

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

August 16, 2007

Fairfax County Government Center,
12000 Government Center Pkwy.
Fairfax, Virginia 22035
Conference Room #9
Chair, S. Liff, presiding

Attendees:

Commissioners: Aho, Geier-Smith, Gomez,
Kocsis, Liff, McRae, Rosier, Walde

Absentees:

None

Staff Attending:

Michael S. Liberman, Director
Cable Communications and Consumer Protection
Susan C. Jones, Chief
Consumer Affairs Branch
Vee Johnson, Staff Liaison
Consumer Affairs Branch

The meeting was called to order at 7:07p.m. by Chair Liff.

Minutes

The August 16, 2007 meeting minutes were approved.

Reports

- Chair's report
 - o Chair Liff thanked Commissioners for early arrivals for taping by Cable Channel 16.
- **Committee reports-** There were no Committee reports.

Staff reports

- Liaison Johnson informed the Commissioners of the initiative taken by Commissioner Kocsis to translate the Tenant Resource Sheet in Spanish. Staff will forward this document to the County's vendor for translation.
- Chief Jones reviewed the monthly statistical reports. The majority of the complaints received in July involved security deposit disputes, and maintenance issues.

Commission Matters

- Staff confirmed that the letter in recognition of Liaison Wagner was delivered to Chairman Gerald Connolly's office on Wednesday, August 1, 2007. Staff will monitor for follow up from Chairman Connolly's staff.
- The attendance record was circulated and reviewed by the Commissioners. The information was confirmed as accurate. The roster was also reviewed. Requested updates will be made by staff.
- No appointments have been made for the existing citizen and tenant member vacancy.
- Commissioner McRae expressed concern for a tenant who was displaced due to a mold situation in her rental unit. Staff requested that Commissioner McRae provide the tenant with Liaison Johnson's number and email address so assistance can be provided.
- Commissioner Aho inquired about the TLC brochure on the web site. Commissioners will review the web site and present comments and suggestions for information on this page. Liaison Johnson informed the commissioners that Chapter 12 was recently added and that updates of the existing publications and information on the web page are planned.

Commissioner Geier-Smith reviewed the move-in packet provided to tenants renting from Southern Management. The packet contained numerous documents which outline legal requirements, community information and rules and regulations for being a good neighbor. Commissioner Geier-Smith does not feel that landlords should be required to provide more information to tenants;. The Commission does not desire to initiate a change in the county ordinance or the VRLTA at this time. Staff informed that information can be provided to landlords with the suggestion that they distribute the information to tenants. The landlord's actions would be voluntary, not a requirement.

Old Business

1. Bylaws

- The amended Bylaws were emailed to County Attorney Jim McGettrick on August 9, 2007. Staff is awaiting a response and will update the Commissioners so the bylaws can be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors for approval.

2. Tenant-Landlord program for Cable Channel16

The Channel 16 Advisory Committee did not have any information to report.

- Liaison Johnson reported that production of the Tenant Landlord Consumer Focus program is underway. The show will focus on maintenance and repairs in rental housing. Chair Liff provided sound bites before the meeting, and the Channel 16 crew taped some of the meeting for inclusion in the upcoming program. Scripts are being developed and will be provided to Commissioner Aho for his review and comments on behalf of the Commission. The studio

taping is scheduled for September 12, 2007. The target date for completion, of this show is September 30, 2007, for airing in October. So far, an interview with a tenant who filed a complaint with Consumer Affairs has been completed. Commissioners requested that a landlord also be interviewed for the program. Staff requested assistance from landlord Commissioners Geier-Smith, Kocsis & Walde. Commissioner Geier-Smith will provide an interview for this program. Taping arrangements will be made by staff.

3. Tenant-Landlord Commission Sign

The TLC sign was circulated to the Commissioners. No changes or adjustments were requested. Staff will make arrangements for the sign to be printed for distribution to rental complexes in Fairfax County. Staff is in the process of compiling a list of all apartment complexes in Fairfax County for this purpose.

New Business

1. Chapter 82, Trespass Towing Ordinance

Commissioners discussed the information presented by Dave Reidenbach, Chief of the Regulation and Licensing Branch, and John Fee,- Chairman of the Consumer Protection Commission, regarding desired amendments to Chapter 82, Trespass Towing ordinance. A motion was made that a letter of the TLC's support of the proposed amendments to the Towing ordinance be provided to the CPD. This motion was passed unanimously. Director Liberman requested that staff draft this letter.

2. Consumer Protection Arbitration Hearing

Commissioners who attended the Consumer Protection Arbitration hearing on July 31, 2007 provided comments to the commissioners. Director Liberman provided a synopsis of the issues presented by the consumer and the business, and Chief Jones informed of the arbitration award issued. Commissioner Liff and Commissioner Grier-Smith shared their impressions of the process. Staff informed that a tape of a mock arbitration is available for viewing by commissioners if desired.

3. Virginia Freedom of Information Act updates

The Commissioners acknowledged an understanding of the FOIA laws which are intended to make sure all government activities are open and transparent.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.