

**MINUTES OF THE FAIRFAX COUNTY
TENANT-LANDLORD COMMISSION**

July 16, 2009

Fairfax County Government Center
12000 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, Virginia 22035
Conference Room #9
Chair Liff presiding

Attendees:

Commissioners: Kocsis, Gomez, Liff, McRae,
Kiffuey, Geier-Smith and Thomas

Absentees:

Aho

Staff Attending:

Susan C. Jones, Branch Chief
Consumer Affairs
Vee Johnson, Staff Liaison
Consumer Affairs Branch

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by Chair Liff.

Minutes

The June 18, 2009, minutes were approved.

Reports

- Chair Liff discussed foreclosures and Commissioners shared the impact they have noticed in their communities.

Committee reports

- Liaison Johnson shared Commissioner Aho's comments regarding the upcoming Consumer Focus program. The program will feature information about the bed bug epidemic. Liaison Johnson requested assistance from the Commission plus the need for an apartment to conduct an instructional inspection. Commissioner Geier-Smith offered the use of an onsite apartment, and will seek property management staff and a tenant to be interviewed regarding this issue. Ideas were shared by the Commissioners. Liaison Johnson encouraged Commissioners to follow up with all contributions and ideas for the program. The target completion date is October, 2009. Liaison Johnson also informed of the possibility of developing three minute segments from the core information of the program to be translated into other languages in order to reach diverse Fairfax County communities.

Staff Reports

- Liaison Johnson will be at the Culmore Resource Center on Wednesday, July 29, 2009, from 10 a.m.-Noon to provide information to tenants. This event is in partnership with the Department of Family Services who will provide translation services.
- Liaison Johnson informed that a complaint was filed by Mr. & Mrs. Rahman who attended the June 18, 2009, meeting. Investigator Slaughter is investigating their complaint.
- Commissioner Thomas inquired about evictions listed on the statistical report. Chief Jones and Liaison Johnson offered examples of information and education staff provides to inquiring tenants and landlords.

Commission Matters

- The attendance record was circulated and approved.
- There are currently two vacancies, one landlord and one citizen.
- The calendar was reviewed and updated to reflect Commissioner availability and upcoming events.

Old Business

- Liaison Johnson will be meeting with Mike Liddle of GIS to initiate the production of custom GIS maps. A copy of the information compiled by staff was circulated for the Commissioners to review.
- The sample lease was discussed by the Commissioners. It was agreed that one lease would be developed instead of two as previously requested. The Commissioners are interested in reviewing all comments provided. Liaison Johnson will e-mail comments already provided to all Commissioners for their review and comments. Commissioners were encouraged to submit comments before the August meeting so a draft can be compiled for review and discussion at the meeting.
- By majority vote, the Commission voted to meet on August 20, 2009, to review and discuss the sample lease agreement.

New Business

- Commissioner Thomas provided a draft letter to be submitted to the county's complete count committee for the 2010 census. Liaison Johnson suggested that the letter include actions by Consumer Affairs to get the word out, such as information in the e-Newsletter, and flyers at outreach events that emphasize the importance of the census. The letter will be finalized at an upcoming meeting.

- Liaison Johnson presented a summary of the following major tenant-landlord laws effective July 1, 2009:
 - Landlords to give tenants notice of insecticide application.
 - Tenants must follow written instructions to prepare units for insecticide application and pest elimination.
 - Landlord is not obligated to pay for mold remediation when the mold is the result of the tenant's actions.
 - Tenants no longer have the right to repair or replace damaged items. The landlord may charge all costs to the tenant. The charge is payable on the next rent due date.
 - Ligated damages are set at 150 percent per day of the monthly rent for holdover tenants.
 - Landlords are required to provide written notice to tenants of a pending foreclosure or mortgage default with limited exceptions.
 - Security deposit interest rate for 2009, is 0%.

- Lisa McCoy, Housing Resource Coordinator with Shelter House, Inc., has accepted the Commission's invitation to speak at the September 17, 2009 meeting. Staff will make needed arrangements.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.