

Arlington County Tenant-Landlord Commission Meeting (Virtual)

Meeting Notes –February 10, 2021

Commissioners present: David Timm (Chair), Kirit Mookerjee, Bismah Ahmed, Elyse Hayes, Kristin Clegg, Nicole Merlene, Emily Camardo, Matthew Whitfield, Esq. Christopher Wimbush.

Virtual meeting held through electronic communication. A recording of the meeting is available on the County's webpage.

Approval of meeting notes – Meeting minutes for January were approved unanimously.

Commissioner Wimbush, new member, was recognized.

Public comment

- The first speaker spoke about his difficult experience receiving a full refund of his security deposit from his former landlord. After a series of clarifying questions from Commissioner Clegg he was advised to seek legal assistance to craft a letter referring to relevant sections of the VRLTA and also seek assistance from Bu-gata, if needed.
- Second speaker lived at the same residence and spoke in general about living conditions at the property; delayed attention to maintenance problems, faulty appliances. He intended to file a Tenant Assertion form. Commissioner Wimbush suggested that staff should follow up regarding the property and performance of the landlord. Chair, Timm agreed.
- The third speaker referenced a previous complaint. Action involved an online police report, and a follow up visit for which she was charged \$153.95 for an Emergency Intervention. She requested advise from the Commission on how to recover payment. Requested information on rental moratorium and expressed commendation to Fire Department on fire alarms and smoke detectors. Staff will follow up to get additional information.

Relocation Guidelines – staff, Hector Mercado Relocation Specialist

Hector Mercado provided a detailed presentation of the County's Relocation guidelines, the federal regulation and timeline for local projects. Copy of guidelines are available on the County webpage. Commissioner Wimbush agreed to submit written questions for staff to respond and share with the full commission.

Tenant Assistance Fund (TAF)- staff, Eric Timar Compliance Officer

Eric Timar provided a detailed presentation of the TAF policy, it's purpose and application to specific situations. The most recent project where the TAF was applied was AHC's Apex Project. There was one question- has there been any recommendations for changes or issues that may

need corrections to the TAF policy, in the future? Mr. Timar responded that there were no current requests for changes.

Discussion of the Virginia Poverty Law Center bills and amendments were postponed until a future meeting.

2021 Work Plan discussion

Chair Timm lead discussion on the 2021 Work Plan, referring to several suggestions from Commissioners that he had obtained during one-on-one interviews with Commissioners which were integrated into the Work Plan. Major recommendations were for formation of subcommittees to advance work in between meetings, since topics may be too substantive to address in the limited time frame. The Eviction Subcommittee was reinstated- Commissioners Mookerjee, Clegg, Camardo, Hayes, Ahmed and Whitefield expressed interests in becoming members. An email will be sent to establish a date and time to meet. Other subcommittees ideas discussed – COVID retrospective and looking forward to end of the moratorium to be included under the Evictions subcommittee. Grievance Dispute -possible subcommittee. Housing Discrimination subcommittee. Commissioner Mookerjee – overview of the Planning Commission including site plan process and the process- early stages to the end. Overview of the site plan process. Check with other Commissions for representation; possible Commissions with whom collaboration maybe useful to TLC’s work – Human Rights and Housing Commission.

Other suggestions included moving VRLTA 101 to an earlier month for the benefit of new members. Affordable Housing Master Plan moved to a later month. Inclusion of Bu-gata’s annual report closer to the end of the year. It was agreed to provisionally approve the work plan with recommended changes. Unanimously approved by members. The January meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:34. p.m.