

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

June 21, 2007

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

Attendees:

Commissioners: Kocsis, Liff, Aho, Walde,  
Mosgrave, Gomez

Absentees:

Rosier, McRae, Geier-Smith

Staff Attending:

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 p.m. by Chairperson Liff.

**Minutes**

The May 17, 2007 meeting minutes were approved.

**Reports**

- Chairperson's report
  - Chairperson Liff requested that Commissioners review the roster for accuracy and inform staff if changes or updates are needed.
  - Chairperson Liff announced the resignation of Commissioner Andrew Chelena and expressed appreciation for his years of service.
  - Chairperson Liff commented on articles in the Washington Post regarding tenant-landlord matters and suggested Commissioners consider inviting the writers to a future meeting. No action was taken by the commission.
  
- **Committee reports** - There were no Committee reports.

### **Staff reports**

- Liaison Johnson met with the Culmore Apartment Managers Association on Wednesday, June 20, 2007. Information was shared regarding the education and mediation services provided by Consumer Affairs to the tenant-landlord community. Liaison Johnson will attend future meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for September 19, 2007.
- Liaison Johnson extended an invitation to Commissioners to attend the Consumer Protection Commission arbitration hearing scheduled for Tuesday, July 31, 2007 at 7:30 p.m. Commissioners who are interested in attending should notify staff at the July 19, 2007 meeting.
- Chief Jones reviewed the monthly statistical reports.

### **Commission Matters**

- A letter in recognition of Liaison Wagner presented by Commissioner Aho was discussed. Revisions were suggested. Staff will make requested changes and forward the letter to Acting Director Liberman for continued discussion at the July 19, 2007 meeting.
- The attendance record was reviewed and corrections noted. Staff will make changes and provide a corrected copy at the July 19, 2007 meeting.

### **Old Business**

1. Tenant-Landlord program for Cable Channel 16
  - Commissioners discussed the previously broadcast Consumer Focus program from 1998. The Commissioners requested staff develop a program regarding tenant-landlord matters using this format.
  - Liaison Johnson suggested a 30-60 second public service announcement (PSA) that would feature Commissioners. A Channel 16 Advisory Committee was established to develop this idea. The members are Commissioners Aho, Kocsis and Liff.
  - Commissioner Aho was designated to provide direct input to staff during the production of the Consumer Focus program on behalf of the Commission.
2. Tenant-Landlord Commission Sign
  - The Tenant-Landlord Commission Sign was reviewed and discussed. A motion was made to adopt the sign proposed by staff. The motion was unanimously accepted. Staff will proceed with arrangements to have the sign printed in English and Spanish for distribution to landlords throughout the county.
3. Educational Outreach Topics
  - No additional educational and outreach topics were proposed by the commissioners.

### **Old Business Continued**

#### 4. Bylaws

- The Bylaws were discussed and amended. A motion was made to accept the proposed amendments. The motion was passed by majority vote. Staff will prepare the written amendments for vote at the July 19, 2007 meeting.

### **New Business**

- By consensus, it was agreed that committee membership and organization be removed as an action item from the agenda.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

*Attachment B*

**TENANT-LANDLORD COMMISSION  
FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA**

**BYLAWS**

ARTICLE I

NAME: The name of this organization is the Fairfax County Tenant-Landlord Commission, hereinafter referred to as the Commission.

ARTICLE II

THE COMMISSION:

1. PURPOSE:

- (a) The Commission shall provide information to the public concerning the rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords.
- (b) The Commission shall forward to the Board of Supervisors, as appropriate, recommendations for changes in legislation at all levels of government.
- (c) The Commission, or its duly appointed representatives, shall represent the County interests concerning tenant-landlord matters before judicial, legislative, administrative, and other public or private bodies upon direction of the Board of Supervisors.
- (d) The Commission shall advise the Board of Supervisors about the nature, causes, and possible solutions to tenant-landlord problems.
- (e) The Commission may hold public hearings and report its findings to the Board of Supervisors on tenant-landlord issues that affect the public interest.
- (f) The Commission shall make tenants and landlords aware of the conciliation and mediation services available through the Fairfax County Consumer Affairs Branch.
- (g) The Commission may arbitrate tenant-landlord complaints, upon agreement of the parties, pursuant to the Rules of Procedure adopted by the Commission.
- (h) The Commission shall report periodically to the Board of Supervisors on the activities of the Commission.

2. POWERS:

In carrying out its duties as described in this section, the Commission shall have the power to make findings of facts and to make and adopt such Rules of Procedure which shall be published, as may be necessary or proper for carrying out its functions under the provisions of these Bylaws.

