

Minutes of the Fairfax County Consumer Protection Commission

February 16, 2021

7:30 PM
Zoom Video Meeting
Chairman Fee presiding

Attendance:

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

Absent:

Commissioners: Gulakowski, Javed

Staff:

Michael S. Liberman, Director
Cable and Consumer Services
(Fairfax)
Rebecca L. Makely, Director
Consumer Services Division
(Aldie)
Susan C. Jones, Branch Chief
Consumer Affairs Branch
(Springfield)
Michelle Margeotes, Consumer Specialist
Consumer Affairs Branch
(Aldie)

The electronic meeting was called to order at 7:31 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, Burke
Commissioner Belkowitz, Fairfax Station
Commissioner Callender, Great Falls
Commissioner Hine, Fairfax
Commissioner Kratovil, Mount Vernon
Commissioner Lynch, Oak Hill
Commissioner Rosier, Great Falls

Chairman Fee passed the virtual gavel to Secretary Rosier. 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 Callender. This motion passed 7-0 with Commissioners Hargraves, Kirk, and Roark not present for the vote.

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 Lynch. The motion passed 7-0 with Commissioners Hargraves, Kirk, and Roark not present for the vote.

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 Lynch. The motion was passed 7-0 with Commissioner Hargraves, Kirk, and Hargraves not present for the vote.

Minutes

A motion was made by Chairman Fee and the minutes from the January 19, 2021, were approved with a change to Commission Matters.

Report of the Chairman

The Chairman had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Report of the Director

Director Liberman requested the Commission respond promptly to meeting invites to confirm a quorum in advance of the meeting.

Director Liberman stated the County Executive FY 2022 Advertised Budget presentation is on February 23, 2021, at 1:00 p.m.

Director Liberman stated the vaccine clinic at the Government Center continues to run on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays with 500-800 participants and on Saturdays and some Sunday with three to four thousand participants.

Commission Matters

Commissioner Belkowitz had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Commissioner Callender inquired about Commissioner terms that have expired on July 31, 2020, related to quorum concerns and renewals by the Board of Supervisors (BOS.) Staff encouraged Commissioners with an expired term to contact their Board member for reappointment.

Commissioner Hine had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Commissioner Kratovil spoke about his interest in data security, privacy, and data breach issues. He stated an annual study released on detailing data breach trends for 2020. There were 1,108 data breaches reported compromising over 300 million files of individuals which is down 66 percent from 2019. Root causes are precise attacks instead of mass data breaches. Phishing, Ransomware, and Business Emails Compromise were leading sources of data breaches and file compromise.

Commissioner Lynch had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Commissioner Rosier stated COVID-19 vaccine registration is not going well due to the confusion of sign up with the State, County, and City. Contact by phone is not working and residents have questions about why their names are not in the database. Director Liberman will bring this concern to the Fairfax County Health Department.

Commissioner Kirk spoke about water seepage in his basement foundation and learning that his insurance does not cover this type of incident. He recommended everyone review their insurance policies.

Chairman Fee has been on Zoom with high school and college friends that have already received the vaccine and feels Virginia is behind in vaccinating residents.

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business

Bylaws. Rebecca Makely, Director, Consumer Services Division stated that the draft of CPC Bylaws has been updated. The Bylaws will be presented as a consideration item to the BOS along with the Tenant-Landlord Commission and Trespass Towing Advisory Board Bylaws.

COVID-19 Scams. Consumer Specialist Michelle Margeotes provided a presentation on COVID-19 Scams.

A discussion ensued on HEPA filters in restaurants, community outreach about COVID-19 scams, and platforms used to promote scams.

Director Makely reminded Commissioners that these types of scams are similar whether it is a Romance Scam preying on loneliness, Charity Scams preying on generosity, or COVID-19 Scams preying on fear. If you received a call and chose to answer, listen to the information, but do not provide any personal information, and do your research on the company.

Commissioner Belkowitz thanked staff for the article on Virginia Youth Club.

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:32 PM.