

Bainbridge Island Ethics Board – Advisory Opinion

RE: AO2008-1

DATE of REQUEST: August 18, 2008

SUBJECT: Conflict of Interest

DATE of ISSUE:

Thank you for your inquiry to the Ethics Board.

You have requested advice regarding potential conflicts of interests by a Council member and an attorney. We address these matters below individually.

You are concerned that a community activist is the daughter-in-law of one of the members of City Council, and that this Council member is voting on issues in which the daughter-in-law is involved as an advocate for or against the same issues. Based on the facts as you describe them, we find that the Council member has not violated the Code of Ethics. The daughter-in-law is permitted to advocate for issues before the City Council, as is any other citizen. A conflict of interest would occur in such a case only if it were demonstrated that the Council member were voting on issues in which he or she had a financial or private interest.

You also are concerned that a particular attorney is representing other parties in litigation with the City or members of its management team. The information in your email comes to the Ethics Board in a redacted form, that is, with the names of the parties covered over (including your own). Without an understanding of the relation of the attorney to the City or its management team or to specific issues in which he or she is involved, we do not have not enough information to determine whether the attorney is putting a member of the City Council (a covered person under the Code of Ethics) into a situation in which the member has a conflict of interest.

Thank you for your concern. The Ethics Board will honor your request for confidentially.

C: City Clerk  
City Attorney