### ARTICLE III

#### COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP, OFFICERS, AND STAFF SUPPORT:

The Fairfax County Tenant-Landlord Commission shall consist of ten members, all appointed by the Board of Supervisors and representing tenants (three members), landlords (three members), and the community at large (four public members, one of whom shall be a condominium owner). Regular appointments to the Commission shall be for terms of three years ending in January. The officers shall consist of a Chair, two Vice-Chairs and a secretary. The Chair shall be elected from the public members of the Commission. One Vice-Chair shall be elected from the tenant members and one Vice-Chair shall be elected from the landlord members of the Commission. Any member of the Commission is eligible to serve as Secretary. Staff support for the Commission shall be provided by the Consumer Affairs Branch.

### ARTICLE IV

#### ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

1. Biennial (every two years) election of the Chair and annual election of the Vice-Chairs and Secretary shall be scheduled for the first regular Commission meeting after January of each year. The term of each office shall commence with the first meeting after the election and shall terminate when a successor takes office. 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.
2. Two months prior to the meeting at which officers are to be elected, a slate of candidates shall be nominated from the floor. After nomination, each candidate shall be polled on his/her willingness and ability to serve as an officer of the Tenant-Landlord Commission.

### ARTICLE V

#### DUTIES AND POWERS OF OFFICERS:

1. Chair: In addition to the well-recognized and inherent duties and powers of the office of the Chair, the Chair signs all actual orders necessary to carry out the will of the Commission. The Chair has the authority to delegate appropriate functions to a member or members of the Commission and to request staff assistance from the Chief of the Consumer Affairs Branch. The Chair presides over meetings of the Commission and is eligible to vote at all times. The Chair appoints standing committees and a chair for each committee with the consent of the majority of the Commission. The Chair may appoint special committees and the chair for each with the approval of a majority of the Commission.
2. Vice-Chair: In event of the absence of the Chair at a meeting, a Vice-Chair shall perform all of the duties and exercise all of the powers of the Chair. The Tenant Vice-Chair and Landlord Vice-Chair shall alternate in performing the absent Chair's duties.

## ARTICLE VI

### COMMITTEES:

1. The Commission may establish as many standing and special committees as may be required to perform its function. Standing committees are the following:  
(1) Legislative; and (2) Promotion and Publicity. Creation of any new standing committee shall require the approval of a majority of the Commission members.
2. The Commission shall provide arbitration services. All Commission members shall be expected to participate in the provision of these services, and shall serve on arbitration panels at the call of the Chair. Each such panel shall be composed of one representative of each group named in Article III. The Chair of each such panel shall be the public member. All panel members shall follow the Rules of Procedure as set forth in the Tenant-Landlord Arbitration pamphlet.

## ARTICLE VII

### MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION:

1. The Commission shall normally meet once each month, usually on the third Thursday, at the call of the Chair; and at other times upon the call of any five members with at least five days notice given to all members. Meetings shall be held at a time agreed to by a majority of the Commission members, and at a place arranged for by the staff of the Consumer Affairs Branch. Committee meetings may be held at the call of the Chair or at the request of two members, with notice to all members of the committee.
2. All meetings of the Commission and the committees shall be open to the public.
3. The Consumer Affairs Branch shall provide staff support and maintain records and minutes of the meeting.

## ARTICLE VIII

### QUORUM AND PROXIES:

Fifty percent of the Commission members shall constitute a quorum. In the event that neither the Chair nor either of the Vice-Chairs is available, the public member present with the longest tenure on the Commission shall act as Chair. There shall be no proxies.

## ARTICLE IX

### VOTING:

In making any recommendations, adopting any plan, or approving any proposal, action shall be taken by a majority vote of members present and voting unless otherwise herein provided. Upon the request of any Commissioner, the vote of each Commissioner on any issue shall be made a matter of record.

## ARTICLE X

### REMOVAL:

Any member(s) may be recommended to the Board of Supervisors for removal from the Commission for cause by a two-thirds majority vote of all of the members. Two weeks written notice of charges and a hearing before the Commission shall be given before a vote is taken.

## ARTICLE XI

### ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

Any member who misses three consecutive meetings or five meetings within a 12-month period, or who fails to participate in the committee work of the Commission without good cause acceptable to a majority of the other Commission members shall be subject to removal from the Commission under the provisions of Article X.

## ARTICLE XII

### AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS:

1. Any proposed amendment to these Bylaws shall be presented in writing to the members of the Commission at a regular or special Commission meeting and shall not be subject for vote until the next regular or special Commission meeting which convenes at least 30 days following the date such proposed amendment was presented.
2. Any or all portions of these Bylaws may be amended or repealed, or new Bylaws adopted, by majority vote of all members of the Commission. At least once yearly, the Commission shall review the Bylaws to determine their continued efficacy and applicability to the experiences of the Commission. The Commission shall undertake such changes, if deemed necessary, to reflect the operations and functions of the Commission or to provide for their improvement.

ARTICLE XIII

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES:

In all matters of parliamentary procedure not specifically covered by these Bylaws, Robert's Rules of Order, newly revised, shall obtain.

EFFECTIVE DATE:

These Bylaws shall become effective immediately upon adoption by vote of a majority of the Commission members in accordance with Article XII.

AMENDED: July 19, 2007