

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

June 17, 2010

Fairfax County Government Center
12000 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, Virginia 22035
Conference Room 9
Vice Chair Kocsis presiding

Attendees:

Commissioners Denton, Geier-Smith, Gomez,
McEneaney, Kiffney, Kocsis, Thomas and Vogl

Absentees:

Liff, McRae,

Staff Attending:

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:35p.m. by Vice-Chair Kocsis.

Minutes

- A motion was made by Commissioner Thomas and seconded by Commissioner Geier-Smith to approve the minutes from the April 15, 2010, meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports

- Vice-Chair Kocsis introduced Commissioner Kevin Denton, appointed on April 27, 2010, by Supervisor Smyth as Tenant Member #3. He is a Housing Specialist with the City of Falls Church and a tenant in Fairfax county. Commissioner Denton shared information about his responsibilities with the City of Falls Church. He was welcomed by the Commission.

Director's Report

- No reports were provided in Director Liberman's absence.

Committee Report

- The Channel 16 Committee did not have a report.

Staff Report

- Consumer Affairs will participate in the Foreclosure Fair and Family Expo at the Government Center, Saturday, June 19, 2010. Consumer Affairs will offer workshops and have information available for the tenant-landlord community. Flyers about the event were distributed and the Commissioners were encouraged to attend and share event information within their network.
- The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services will be conducting a series of Bed Bug workshops throughout Virginia in July. Liaison Johnson will attend the workshop on July 22, 2010. Information was provided so Commissioners can register if they choose to attend.
- There were no questions about the statistical reports.

Commission Matters

- The calendar was reviewed. No updates at this time.
- A motion was made by Commissioner Kiffney and seconded by Commissioner Gomez to have a meeting recess in August 2010. The motion carried unanimously. The regular meeting schedule will resume September 16, 2010.

Old Business

- Liaison Johnson attended the Fair Housing Forum hosted by the Fairfax County Human Rights Commission on April 28, 2010. The keynote speaker was Civil Rights Attorney Michael Allen of Reiman, Dane & Colfax. He reviewed cases and discussed some of the impediments to fair housing choices. According to the Human Rights Commission, fair housing complaints increased in Fairfax. The increase is believed to be connected to the mortgage meltdown. As the market attempts to correct itself, unfair lending practices are of concern. Commissioner Geier-Smith also attended and commented about the fact that housing discrimination still exists. Commissioner Denton discussed ADU dwellings and the impact increased density has on housing patterns.
- Liaison Johnson drafted a lease checklist. It is currently being reviewed by Commissioner Kocsis and Kiffney. A draft will be provided to Assistant County Attorney Bailey for comments and guidance.

New Business

- The joint meeting with the City of Alexandria Landlord-Tenant Relations Board was attended by Commissioners Geier-Smith, McEneaney, Liff, Kocsis, Kiffney, and McRae. The Arlington County Commission did not attend. Information regarding Bed Bugs was exchanged. The City of Alexandria discussed their request to ask the Virginia Housing Commission to consider legislation that would give the State Corporation Commission the authority to ensure that landlords comply with statutory requirements for the use of Ratio Utility Billing Systems (RUBS) for allocation of utility charges based on complaints from tenants. Staff has also received complaints from tenants regarding inaccurate or lack of billing records from landlords regarding RUBS disputes. The City of Alexandria encourages support for this request.
- There were no questions about the County legislative proposal process for the 2011, Virginia General Assembly. Commissioners did not have a legislative initiative or position statement to propose at this time. The deadline for submission is August 6, 2010.
- Liaison Johnson attended the Tenants in Foreclosure Conference on Thursday, May 6, 2010. There was an exchange of information between D.C., Maryland and Virginia. Best practices regarding advising and assisting tenants facing foreclosure were shared. Consumer Affairs continues to offer advice and guidance to tenants regarding the Protecting Tenants in Foreclosure Act. Information and guidance is available on the web site.
- Highlights regarding the 2010 Point-in-Time Count of People Who Are Homeless in the Fairfax-Falls Church Community were discussed. On January 27, 2010, there were 1,544 people who were homeless. Commissioner Thomas shared information about efforts to intervene with families and individuals before they become homeless through shelters and other transitional housing options.

Adjournment:

A motion was made by Commissioner Geier-Smith and second by Commissioner Kiffney to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 8:25p.m.