

# The St. Mary's Ethics Ordinance

- ◆ Purpose: to maintain impartiality and independent judgment by officials and employees of the County



# Conflict of Interest

- ✦ The Ethics Ordinance assures impartiality and independent judgment by prohibiting participation that involves a “conflict of interest.”
- ✦ Rationale: Trust in government is enhanced when the public is assured that personal or business interests do not influence official activities, duties, and decision-making by officials that are employed, elected, or appointed.

# Ethics Commission Role

- Interprets the Ethics Ordinance
- Advises persons as to its application
- Hears and decides complaints alleging violations
- Keeps statements, registrations, reports, complaints
- Conducts education programs re: purpose of Ordinance

# Financial Disclosure Statement

- ✦ Requires disclosure of general information on financial interests in real estate and business, employment, gifts, outside board memberships, and outside employment. Purpose: to reveal potential conflicts of interest – NOT to disclose value of assets.
- ✦ Is available at the Governmental Center for public inspection by any citizen, who must provide name, address, and telephone number before viewing a requested form – the information then supplied to the filer.

# Full Disclosure

Elected officials and employees:

BOCC, Administrators, Directors of County Agencies, Lobbyists, Candidates for Public Office

Appointees to Voluntary Boards & Commissions:

Board of Education, Alcohol Beverage Board, Housing Authority, Metropolitan Commission, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Ethics Commission

# Discretionary Disclosure

Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board, Historic Preservation Board, Economic Development Council, Electrical Examiners Board, Plumbing Board, Recreation and Parks Advisory Board, Building Authority Commission, Development Review Forum, Adequate Public Facilities T.F., Wicomico Shores Golf Course Advisory Board

Members of ad-hoc committees providing advice and/or recommendations regarding acquisition, procurement, or zoning or designation of land.

# Information Required (1)

- Owned or leased property: location, nature of it, others with legal interest (ownership)
- Financial interests in businesses with partners' names and addresses and whether the business does business in or with the County

# Information Required (2)

Gifts from person or business doing business with or regulated by County entity on which filer serves:

- ✦ Nature and value
- ✦ Identity of donor
- ✦ Identity of person to whom a gift was given at filer's direction

# Information Required (3)

- Place of employment
- Paid or non-paid offices or directorships with business entities
- Offices or directorships with volunteer organizations other than County boards, committees, commissions
- Indebtedness, excluding retail accounts, of \$1,000 or more to individuals or entities.

# Regulation of Former Employees/Officials

- ✦ Within one year of the termination of service, an employee or official may not act as a compensated representative of another in connection with any specific matter in which he/she participated substantially as a county official or employee.

# How the Commission operates

- Offers advice to one contemplating an action or in doubt about a current situation. (Test: Will it look good on the front page of the newspaper?)
- Adjudicates formal complaints
- Renders decisions on complaints (preferably through a remedy of mutual agreement)
- Enforces judgment

# Ethics Commission Members

<u>Name</u>	<u>Appointed</u>
David S. Deaderick, chair	May 14, 2001
George E. Baroniak, vice chair	August 2, 2002
Joseph B. Bush	July 14, 2004
Arthur F. Goeller	July 14, 2004
Warren Kunz	July 26, 2005
Viola M. Gardner, Alternate	July 15, 2003
Susan Wolfe, Executive Secretary	

Web page for the Ethics Commission: [www.co.saint-marys.md.us/ethics](http://www.co.saint-marys.md.us/ethics)

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