

Minutes of the Fairfax County Consumer Protection Commission

October 16, 2018

7:30 PM
Government Center, Conference 8
12000 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, Virginia 22035
Chairman Fee, presiding

Attendance:

Commissioners: Callender, Fee, Gulakowski,
Hargraves, Hine, Kazmi, Kirk, Lynch, Rosier,
Roark

Absent:

Commissioners: Belkowitz, Javed, Omeish

Staff:

Michael S. Liberman, Director
Cable and Consumer Services
Rebecca L. Makely, Director
Consumer Services Division
Rick E. Ellrod, Director
Communications Policy and
Regulation Division
Susan C. Jones, Branch Chief
Consumer Affairs

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 PM by Chairman Fee.

Minutes

The minutes for the June 19, 2018, and July 17, 2018, meetings were approved.

Report of the Chairman

Chairman Fee had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Report of the Director

Director Liberman had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Commission Matters

Commissioner Callender continues to receive the Chinese robocalls.

Commissioner Hargraves had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Commissioner Kazmi had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Commissioner Rosier inquired about putting in a speedbump on her street. Suggestions were made to contact Virginia Department of Transportation and Supervisor Foust's office.

Commissioner Hine had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Commissioner Lynch had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Chairman Fee stated he canceled his subscription with the Washington Post and re-subscribed as a new customer, which saved him money.

Commissioner Roark had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Commissioner Kirk had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Commissioner Gulakowski had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Old Business

There was no old business before the Commission.

New Business

1. Cable Operators Presentations

Louise Anderson of Verizon spoke of their commitment, values, ethics and compliance, and diversity. She explained Verizon's response to Hurricanes Florence and Michael and their efforts to restore service. Ms. Anderson spoke about the culture of Verizon and their ability to apply innovative technology to social issues.

A discussion ensued on products, speed access, decrease in fees, landlines, hanging wires throughout the county, and lack of response to address issues, underground installation, prorating outages, bundled services, and levels of customer service.

Angelique LeBlanc of Cox Communications spoke about their partnerships; upgrading video; talking remote; public, educational, and governmental channels, and high definition services.

A discussion ensued on Cox Homelife security automatic timeout on the camera feed, older equipment and replacement costs, overall fees, bundling of services, disappearance of channels such as the Weather Channel, lack of ability to transfer programs after an upgrade, and overall technical improvements.

Marie Schuler of Comcast highlighted the wide array of products and services offered to the residents of Reston. Ms. Schuler spoke on the following topics: Xfinity TV, Xfinity Internet, Xfinity Mobile, Xfinity Home, customer service, community investment, expanding digital literacy, promoting service, and building tomorrow's leaders.

A discussion ensued on Wi-Fi hotspots, privacy, and net neutrality.

Rick Ellrod, Director, Communications Policy and Regulation Division, described the three-year renewal process specified under federal law. With the Comcast and Verizon franchises due to expire in mid-2020, the county is approximately a year into the renewal window, "doing our homework" by conducting ascertainment studies of past performance and the county's future cable-related needs and interests. In response to the Commission's question, Mr. Ellrod indicated staff would not likely bring negotiated agreements before the Commission for at least a year.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.