

Minutes of the Fairfax County Consumer Protection Commission

May 17, 2011

7:30PM Conference 4/5
Government Center
12000 Government Center
Pkwy. Fairfax, Virginia 22035
Chairman Fee, presiding

Attendance:

Commissioners: Bahhur, Belkowitz,
Bounacos, Boyd, Fee, Martz, Roark, Rosier,
Stamp

Absent:

Commissioners: Hine, Hargraves, Kirk, Nguyen

Staff:

Michael S. Liberman, Director
Cable and Consumer Services
Ellen Posner, Assistant County Attorney
Rick Ellrod, Director, Communications
Policy and Regulation Division
Steve Sinclair, Branch Chief, Public Utilities
Susan C. Jones, Branch Chief, Consumer Affairs

Guests:

Kathryn Falk, Vice President, Public &
Government Affairs, Cox Communications
Barrett Stock, Governmental Affairs
Manager, Cox Communications

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

Minutes

The minutes of the March 15, 2011, meeting were approved. The minutes of the April 19, 2011, meeting were approved pending a line deletion in commission matters.

Report of the Chairman

Chairman Fee deferred commission matters until after the public input session.

Chairman Fee introduced the newest CPC member, Commissioner Matthew

Martz. Chairman Fee mentioned that Verizon FIOS will be installed in his home

next week. **Report of the Director**

Director Liberman confirmed the approval of the FY 2012 Budget, which is effective July 1, 2011.

Director Liberman stated that the taxicab industry was sent notification that staff's recommendation was not to increase the number of taxicab certificates. The taxicab industry has until June 30, 2011, to let staff know whether they would like to increase their own allotment or if any other businesses in the industry would like a share of the allotment of certificates in Fairfax County.

Director Liberman informed commissioners that five employees from the Facility Management Department who work with scheduling and logistics of the conference rooms will be placed under Channel16 on July 1, 2011.

Commission Matters

Commissioner Bounacos had no matters to bring before the commission.

Commissioner Stamp had no matters to bring before the commission.

Commissioner Rosier had no matters to bring before the commission.

Commissioner Bahhur had no matters to bring before the commission.

Commissioner Roark had no matters to bring before the commission.

Commissioner Boyd had no matters to bring before the commission.

Commissioner Belkowitz spoke about his difficulties with Verizon and their lack of customer service in correcting the problem. He complimented staff on their assistance.

Commissioner Martz had no matters to bring before the commission.

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business

1. Board of Supervisors (BOS) Request for Falls Church Water Study. BOS has asked the commission to revisit this issue, review the study by Falls Church Water, and prepare a response to the BOS on whether the proposed rate increase complies with all the rate making principles approved by the BOS on May 24, 2010.

A discussion ensued on businesses, HOAs, and individual homeowners who brought lawsuits against Falls Church Water seeking refunds for overcharges in 2007, 2008, and 2009.

2. Cox Cable Franchise Renewal Public Input Session. Rick Ellrod, Director, Communications Policy and Regulation Division (CPRD) explained that Cox Communications franchise agreement with the county will expire in 2013. The renewal process is governed by federal law, which limits what the county can consider in issuing a renewal franchise. Under that law, it is essential for the county to carry out a community needs assessment to determine the county's future cable-related needs and interests for the next franchise period, which may be as long as 15 years. CPRD is interested in comments on the county's needs and interests in all these areas. The county is forbidden by federal law to regulate a cable company's rates, or the programming services and packages offered. On the other hand, comments on the issues of the cable system's capacity or speed, reliability, customer service, service to schools and other public sites, public, educational, and governmental access channels, and any other future needs and interests are welcome.

Three individuals provided public comment.

The Cox Cable Franchise Renewal Public Input Session ended at 8:35p.m. The meeting adjourned at 8:58PM