

Minutes of the Fairfax County Consumer Protection Commission

April 21, 2009

7:30PM Conference 10
Government Center
12000 Government Center
Pkwy. Fairfax, Virginia 22035
Chairman Fee, presiding

Attendance:

Commissioners: Belkowitz,
Douskalis, Fee, Hargraves,
Hine, Nguyen, Rosier

Absent:

Commissioners: Adams, Bahhur,
Boyd, Kirk, Mrowka, Roark

Staff:

Michael S. Liberman,
Director Cable
Communication 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

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

Minutes

The minutes of the March 17, 2009, meeting were approved.

Report of the Chairman

Chairman Fee stated he placed a full trash container out at noon and it was taken from his property. He contacted American Disposal to see what their service cost and it was cheaper than what he currently had so he cancelled AAA Trash service.

Report of the Director

Director Liberman discussed the upcoming budget mark•up by the BOS on April 20 and the adoption of the budget on April 27, 2009.

Director Liberman provided the commissioners the requested web statistics.

Commission Matters

Commissioner Hargraves discussed receiving telephone solicitation calls for car warranty and receiving email from credit card company that his personal information had been compromised on the Navy Federal system.

Commissioner Douskalis stated that the Bank of America was doing a better job at notifying customers which companies they share personal information.

Commissioner Belkowitz asked about the increase in cable numbers. Staff provided a response.

Commissioner Nguyen mentioned that the "Do Not Call" expires and people need to reregister to help stop the car warranty calls. In addition, he inquired whether businesses in Fairfax County were allowed to give discounts based on socioeconomic background or ethnicity versus giving a fair discount across the board.

Commissioner Hine offered outreach opportunities to the County and local community by the Department of Energy on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

Commissioner Rosier mentioned the personal shopper newspaper advertisement for jobs she received in the mail with a \$10,000 check for a person to deposit in their account. The check eventually bounces and the person is responsible for the money. Staff asked Commissioner Rosier to bring the information if she still had it to use with scams presentations.

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business

1. City of Fairfax Department of Utilities.

Lauren S. Sufleta, P.E. Assistant Director talked about the structure of the organization, core responsibilities, the Goose Creek water treatment plant, water distribution and sewer collection system, customer profile, water and sewer billing system and rates, connection fees, and revenues.

A discussion ensued on whether a customer survey had been done; how the rates compare with other utility companies and will the bulk revenue off set the cost of the repairs.

Steve Sinclair, Chief, Public Utilities Branch, informed the commissioners that the Town of Vienna declined the invitation to present their position at tonight's CPC meeting.

Chairman Fee made the motion to authorize staff in the Department of Cable Communications and Consumer Protection and the County Attorney's office to prepare Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to the Town, to the extent necessary, in order to be able to complete an evaluation of the Town's water system, rates and services as part of the Commission's study on water rates for municipal water utilities in Fairfax County and subsequent report to the Board of Supervisors. Commissioner Hine seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

A discussion ensued on the upcoming water rate presentations and whether the commission has any indication from the residents in general on whether they care about what is going in the county.

Director Liberman stated that the commission may want to consider, in their course of their investigation, hold a public hearing and invite the public to comment on this particular issue.

Ellen Posner, Assistant County Attorney, told commissioners that the Board of Supervisors and the County Executive's Office have received inquiries from presidents of homeowners associations and individual citizens about this issue and are being updated on the situation.

A discussion ensued on the time frame of presentations, reviewing documentation, FOIA request, and the possibility of holding a public

hearing. The meeting adjourned at 9:03PM.