

Minutes of the Fairfax County Consumer Protection Commission

November 18, 2008

7:30PM Conference 9
Government Center
12000 Government Center Pkwy.
Fairfax, Virginia 22035
Chairman Fee, presiding

Attendance:

Commissioners: Adams, Bahhur,
Douskalis, Fee, Hine, Kirk, Roark,
Rosier

Absent:

Commissioners: Hargraves, Mrowka,
Nguyen

Staff:

Michael S. Liberman, Director
Department of Cable Communications
and Consumer Protection
Ellen F. Posner, Assistant County Attorney
Steve Sinclair, Chief, Public Utilities Branch
Susan C. Jones, Chief
Consumer Affairs Branch
Susan Hafeli, Utility Analyst
Public Utilities Branch

The meeting was called to order at 7:32PM by Chairman Fee.

Minutes

The minutes of the October 20, 2008, meeting were approved.

Commissioner Dousakis requested a change in the minutes under Commission Matters. Staff made changes prior to the meeting and handed out updated minutes.

Report of the Chairman

Chairman Fee mentioned an issue his neighbor had with an unlicensed contractor.

Report of the Director

Director Liberman informed the commissioners that he received a call from Good Morning America concerning going out of business sales and misleading advertisements. He said they were very complimentary on our web site. He said one of his goals is to work with the Consumer Affairs Branch on identifying communication strategies from educational outreach topics presented by staff.

Director Liberman will bring the CPC a tentative schedule for the upcoming water utility presentations. Staff will draft an invite letter to be sent by the commission that will address particular discussion points at the presentation. The Public Utilities Branch will work on obtaining data information on this issue to share with the commission.

Commission Matters

Commissioner Hine had no matters to bring before the commission.

Commissioner Adams had no matters to bring before the commission.

Commissioner Kirk had no matters to bring before the commission.

Commissioner Roark had no matters to bring before the commission.

Commissioner Rosier had no matters to bring before the commission.

Commissioner Bahhur had no matters to bring before the commission.

Commissioner Douskalis had no matters to bring before the commission.

Old Business

Inquiry into business cards for CPC commissioners. Staff is looking into this issue.

New Business

1. Board Directive to Investigate Water Rates

Anthony H. Griffin, County Executive, outlined for the CPC commissioners the Board of Supervisors directive to conduct an investigation, with the assistance of appropriate County staff, into the rates paid by County residents to the various municipal water utilities serving Fairfax County, and to determine the basis for the rate differentials, paid by County residents to these various municipal water utility systems. The Board requested a Commission report, including findings and possible recommendations, by the end of the year.

A discussion ensued on the residential vs. governmental consumption of water, the availability of technical information, the expectations for completion of the project and the reasonable return on investments.

County Executive Griffin recommended that the CPC meet first with Fairfax Water Authority because they will provide the baseline on water rates. He stated that Fairfax Water can make a presentation on how their system works and the basis for their charges.

County Executive Griffin stated that his expectations on this project would involve meeting with the municipal water utilities during January and February 2008, gathering and reviewing the data, and developing a final report to present to the BOS next summer.

2. Nominating Committee

The 2009 nominating committee is Commissioner Douskalis, Chair, Scott Hine, and Samiah Bahhur.

Election of officers will occur at the February CPC meeting.

Steve Sinclair, Chief, Public Utilities Branch mentioned that the January CPC meeting is scheduled on Inauguration Day. The January CPC meeting has been moved to January 27, 2009.

A discussion ensued on the holiday gathering at the December 16, 2008, meeting. Commissioners voted to hold the gathering at Bravos Restaurant.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15PM.