5 advisory opinions. Each opinion is summarized on the commission's [website](#). Opinions on specific issues may now keyword searched through the new search engine available on the [opinions](#) page. Note that only advisory opinions issued from 2009 are available on the website at this time. (Earlier advisory opinions are accessible through the [old website](#). That page is no longer being updated.) The full text of each opinion is also available through these links.

Some requests for advice are handled by the staff directly, in cases where there is sufficient precedent to provide guidance or where time does not permit the consideration of the inquiry by the full commission. In each case, the ethics commission subsequently reviewed and retroactively approved each response.

COMPLAINTS

The commission received 10 complaints of ethics violations. After investigation, 10 complaints were dismissed and/or closed without further action.

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENTS

The commission is charged with the responsibility of reviewing each financial disclosure (FDS) and conflict of interest (COI) statement received from County employees and covered volunteers, for completion, accuracy, and for potential conflict of interest. This year the commission received 219 disclosure statements as follows:

Regular employees and covered volunteers	205
New employees	3
Departing employees	11

Each statement of covered filers was reviewed as required by law and employee filers were notified of, and directed to correct, all omissions or deficiencies. All disclosure statements, including corrections and additions, are available for inspection and copying with advance notice. The statements of volunteers who are required to file but are not otherwise covered by the ethics law were not reviewed.

There were no late filing fees assessed in 2016.

There were 0 requests to examine/copy filings. As required by law, all filers whose statements were examined were notified of that fact in writing.

LOBBYING

The commission received 66 lobbying registrations from 45 lobbyists.

Lobbying registrations, employer authorizations, and activity reports are public documents. The ethics commission staff received, reviewed, and compiled the statistics on 103 activity reports. There were no late filing fees assessed.

The following information summarizes the compensation and expenditures reported by registered lobbyists in 2016:

Compensation paid to lobbyists.....	\$210,724.14
Office expenses in addition to compensation	17,302.54
Professional and technical research and assistance	0.00
Publications or letter writing campaigns	0.00
Witnesses.....	575.00

Meals and beverages for county employees and their immediate families	110.00
Special events (parties, dinners, athletic events, entertainment, and other functions)	0.00
Food, lodging, or other expenses at a conference or meeting	40.00
Other gifts	0.00
Miscellaneous expenses	0.00

EDUCATION

The ethics commission staff hosted one in house training session for 13 employees. Training includes the use of multi-media as well as printed hand-outs and copies of the *Pocket Guide*, a mini-brochure summarizing the ethics law’s conflicts of interest provisions. At the request of the personnel office, the ethics commission also provides the *Pocket Guide* to all new employees. The *Pocket Guide* is for the present, available to the public upon request.

The commission also provides, upon request, two brochures: *What You Need to Know about the Public Ethics Law- Lobbyists* and *What You Need to Know about the Public Ethics Law- Vendors and Contractors*.

The director is a member of the Council on Governmental Ethics Laws (COGEL), an international organization of ethics agencies and ethics law practitioners.

BUDGET

Saving money while performing the duties assigned to the commission by the Anne Arundel County Charter has always been a priority. Use of email has largely replaced paper- the commission sends all notifications and disclosure forms to county employees by email in lieu of first-class mail. The commission also requests all disclosure filers (covered volunteers and lobbyists) to accept email notifications and to access all forms via the commission’s website. Many of these filers have agreed to accept email only notifications.

CONCLUSION

The commission holds its regular meetings on the second Monday of each month at 4:00 p.m. in the conference room at the commission’s office. Contingent meetings are also scheduled for specific dates but are only held if called by the Chair. The dates of all scheduled meetings are available online.

Questions or comments about this report are welcome and may be mailed, [emailed](#), or faxed to the ethics commission.

Respectfully submitted on January 23, 2017 by:

Anne Arundel County Ethics Commission:

Michael S. Botsaris, Executive Director

Emerson C. Davis, Chair

Karl J. Appel

Vanessa Carter

Katherine Cawood

Jonathan P. Kagan

J. Adger Stokes

John W. Van de Kamp