

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

June 18, 2009

Fairfax County Government Center
12000 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, Virginia 22035
Conference Room #9
Chair Liff presiding

Attendees:

Commissioners: Kocsis, Gomez, Liff, McRae,
and Thomas

Absentees:

Kiffney, Geier-Smith, Aho

Staff Attending:

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

Guests:

Kazi & Mahsum Rahman
Prestwick Apartments

The meeting was called to order at 7:36 p.m. by Chair Liff.

Minutes

The June 18, 2009, minutes were approved.

Reports

- Chair Liff had no reports.

Committee reports

- The Channel16 report for the upcoming Consumer Focus program was not available. Commissioners would like to feature information about the bed bug epidemic along with other repair and maintenance issues. Chair Liff suggested that information about programs and events be submitted to Spanish language newspapers.

Staff Reports

- Staff will provide tenant-landlord information at the following upcoming events:
 - *A Day of Hope*, sponsored by the Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington on Saturday, June 20, 2009, from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
 - *Housing Rescue Fair*, sponsored by the Hispanic Committee of Virginia on Saturday July 11, 2009, at Wakefield High School in Arlington from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
- Staff continues partnership with St. Anthony Catholic Church to address tenant issues in the Culmore area and plan education outreach programs.
- Liaison Johnson attended the Culmore Apartment Managers Association meeting on Wednesday, June 18, 2009, and will attend a meeting with Culmore Partners on Tuesday, June 22, 2009. Staff is seeking to form new partnerships and expand outreach and education throughout the county.
- A communications request was submitted to Channel 16 for a 30 minute studio based program on behalf of the Tenant-Landlord Commission. The program should be completed and ready for broadcast in September 2009.
- No questions or comments regarding the statistical reports.

Commission Matters

- The attendance record was circulated and approved.
- There are currently two vacancies, one landlord and one citizen.
- The calendar was reviewed and updated to reflect upcoming Commissioner availability and events.
- Commissioner Thomas informed of the county's complete count committee for the 2010 census. Nominations are being taken for community ambassadors to reach out to undercounted populations in the county to make sure everyone is counted. Director Liberman suggested that the Commission offer a letter of support for the census efforts as tenants need to be counted to insure adequate funding for services and programs in the county. Commissioner Thomas will draft a letter for discussion at the July meeting.
- Staff will include information about the upcoming census in the next e-Newsletter.
- Commissioners voted to have summer recess in August 2009. A meeting will not be conducted. The regular meeting schedule will resume September 2009.

Old Business

- Information has been collected for the development of custom GIS maps. This information is being reviewing so the requested maps can be created.

New Business

- Commissioners did not have a legislative initiative or position statement to propose for the 2010 legislative session. The deadline for submission is August 10, 2009.

- A revised sample lease was distributed. Commissioners were asked to review and provide comments by email to Liaison Johnson by June 30, 2009.
- The Protecting Tenants in Foreclosure Act of 2009, was reviewed. In summary, this law, which was effective May 20, 2009, states that valid leases continue from the landlord to the new owner if a property is foreclosed upon. However, the tenant must stay current with rental payments and other terms of the lease agreement. Following is a summary of key provisions:
 - o New owners have to honor lease agreements.
 - o If the lease has expired, tenants must be given a minimum of 90 days to find a new home. Tenants can not be forced out immediately.
 - o Foreclosure cannot be used as a reason to terminate a lease or evict a tenant.
 - o Tenants who have a lease for a fixed term that has not expired, have a right to remain in the rental unit. A tenant cannot be evicted until the end of the lease term.
 - o If the lease ends in less than 90 days, the new owner may not evict a tenant without giving a minimum 90-days notice.
 - o There is one exception to this rule. If the new owner wants to live in the rental as their primary residence, the owner only has to give the tenant a 90-day notice to leave even if the lease runs longer than 90 days.
- Kazi and Hansum Rahman shared information with the Commission regarding maintenance, repair, and utility billing issues at Prestwick apartments in Falls Church, Va. Liaison Johnson will follow up with the tenants to find out what intervention and services Consumer Affairs can offer to help resolve their issues.
- Liaison Johnson informed of a request from Lisa McCoy, Housing Resource Coordinator with Shelter House, Inc., to speak with the Tenant-Landlord Commission about their program and services. Shelter House, Inc. is a community-based, non-profit organization that serves homeless families in Fairfax County. The Commission would like to extend an invitation to Ms. McCoy to speak at the September 17, 2009 meeting. Staff will make needed arrangements.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.