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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**OHIO ETHICS COMMISSION ISSUES FORMAL ADVISORY OPINION AND ANNOUNCES  
NEW ONLINE ACCESS TO ADVISORY OPINIONS**

At its meeting on October 31, 2018, the Ohio Ethics Commission issued [Advisory Opinion 2018-02](#). The opinion addresses when a city council member elected to represent a ward can participate in matters involving public infrastructure improvements that affect properties only in his or her ward, including property in which the council member has an interest.

The Commission determined that a council member is prohibited from participating in matters involving improvements that would affect his or her property interests unless the improvements provide a benefit to all or a large portion of the property in the ward and the benefit to the council member's property is not selective, differential, unique, or in disproportion to the benefit provided to other affected property. The opinion provides examples of specific factors that would help demonstrate that the improvements would not have a substantial and improper influence on the council member's public duties.

In other business, the Commission authorized staff to post "Informal" Advisory Opinions on the Commission's website. Formal Advisory Opinions dating back to 1974 consider situations that may occur in a variety of jurisdictions or apply to many other public officials or employees. These opinions are reviewed and approved by the Commission. Currently, 345 formal opinions are available on the Commission's website.

Informal Advisory Opinions are issued to an individual person under the authority of the Commission. While they are also reviewed and approved by the Commission, they have not historically been available on the Commission's website. At last week's meeting, the Commission directed staff to make these opinions accessible online.

"It's long been a goal to have the informal opinions readily available on our website," said Executive Director Paul M. Nick. He noted that 424 informal opinions have been scanned into searchable documents. Nick added, "This new resource will provide easy, online access to past Commission guidance on how to comply with the Ohio Ethics Law."

These informal opinions may be viewed [here](#).

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