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STAFF GENERAL COUNSEL

May 23, 2002

Vernita Thomas  
Special Projects Administrator  
Office of Safe Neighborhood Parks  
10710 S.W. 211 Street  
Room 109  
Miami, Florida 33189

**RE: REQUEST FOR ADVISORY OPINION 02-53**

Dear Ms. Thomas:

The Commission on Ethics and Public Trust considered your request for an advisory opinion at its meeting on May 22, 2002 and rendered its opinion based on the facts stated in your letter.

You requested an opinion regarding any conflicts between your position as Assistant Director of Safe Neighborhood Parks and your ability to serve on the Board of Directors for the Center for Minority Studies.

In your letter, you advised the Commission that you serve as Special Projects Administrator for the Office of Safe Neighborhood Parks. Your specific duties include management of the fiscal operations of the two hundred million dollar Safe Neighborhood Parks bond Program, staff support to the Citizens' Oversight Committee and the Monitoring and Auditing subcommittee and review and approval of bond disbursements.

The Center for Minority Studies provides social services and health services to the minority community. The president of the Center for Minority Studies serves as an

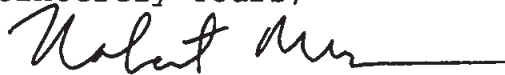
appointee of Commissioner Moss to the Citizens' Oversight Committee. The Citizens' Oversight Committee is responsible for oversight of deposits and disbursements of bond funds and solicitation of proposals for grant awards under the ordinance. The Oversight Committee has no staff oversight responsibility and is not involved in personnel decisions.

The Commission found the Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics ordinance permits you to serve on the Board of Directors for the Center for Minority Studies. The ordinance does not restrict employees from serving on boards as long as they do not violate Section 2-11.1(g) (Exploitation of official position) or Section 2-11.1 (h) (Disclosure of confidential information). Therefore, you may not use your county position to secure special privileges for the organization or disclose confidential information to the organization.

This opinion construes the Miami-Dade Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics ordinance only and is not applicable to any conflict under state law. Please contact the State of Florida Commission on Ethics if you have any questions regarding possible conflicts under state law.

If you have any questions regarding this opinion, please call the undersigned at (305) 579-2594 or Ardyth Walker, Staff General Counsel at (305) 350-0616.

Sincerely Yours,



ROBERT MEYERS  
Executive Director