

Minutes of the Fairfax County Tenant-Landlord Commission

February 9, 2023

7:30 p.m.

Government Center Conference Room 232
12000 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, VA 22035
Chairperson Chamberlain presiding

Attendance:

Commissioners: Chamberlain, Geier-Smith,
Otonde

Remote:

Commissioners: Reid

Staff Attending:

Rebecca L. Makely, Director
Cable and Consumer Services
Susan C. Jones, Consumer Specialist III
Consumer Affairs Branch
Melissa Pickham, Consumer Specialist II
Consumer Affairs Branch

The electronic meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by Chairperson Chamberlain.

Chairperson Chamberlain notified the Commission that Commissioner Reid requested to participate in the meeting remotely.

Vice Chairperson-Tenant Otonde made the motion to approve Chairperson Chamberlain's decision to approve Commissioner Reid's request to participate from a remote location in conformance with the Tenant-Landlord Commission's Remote Participation Policy. Commissioner Geier-Smith seconded the motion. The motion was approved, 3-0-0.

Chairperson Chamberlain made the motion that Commissioner Reid's voice can be heard by all persons at the primary meeting location. Commissioner Geier-Smith seconded the motion. The motion was approved, 3-0-0. Commissioner Reid participated remotely from McLean, Virginia due to a temporary or permanent disability or other medical condition that prevents the member's physical attendance.

Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Geier-Smith to approve the January 12, 2023, as written. Commissioner Otonde seconded the motion. The minutes were approved, 3-0-1, with Commissioner Reid abstaining.

Report of the Director

Director Makely presented the Commission with the Virginia General Assembly 2023 Legislative Session, Tenant-Landlord Bills reviewed by Consumer Affairs. Director Makely provided a brief overview of the bills and will email the document to the Commission.

Director Makely announced Commissioner Geier-Smith had submitted her resignation and her last meeting will be March 9, 2023. The Tenant-Landlord Bylaws regarding replacement officers were reviewed.

Article IV-Officers and Their Duties:

Replacement Officers. If an office becomes vacant for any reason, it shall be filled by an election at the next regular meeting having a majority of members present. The newly elected officer shall complete the unexpired term of the officer succeeded. Prior to the election of any replacement officer, all members shall be provided with notice of the proposed election before the meeting at which the replacement is elected.

Director Makely stated the elections can be held at the March meeting.

Chairperson Chamberlain deferred the election until positions on the Tenant-Landlord Commission are filled.

A discussion ensued on the possibility of changing appointment qualifications to include a legal professional, real estate representative, one citizen member, one landlord member, one tenant member, and the rest at-large, with a member(s) allowed to work in the county, but not live in the county. Staff will seek input from the Office of the County Attorney.

Susan C. Jones, Consumer Specialist III, informed the Commission about National Consumer Protection Week from March 5 to 11, 2023. Staff will provide the flyer and link to the events.

Report of the Chairperson

Chairperson Chamberlain had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Commission Matters

Commissioner Reid emailed an inquiry about housing timeline and the waitlist for housing choice vouchers and low rent subsidies. Staff provided information to address his inquiry.

Commissioner Otonde stated properties with affordable housing should advertise the information on their websites so that tenants are able to find affordable dwelling units. Staff will provide a recommended link from Fairfax County Department of Housing and Community Development that might be helpful in searching for properties.

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

Old Business

New Business

1. Draft Advisory Memo. Chairperson Chamberlain provided a draft memo to be reviewed by Commission members. Chairperson Chamberlain provided an overview of the situation and reasons for the memo.

A discussion ensued on the ability of the Board of Supervisors (BOS) to enforce the issue, the purpose and intent of the memo, actions to be taken, formatting/grammar updates, and payment to escrow through the court system.

Chairperson Chamberlain wants to find ways to assist Consumer Affairs in the educational development and resources to be available to tenants and landlords to include the Statement of Tenants Rights and Responsibilities.

Chairperson Chamberlain wants to suggest for the 2024 Legislative agenda to review whether the TLC would like to ask the General Court Clerk to have a certification that the Statement of Tenants Rights and Responsibilities has been issued.

Commissioner Otonde will submit suggestions to Chairperson Chamberlain. Commissioner Geier-Smith will review the document for suggested changes.

Director Makely suggested at the start of the memo to express how you are coming to the BOS under Chapter 12 of the County Code, duties of the TLC. Director Makely will provide the information to Chairperson Chamberlain.

Chairperson Chamberlain stated the tenant involved in the scenario might attend the next meeting.

Chairperson Chamberlain inquired about the 120 complaints for this month. Staff spoke about the various tenant issues Consumer Affairs receives. Staff will review the numbers.

A motion was made by Commissioner Otonde and seconded by Commissioner Geier-Smith to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, 3-0-0, with Commissioner Reid being absent for the vote. The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.