



County of Fairfax, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 12, 2020

TO: Consumer Protection Commission

FROM: Michael S. Liberman, Director *MS*
Department of Cable and Consumer Services

SUBJECT: Consumer Protection Commission Meeting for November 17, 2020

Please find attached the Consumer Protection Commission agenda packet. The next scheduled meeting is **Tuesday, November 17, 2020, 7:30 p.m.** This meeting will be held via a video connection due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

To join the meeting:

Click: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81107462960?pwd=OHFPVjgrZkkwOGpSQkxyRVNCT0N6UT09>

Enter Password: 402536

Audio-only participation:

Dial: 888-270-9936

Enter Code: 584548

Please RSVP with your attendance to Susan Jones by COB on Monday, November 16, 2020, at susan.jones@fairfaxcounty.gov or 703-324-5877.

Enclosures

cc: Joseph M. Mondoro, Chief Financial Officer
Office of the County Executive

Rebecca L. Makely, Director
Consumer Services Division, DCCS



Minutes of the Fairfax County Consumer Protection Commission

October 20, 2020

7:30 PM
Zoom Video Meeting
Chairman Fee presiding

Attendance:

Commissioners: Belkowitz, Callender, Fee,
Gulakowski, Hargraves, Hine, Kirk, Kratovil,
Lynch, Roark, Rosier

Absent:

Commissioners: Javed

Staff:

Michael S. Liberman, Director
Cable and Consumer Services
(in Conference Room 11)
Rebecca L. Makely, Director
Consumer Services Division
(Board Auditorium)
Susan C. Jones, Branch Chief
Consumer Affairs Branch
(Springfield)

The electronic meeting was called to order at 7:40 PM by Chairman Fee.

Quorum, Location, and Audibility of Members' Voices

Chairman Fee conducted a Roll Call to verify that a quorum of members were participating; and that each member's voice was clear, audible, and at appropriate volume for all of the other members; and the location from which member was participating. The roll call was as follows:

Chairman Fee, Fairfax County Government Center
Commissioner Belkowitz, Fairfax Station
Commissioner Callender, Great Falls
Commissioner Gulakowski, Burke
Commissioner Hargraves, Kingstowne
Commissioner Hine, Fairfax
Commissioner Kirk, Falls Church
Commissioner Kratovil, Mount Vernon
Commissioner Lynch, Oak Hill
Commissioner Roark, Lorton
Commissioner Rosier, Great Falls

Chairman Fee passed the virtual gavel to Vice Chairman Gulakowski. A motion was made by Chairman Fee that each member's voice was adequately heard by each member of the Consumer Protection Commission (Commission.) This motion was seconded by Commissioner Lynch. This motion passed unanimously.

Need for an Electronic Meeting

A motion was made by Chairman Fee that the State of Emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic made it unsafe for the Commission to physically assemble and unsafe for the public to physically attend any such meeting, and that as such, FOIA's usual procedures, which require the physical assembly of the Commission and the physical presence of the public, could not be implemented safely or practically. Chairman Fee further moved that the Commission conduct the meeting electronically through a dedicated audio-conferencing line, and that the public access the meeting by calling 1-888-270-9936 and entering access code 584548. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hargraves. The motion passed unanimously.

Need to Dispense with FOIA's Usual Procedures to Assure Continuity in Government/Continue Operations

A motion was made by Chairman Fee that all of the matters addressed on the agenda addressed the Emergency itself, were necessary for continuity in Fairfax County government, and/or were statutorily required or necessary to continue operations and the discharge of the Commission's lawful purposes, duties, and responsibilities. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Rosier. The motion was passed unanimously.

Minutes

A motion was made by Chairman Fee and seconded by Commissioner Gulakowski to approve the minutes from the July 21, 2020 and August 18, 2020. The motion passed unanimously.

Report of the Chairman

The Chairman had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Report of the Director

Director Liberman discussed options of a Commission photo for the Annual Report. He informed the Commission of plans for staff to present the Commission's By-Laws along with the Tenant-Landlord Commission and Trespass Towing Advisory Board By-laws. The By-laws will be presented to the Commission for review and approval.

Director Liberman acknowledged the traffic altercation email involving a Verizon vehicle sent by Commissioner Belkowitz. Staff reviewed the issue.

Director Liberman stated DCCS continues to meet their objectives and provide service to residents, with the majority of staff continuing to telework.

Director Liberman stated the Board of Supervisors is also meeting tonight in the Board Auditorium and Director Makely is providing staff support to the meeting while also participating in the CPC meeting.

Director Liberman informed the Commission about the Early/In-Person voting at the Government Center since September 18, 2020. Now 14 satellite locations have opened for residents to Early/In-Person vote.

Commissioner Belkowitz stated his son received two ballots in the mail and questioned whether the ballots are both legitimate. Staff responded both ballots are legitimate, but only one should be returned to the Office of Elections. A mailing error was corrected early in the process.

