

ETHICS OPINION
Office of the City Attorney

TO: Commissioner Joshua Simmons
FROM: John J. Hearn, City Attorney
RE: Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance Dinner
DATE: September 20, 2019

On your behalf, Kristi Bartlett, the Director of Economic Development, has asked if you may attend the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance Dinner. Coral Springs is a Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance member. The City's membership includes five tickets to the dinner. The dinner is valued at \$200.00. If these facts are incorrect or inaccurate in any way, please let us know since it may affect the opinion we give.

The Broward County Code of Ethics provides that Municipal Elected Officials "shall not accept gifts, directly or indirectly, regardless of value" from any lobbyist registered with the City, from any principal/employer of any such lobbyist, or from vendors or contractors of the City. Section 1-19(c)(1)a., County Code of Ordinances. Commissioners may accept gifts in an "official capacity" from "other sources" up to \$50.00 per occurrence. Section 1-19(c)(1)b., County Code of Ordinances.

The Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance is not a lobbyist, vendor or contractor of the City. Therefore, you may accept a gift up to a \$50.00 value.

However, the City pays \$7,500 annually for its Alliance membership, and the membership includes five tickets for this event. Since the City has purchased the membership, full consideration has been paid for the dinner, and you may attend and accept the dinner.

If you need additional guidance regarding this matter, please feel free to contact my office.