

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

February 19, 2009

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

Attendees:

Commissioners: Kocsis, Gomez, Geier-Smith,  
Liff, Aho, McRae, Kiffney

Absentees:

None

Staff Attending:

Michael S. Liberman, Director  
Cable Communications and Consumer  
Protection  
Susan C. Jones, Branch Chief  
Consumer Affairs  
Vee Johnson, Staff Liaison  
Consumer Affairs Branch

The meeting was called to order at 7:38 by Vice-Chair Kocsis.

**Minutes**

The February 19, 2009, minutes were approved.

**Reports**

- Vice-Chair Kocsis had no reports.

**Committee reports**

- The Channel 16 Advisory Committee did not have a report.

## **Staff Reports**

- The next foreclosure information meeting, which provides information for tenants, is February 26, 2009. Liaison Johnson provided details about the upcoming meeting.
- Fannie Mae has extended its suspension of evictions through 2/28/09 for properties occupied by renters.
- Branch Chief Jones informed that the Board of Supervisors will issue a proclamation on February 23, 2009, proclaiming March 1-7 as National Consumer Protection Week in Fairfax County. Free events and seminars are scheduled throughout the county during this week.
- Director Liberman informed that County Executive Anthony H. Griffin will present his proposed FY 2010 budget to the Board of Supervisors on February 23rd. He will keep Commissioners updated regarding the proposed budget.
- No questions or comments regarding the statistical reports.

## **Commission Matters**

- The attendance record was circulated and approved.
- There are currently three vacancies, one landlord, one citizen, and one tenant.
- Commissioner Geier-Smith attended the *Virginia Landlord Year in Review Dinner* on 1/28/09. She shared information with the Commission. Copies of the law summary that she received were provided to the Commissioners. It was suggested that they review this information and use it as a foundation for developing legislative recommendations for the 2010 General Assembly.
- Commissioner Aho requested detailed information regarding the areas within the county that have the most tenant-landlord complaints. The Commissioners would like a custom map showing the distribution of complaints. Liaison Johnson will request a custom GIS map of apartment communities in the county, a map showing the areas where complaints are filed, and a map showing all tenant-landlord complaints in the county.
- Commissioners Aho requested data on the number of hits on the tenant-landlord commission page on the Web with details about what information is viewed and downloaded from the site. Director Liberman will research information for this request.

## **Old Business**

### Commission Outreach Activities

- Commissioner Kocsis attended the tenant outreach event at the Springfield/Franconia Family Resource Center on Thursday, January 29, 2009. He shared comments about his participation. Following this event, a tenant filed a maintenance complaint with Zoning Enforcement, and staff contacted Legal Services of Northern Virginia on behalf of the Springfield/Franconia Center to address issues not within the scope of Consumer Affairs.

## **New Business**

- **Election of Officers**

In accordance with Article IV of the Bylaws, an election was conducted regarding the following slate of candidates:

Chair:	Sally Liff
Tenant Vice-Chair:	Michael Aho
Landlord Vice-Chair:	Chris Kocsis
Secretary:	Karen Geier-Smith

The slate was accepted by unanimous vote of the Commissioners.

## **New Business**

- Staff initiated contact with the Arlington County and City of Alexandria Tenant-Landlord Commission. The staff contact with the City of Alexandria is Melodie Baron. This board meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. The staff coordinator for the Arlington County Commission is Cynthia Gordon. This board meets on the third Wednesday of each month.

Commissioners Aho requested that an invitation be extended inviting the Tenant-Landlord Commissions from Alexandria and Arlington to a meeting to exchange information about activities and action of the Commissions. Liaison Johnson will initiate contact to determine availability.

## **Guests for 2009**

- Staff presented information regarding the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) and provided a copy of the member list. COG is comprised of 21 local governments that develop regional responses to issues such as the environment, affordable housing, economic development, health and family concerns, human services, population growth, public safety, and transportation. Staff will check for points of contact with COG.
- 2009 Virginia General Assembly.

Liaison Johnson discussed HB 2121 which requires landlords to give tenants notice in event of foreclosure. Since the housing market remains uncertain, this would be important protection for tenants. Currently the amended version does not provide a specific remedy for tenants if the landlord fails to provide the required notice. The bill would be a greater deterrent if consequences for noncompliance were outlined. Staff will continue to keep the Commission informed about the impact of foreclosure on renters for possible consideration as an upcoming legislative item.

- Other tenant-landlord bills before the General Assembly were discussed and comments offered by the Commissioners.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 p.m.