Commission Matters

Commissioner Belkowitz stated the email he sent to staff was about an accident he saw from his work window. He indicated a Verizon truck was first in line and did a U-turn in the intersection instead of checking on possible injuries. He believes this behavior is not what an employee from Verizon should do.

Commissioner Callender had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Commissioner Gulakowski mentioned an article in the *Washington Post* about e-scooter accidents with pedestrians.

Commissioner Hargraves stated he voted at the Franconia Governmental Center and had to wait in line 2.5 hours. He stated more voting machines were needed. Commissioner Hargraves thanked staff for their assistance in the neighborhood outage issue with Dominion Energy.

Commissioner Hine had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Commissioner Kirk had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Commissioner Kratovil asked if staff was tracking consumer inquiries regarding PPE funding and Small Business scams. Staff indicated all inquiries are tracked and there had been no increase or spike in inquiries relating to PPE funding or utility concerns. Inquiries were focused on tenant-landlord issues related to COVID-19.

Commissioner Lynch received a knock on the door for tree services and wondered if there were any provisions during COVID-19 regarding door-to-door solicitation. Staff responded there was no provision and consumers could choose not to answer the door. Solicitors must adhere to “No Solicitation” signs posted at all vehicle and pedestrian entrances, including trails, and paths.

Commissioner Roark had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Commissioner Rosier stated she volunteered to hand out food and is quite concerned about the amount of people who do not have money to feed their families. She said it is important for everyone to give if they are able since this problem is growing.

Chairman Fee stated he was charged a \$1.00 a month fee to pay his trash bill by check. He contacted the trash company and the company agreed to remove the charge from his bill.

Old Business

There was no old business before the Commission.

New Business

There was no new business before the Commission.

A discussion ensued on the Office of Elections staff answering questions at 703-222-0776, cancelation of the September Commission meeting, the November 17, 2020 meeting date, and the October meeting minutes being published on the DCCS webpage.

Commissioner Fee made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Gulakowski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:22 PM.

**FAIRFAX COUNTY
CONSUMER PROTECTION COMMISSION
November 17, 2020 AGENDA**

Call to Order by the Chairman (7:30 PM)

Minutes

- Draft of the October 20, 2020, meeting minutes attached.

Report of the Chairman

Report of the Director

Commission Matters

Old Business

New Business

- Consumer Protection Commission FY 2020 Annual Report
- Consumer Protection Commission Bylaws Draft Update

General Interest

- Consumer Protection Commission Calendar
- Consumer Protection Commission Membership
- Consumer Affairs Statistics
- Community Outreach
- Consumer Resources

CPC Calendar

Fairfax County
Consumer Protection Commission
2020 Yearly Planning Calendar
November 17, 2020

- January 21 • Election of Officers
- February 18 • Commission Planning
- March 17 • Cable Franchise Presentation
- April 21 • Meeting canceled
- May 19 • Meeting canceled
- June 16 • Meeting canceled
- July 21 • COVID-19 Pandemic Response August
- 18 • COVID-19 Pandemic Overview September 15
- Meeting canceled
- October 20 •
- November 17 • Consumer Protection Commission FY 2020 Annual Report
 - Consumer Protection Commission Bylaws Draft Update
- December 15 • Year-End Review
 - Officer Nominations

CPC Membership

Name

Staff

Harold G. Belkowitz
Appt. Expires 7/31/2021

Wes Callender
Appt. Expires 7/31/2021

John Fee (Chairperson)
Appt. Expires 7/31/2021

Denis Gulakowski (Vice-Chairperson)
Appt. Expires 7/31/2021

Dirck A. Hargraves
Appt. Expires 7/31/2023

Scott Hine
Appt. Expires 7/31/2021

Umair Javed
Appt. Expires 7/31/2021

Dennis D. Kirk
Appt. Expires 7/31/2022

Jason J. Kratovil
Appt. Expires: 7/31/2021

Daton Lynch
Appt. Expires 7/31/2021

Michael J. Roark
Appt. Expires 7/31/2023

Jacqueline Rosier (Secretary)
Appt. Expires 7/31/2022

Michael S. Liberman, Director
Department of Cable and Consumer Services
michael.liberman@fairfaxcounty.gov

Rebecca L. Makely, Director
Consumer Services Division
703-324-5947
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Susan Jones, Chief
Consumer Affairs Branch
703-324-5877
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Main number: 703-222-8435
Fax number: 703-653-1310
consumer@fairfaxcounty.gov

CAB Statistics



Consumer Affairs Branch
Monthly Summary - All Activities
October 2020

	Current Month		Fiscal Year-to-Date		Prior Fiscal YTD	
Cases Received	87		353		356	
Cases Closed	82		288		300	
Favorable	51	62%	162	56%	202	67%
Unfavorable	6	7%	23	8%	22	7%
Invalid	3	4%	12	4%	14	5%
Other	22	27%	91	32%	62	21%
Total (Checks column totals)	82	100%	288	100%	300	100%
Advice Inquires (closed)	549		1713		2925	
Case Inquires over 90+days (open)	18		50		144	
Amount Received	\$50,648.00		\$190,119.00		\$194,513.00	

