

## **Minutes of the Fairfax County Tenant-Landlord Commission**

February 10, 2022

7:30 p.m.

Video Meeting

Chairperson Chamberlain  
presiding

Attendance:

Commissioners: Chamberlain, Geier-Smith,  
Nair, Otonde, Park

Absent:

Commissioners: Islam

Staff Attending:

Rebecca L. Makely, Acting Director  
Cable and Consumer Services  
Susan C. Jones, Branch Chief  
Consumer Affairs Branch  
Melissa Pickham, Consumer Specialist  
Consumer Affairs Branch

The electronic meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Chairperson Chamberlain.

### **Quorum, Location, and Audibility of Members' Voices**

Chairperson Chamberlain conducted a Roll Call to verify that a quorum of members was participating; and that each member's voice was clear, audible, and at an appropriate volume for all of the other members; and the location from which member was participating. The roll call was as follows:

Chairperson Chamberlain, Alexandria, VA  
Commissioner Geier-Smith, Fairfax, VA  
Commissioner Islam-Absent  
Commissioner Nair, Fairfax, VA  
Commissioner Otonde, Centreville, VA  
Commissioner Park, Vienna, VA

Chairperson Chamberlain passed the virtual gavel to Commissioner Geier-Smith. A motion was made by Chairperson Chamberlain that each member's voice was adequately heard by each member of the Tenant-Landlord Commission (Commission). This motion was seconded by Commissioners Nair and Park. This motion passed unanimously, 5-0-0.

### **Need for an Electronic Meeting**

A motion was made by Chairperson Chamberlain that the State of Emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic made it unsafe for the Commission to physically assemble and unsafe for the public to physically attend any such meeting, and that as such, FOIA's usual procedures,

which require the physical assembly of the Commission and the physical presence of the public, could not be implemented safely or practically. Chairperson Chamberlain further moved that the Commission conduct the meeting electronically through a dedicated video and audio-conferencing line, and that the public access the meeting by calling 571-429-5982 and entering access code 855 056 395#. This motion was seconded by Commissioners Nair, Otonde, and Park. This motion passed unanimously, 5-0-0.

### **Need to Dispense with FOIA's Usual Procedures to Assure Continuity in Government/Continue Operations**

A motion was made by Chairperson Chamberlain that all of the matters addressed on the agenda addressed the Emergency itself, were necessary for continuity in Fairfax County government, and/or were statutorily required or necessary to continue operations and the discharge of the Commission's lawful purposes, duties, and responsibilities. This motion was seconded by Commissioners Nair and Otonde. This motion passed unanimously, 5-0-0.

### **Minutes**

A motion was made by Vice Chairperson Geier-Smith to approve the January 13, 2022, minutes. Commissioner Nair seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously, 5-0-0.

### **Report of the Director**

Acting Director Makely provided an update on old business concerning tenant-landlord complaints from management-owned vs. private landlords. From January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2021, closed complaints for management-owned were 123 and private landlords were 105.

Chairperson Chamberlain asked if there was a way to track that data from 2020 and 2019. Staff will check if data is available.

### **Report of the Chairperson**

Chairperson Chamberlain mentioned upcoming legislation on the Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act for noncompliance with rental agreements. It would increase from five days to 14 days the mandatory waiting period a landlord must observe prior to pursuing remedies for termination of the lease agreement. The written notice serves to notify the tenant of the nonpayment of rent and the landlord's intention to terminate the rental agreement if rent is not paid.

### **Commission Matters**

Commissioner Park had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Commissioner Otonde stated she was seeing rent increases due to COVID.

A discussion ensued about evictions, non-payment, or late payment of rent, court docket delays, backlog of the rent relief payments to landlords, income verification, sharing of personal information, and contract concessions.

Commissioner Geier-Smith had no matters to bring before the Commission

Commissioner Nair expressed interest in numbers of private rental units compared to management-owned rental units. Acting Director Makely stated Fairfax County provides an annual report on the housing demographics and would check on the breakdown. Chairperson Chamberlain mentioned data points from a report by George Mason Real Estate Group.

### **Old Business**

There was no old business before the Commission.

### **New Business**

**1. Elections.** Commissioner Geier-Smith moved to adopt the slate of candidates:

Landlord Vice Chairperson-Paula Park  
Tenant Vice Chairperson-Anup Nair  
Secretary-Karen Geier-Smith

Commissioners Nair and Park seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0-0.

**2. Items of Interest:** Chairperson Chamberlain mentioned increase in Romance Scams. Staff will email link to *Consumer Connection* Facebook Live program with AARP on Online Romance Scams.

Chairperson Chamberlain stated the Commission will meet virtually on March 10, 2022.

A motion was made by Commissioner Geier-Smith and seconded by Commissioner Park to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 p.m.