BOARD OF ETHICS
WASHINGTON SUBURBAN SANITARY COMMISSION

ADVISORY OPINION #A-05-05

SUBJECT: WHETHER THE WSSC CODE OF ETHICS PROHIBITS THE GENERAL MANAGER FROM ACCEPTING AN INVITATION TO BECOME AN HONORARY DIRECTOR FOR THE PRINCE GEORGE'S CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

On or about July 5, 2005, the WSSC General Manager submitted this request for an Advisory Opinion to the WSSC Board of Ethics. The question is whether he may accept an invitation to join the Prince George's Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber) as an Honorary Director.

The mission of the Chamber is "to advance the interests of business for a vibrant Prince George's County." According to the Chamber's website, there are currently 16 Honorary Directors on the Chamber, representing such fields as government, education, and the military. As an Honorary Director, the General Manager would assist the Chamber in developing and implementing effective governance and policy decisions for businesses and Prince George's County. Beginning in September, 2005, the meetings are held once a month from 8-9:30 a.m. There are no dues that are required to be paid. In response to a question posed to him by the Board, the General Manager stated that there are no lobbying expectations associated with accepting the invitation.

The Board has reviewed the Code of Ethics and finds that it does not prohibit the General Manager from accepting the invitation from the Chamber. The Board notes that the presence of the WSSC General Manager on the Chamber will provide an important opportunity to promote openness and communication with the Prince George's County business community. The Board recognizes, however, that there may be situations that arise that could give an appearance of a conflict of interest. The Board trusts that the General Manager will handle this appropriately.

Based on the above, the Board holds that the WSSC Code of Ethics does not prohibit the General Manager from accepting an invitation to be an Honorary Director on the Prince George's County Chamber of Commerce.

On Motion by Charles Kuderna, seconded by Debra Davis, the Board agreed at its meeting held on September 8, 2005 to adopt the foregoing advisory opinion.

__/s/_____
Debra M. Davis
Chair, WSSC Board of Ethics

September 8, 2005 _____
Date