

COMMISSION ON LANDLORD AND TENANT AFFAIRS

January 2014 through December 2014

COLTA Membership

The ordinance establishing the Commission on Landlord and Tenant Affairs (COLTA) provides for the appointment of twelve members and includes representation from Takoma Park tenants, homeowners, and landlords. There are currently eleven members serving on COLTA. Five of the current members are homeowners, two are landlords, and four are tenants.

The Commission is an experienced group of volunteers, appointed by the Council for staggered three-year terms. During their respective tenure, ten of the members have heard complaints on landlord-tenant issues or rent increase petitions. New Commissioners receive an orientation session where the Takoma Park Landlord-Tenant and COLTA Codes, administrative regulations, hearing procedures and forms are reviewed. New Commissioners routinely attend hearings as observers prior to sitting on a hearing panel.

A roster of the current COLTA membership is attached.

Business Meetings and Hearings

COLTA conducts a minimum of one business meeting per year. Hearings are conducted throughout the year to address unresolved landlord/tenant complaints and to consider objections to preliminary Administrative Decisions, issued during the Fair Return Rent Increase petition process. The minutes of the 2014 Business Meeting are attached. Hearing information is detailed on page 2 of this report.

Other Activities

Commission members are provided drafts of proposed housing legislative initiatives and Administrative Regulations for review. Their comments have been of assistance in the development of regulations regarding fees charged to tenants and the process for transferring utility costs to tenants. A newsletter is also published twice per year. The Commission's Winter 2014-15 Newsletter is attached.

Staffing

The Assistant City Attorney Kenneth Sigman serves as the Commission's Executive Director. Staff support is provided by the Housing and Community Development Department's Landlord-Tenant Mediation Specialist, Moses A. Wilds, Jr.

Case Load Activity

The Office on Landlord-Tenant Affairs receives an average of 205 calls per month. Most of issues are resolved outside of the COLTA hearing process and as such are not included in the following data.

COLTA Cases Filed	2012	2013	2014
Total COLTA Cases Filed	10	9	11
Landlord Tenant Cases			
Total Landlord Tenant Cases Filed	9	7	10
Complaints Mediated	4	5	5
Cases Closed (Withdrawn)	1	0	2
Hearings	4	2	1
Cases continued into following year	0	0	2
Type of Cases			
Security Deposit Refunds	4	3	6
Defective Tenancy / Notice to Vacate	4	4	3
Illegal Rent	0	0	1
Illegal Entry	1	0	0
Rent Stabilization Rent Increase Petitions			
Total Rent Increase Petitions Filed	1	2	1
Preliminary Administrative Decisions (PAD) Pending	0	0	0
Preliminary Administrative Decisions (PAD) Issued	0	2	1
Rent Increase Petition Objections	0	0	0
Petitions Withdrawn by Applicant	1	0	0

Attachments: Commission on Landlord and Tenant Affairs Membership Roster (Jan 2015)
 COLTA Business Meeting Minutes (December 10, 2014)
 COLTA Newsletter (Winter 2014)

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