

Minutes of the Fairfax County Tenant-Landlord Commission

April 19, 2018

Fairfax County Government Center
12000 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, Virginia 22035
Conference Room 9/10
Commissioner Fielding presiding

Attendees:

Commissioners Fielding, Harberg, Geier-Smith, Park

Absentees:

Kocsis, Gomez, Purnell

Staff Attending:

Rebecca L. Makely, Director
Consumer Services Division
Susan C. Jones, Branch Chief
Consumer Affairs Branch
Vee Johnson, Consumer Specialist
Consumer Affairs Branch

Guests:

Donna Pesto, Deputy Zoning Administrator
Lily Yegazu, Senior Assistant to the Zoning
Administrator
Sara Morgan, Senior Assistant to the Zoning
Administrator

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by Chairman Fielding.

Minutes

- A motion was made by Commissioner Geier-Smith and seconded by Commissioner Harberg to approve the minutes from February 15, 2018. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports

- Chairman Fielding shared the current site plans and design for the Herndon Downtown Redevelopment. Approval is scheduled for May with groundbreaking in November.

Director's Report

- Director Makely provided an update about the FY 2019 budget process. More than 150 residents spoke at the public hearings including video testimony via YouTube. The budget mark-up is scheduled for April 24, 2018, followed by the adoption of the budget on May 1, 2018.
- During National Consumer Protection Week, March 4-10, Consumer Affairs reached over 1,500 consumers through workshops, at local libraries, on social media, and *Consumer Connection* on Facebook Live.
- Consumer Affairs is joining with the Fairfax County Silver Shield Task Force to present Operation: Stop Scam on Saturday, April 28, 2018, from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. at the Fairfax County Government Center. Event information was provided to Commissioners.

Staff Report

- A case summary was provided regarding a complaint from a tenant about a photography addendum required by a landlord as a condition of renting an apartment. The addendum requested unrestricted rights and permissions to photographs or images taken by the landlord of tenants for marketing activities. The tenant was concerned about privacy issues and requested the landlord modify the addendum to limit the scope of the addendum and return the tenant's rent deposit of \$400. After CAB intervention, the landlord did not alter the language in the photography addendum, but refunded the rent deposit of \$400 to the tenant.
- On March 14, 2018, Consumer Affairs facilitated a workshop hosted by Supervisor Jeffrey C. McKay for tenants at Manchester Lakes Apartments at Kingstowne Library. This workshop was in response to tenant complaints about the landlord's responses to maintenance and repair issues in individual units as well as the buildings. Information and resources offered by county and community agencies were provided along with contact information for Consumer Affairs staff designated to assist tenants at Manchester Lakes. A follow up workshop is scheduled for May 30, 2018, at Kingstowne Library.

Commission Matters

- The calendar was reviewed. No updates at this time.
- Commissioner Harberg discussed challenges in addressing marijuana smell complaints from tenants. Lease provisions, addendums, and police involvement were discussed.
- Commissioner Park shared information about her attendance at the 2018 Winter Olympics in South Korea in February.

Unfinished Business

- None

New Business

- A presentation regarding proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendments for Short-Term Lodging (STL) was presented by the Zoning Administration Division. Information was provided regarding recommendations under consideration for changes to the County Code and Zoning Ordinance. The current Zoning Ordinance does not permit such uses in any dwelling unit and only allows short-term overnight stays as a hotel/motel or bed and breakfast. Proposed regulations are seeking to balance the interests of neighborhoods and residents who want to operate STLs in their home. The next public hearing is on May 3, 2018, followed by a hearing by the Board of Supervisors on June 19, 2018.
- Commissioner were reminded of the upcoming Annual Fair Housing and Training and Luncheon on April 20, 2018. Senator Tim Kaine is the featured speaker.

Adjournment:

A motion was made by Commissioner Geier-Smith and seconded by Commissioner Harberg to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m.