

## **Minutes of the Fairfax County Tenant-Landlord Commission**

August 16, 2018

Fairfax County Government Center  
12000 Government Center Parkway  
Fairfax, Virginia 22035  
Conference Room 9/10  
Vice-Chairman Geier-Smith presiding

Attendance:

Commissioners Geier-Smith, Gomez, Harberg, Park,  
Purnell

Absent:

Commissioners Fielding, Kocsis

Staff Attending:

Michael S. Liberman, Director  
Consumer Services Division  
Susan C. Jones, Branch Chief  
Consumer Affairs Branch  
Vee Johnson, Consumer Specialist  
Consumer Affairs Branch

Guests:

Lily Yegaza, Senior Assistant to the Zoning  
Administrator  
Department of Planning and Zoning  
Sara Morgan, Senior Assistant to the Zoning  
Administrator  
Department of Planning and Zoning  
  
Cynthia Smith, Alexandria  
Reverend Elliott Waters, City of Alexandria

The meeting was called to order at 7:37 p.m. by Vice-Chairman Geier-Smith.

### **Minutes**

A motion was made by Commissioner Gomez and seconded by Commissioner Park to approve the minutes from June 21, 2018. The motion carried unanimously.

### **Public Comment**

Cynthia Smith from Alexandria shared issues she has experienced as a tenant. Reverend Elliott Waters offered supportive information on her behalf. The Commission acknowledged her concerns. Consumer Affairs' staff provided contact information should Ms. Smith desire to discuss any issues further.

### **Report of the Chairman**

Vice-Chairman Geier-Smith had no matters to bring before the Commission.

### **Report of the Director**

Director Liberman discussed department transitions since the retirement of Deputy County Executive, David J. Molchany in June 2018. DCCS now reports to Joseph M. Mondoro, Chief Financial Officer.

## **Staff Report**

On August 14, 2018, *Consumer Connection* discussed Tenant Rights and Responsibilities on [Facebook Live](#), featuring Susan Jones and Michelle Thompson. The link to view the discussion will be emailed to Commissioners.

Tenant-Landlord information, developed by Consumer Affairs and the Tenant-Landlord Commission, was distributed at the Fairfax County Employee Financial Fitness workshop, *Legal Information for Life Events*, on Thursday, August 16, 2018.

A summary was provided regarding a tenant's request for compensation after their personal belongings were damaged when the rental dwelling flooded two times within two months. The landlord did not provide compensation for the tenant's belonging based on the lease provision requiring the tenant to have renter's insurance. However, in consideration of the inconvenience and water damage, the landlord reduced the tenant's rent by \$500 for seven months, resulting in a rent adjustment of \$3,500 for the tenant.

## **Commission Matters**

Commissioners discussed a tenants' right to a pest free environment and the landlord's responsibilities to provide a pest free environment in a rental dwelling.

The calendar was reviewed. No updates at this time.

## **Old Business**

None

## **New Business**

The Zoning Administration Division discussed the Short-Term Lodging (STL) amendment that goes into effect October 1, 2018. In order to use any part of a residence as a STL, Fairfax County requires the owner or tenant to secure a permit and meet specific criteria before operating a STL. The permit is valid for two years for a \$200 fee. The STL must comply with the requirements of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building or Virginia Manufactured Home Safety Regulations and be open, upon request, for inspection by County personnel during reasonable hours. The amendment strives to balance the needs of homeowners and neighborhoods. STL activity will be monitored for 18 months and a status report presented to the Board of Supervisors for their review.

Staff suggested an invitation be extended to the Office of Human Rights and Equity Programs (OHREP) to provide an overview of the highlights of the *Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice 2016–2020*, as it relates to fair housing and fair housing choices.

It was also suggested that Vin Rogers, Director of the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (FCRHA), Policy, Reporting and Communications, be invited back to discuss their strategic plan to address issues of affordable housing in Fairfax County.

The Commission would like to invite OHREP and the FCRHA to upcoming meeting to share information. Staff will make arrangements.

A motion was made by Commissioner Gomez and seconded by Commissioner Purnell to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.