CLOSED COMPLAINT CATEGORIES

	FISCAL YEAR-TO-DATE	% FYTD	PRIOR FISCAL YTD	% PRIOR FYTD
Tenant-Landlord		28%	Tenant Landlord	32%
Towing		5%	Cable Television (regulated)	21%
Cable Television (regulated)		5%	Housing - Service	11%
Retail Stores		5%	Automotive - Service	7%
Housing-Service		5%	Internet Sales	6%
Other		52%	Other	23%

Community Outreach

OUTREACH EVENT CALENDAR

November 2020

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	# of Guests	Event Time	Staff
11/4/2020	Consumer Knowledge	Chantilly High School (Virtual) 4201 Stringfellow Road Chantilly, VA	40	8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	MM
11/5/2020	Consumer Knowledge	Chantilly High School (Virtual) 4201 Stringfellow Road Chantilly, VA	43	8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	MM
11/6/2020	Consumer Knowledge	Woodson High School (Virtual) 9525 Main Street Fairfax, VA		8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	MM
11/10/2020	Consumer Knowledge	Chantilly High School (Virtual) 4201 Stringfellow Road Chantilly, VA		8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	MM
11/23/2020	Consumer Connection: Online and Retail Shopping	Fairfax County Government Center 12000 Government Center Parkway Fairfax, VA		12:00 p.m. - 12:20 p.m.	SCJ

Consumer Resources

Resource Items

Fairfax County Department of Cable and Consumer Services

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cableconsumer>

Fairfax County Consumer Affairs Branch

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cableconsumer/csd/consumer>

Fairfax County Consumer Affairs Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/fairfaxcountyconsumer/>

Information Items

New FTC Website Makes It Easier to Report Fraud and Other Consumer Issues

The Federal Trade Commission, the government's fraud fighting agency, received 3.2 million consumer complaints last year, dealing with everything from identity theft to online shopping problems. [\[More\]](#)

Court Issues Order Halting Operators of Fake Websites Claiming to Sell Clorox and Lysol Products

At the Federal Trade Commission's request, a federal court in Ohio has issued a temporary restraining order against 25 counterfeit websites that allegedly have been playing on consumers' COVID-19 pandemic fears to trick them into paying for Clorox and Lysol products that the defendants never deliver. [\[More\]](#)

Fairfax County Coronavirus (COVID-19) Updates

[Fairfaxcounty.gov/covid19/](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/covid19/)

Ways to Stay Informed About Coronavirus (COVID-19)

<https://fairfaxcountyemergency.wpcomstaging.com/>

Ways to Donate and Help During COVID-19

<https://fairfaxcountyemergency.wpcomstaging.com/2020/03/25/ways-to-donate-and-help-during-covid-19/>

DCCS Operating Status

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cableconsumer/status,>

Consumer Connection: COVID-19 Scams (July 20, 2020)

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=287643635890687>

Your Community, You're Connected: 2020 Legislative Review (July 7, 2020)

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cableconsumer/channel-16/your-community-youre-connected>

Consumer Connection: Scam Trends During COVID-19 (September 28, 2020)

https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=2921397914626535&external_log_id=283262e394c3b8963fd0e2da4d5fae3f

Consumer Connection: Consumer Update for Fairfax County Residents (October 29, 2020)

<https://m.facebook.com/watch/?v=634698123862225>

New FTC Website Makes It Easier to Report Fraud and Other Consumer Issues

by Herb Weisbaum, The ConsumerMan

Last updated November 1, 2020

The Federal Trade Commission, the government's fraud fighting agency, [received 3.2 million consumer complaints last year](#), dealing with everything from identity theft to online shopping problems.

"Every time you file a report with the FTC, you are helping us build cases, stop scammers, and also alert others about current trends," said Rosario Mendez, an FTC staff attorney.

The FTC just launched a new website, ReportFraud.ftc.gov, which makes it quicker and easier to report scams, fraud, or bad business practices.

Fill out the complaint form, and you'll get a tracking number that can be used to update your report if something changes. The site also provides the next steps you should take. You'll receive this advice via email if you provide your address.

"This is specific information that will help you better understand what you can do to deal with the problem you're reporting," said Charles Harwood, director of the FTC's Northwest regional office in Seattle.

For example, submit a report that you were contacted by a scammer pretending to offer tech support, and you will get a list of next steps to take:

- *Update your computer's security software.*
- *Run a scan and delete anything it identifies as a problem.*
- *If you shared any passwords, change your password right away. Create new passwords that are strong.*
- *If you think there's a problem with your computer, find a computer technician you can trust. Try finding someone via your computer manufacturer's website or visit a store that sells computer equipment and offers technical support in person.*

[This video](#) shows how to use ReportFraud.ftc.gov.

The FTC cannot respond to each report individually, and it can't take action on behalf of individual consumers, but filing a report will help in the fight against fraud.

“We would love to hear from people, both the FTC and the 3,000 other law enforcement agencies that use our information,” Harwood said. “By doing this, you are helping protect your community from fraud.”