

City of Takoma Park, Maryland

Commission on Landlord-Tenant
Affairs
(COLTA)
Telephone: (301) 894-7440



7500 Maple Avenue
Takoma Park, MD 20912

COLTA Business Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: December 11, 2012

Location: Takoma Park Community Center-Council Conference Room
7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, MD

Attendees: Commissioners Price, Wakelyn, Munger, Edwards, Sutton, King

Staff: Moses A. Wilds, Jr., Landlord-Tenant Affairs

A quorum being present Chairperson Lauren Price called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm and requested commissioners to introduce themselves. Following the introductions Lauren Price and Peter Munger received unanimous approval to continue as Chairperson/Vice-Chairperson respectively.

Landlord-Tenant staff member Moses A. Wilds, Jr. next led a review of the Commission's membership Roster information and the 2013 hearing Calendar. Commissioner Munger noted a change in his preferred email address and the other commissioners indicated their contact information was correct. Mr. Wilds noted the need for commissioners to submit any changes to their contact information as soon as any change occurs. Mr. Wilds then reviewed the 2013 COLTA Hearing Schedule and asked that any commissioners with scheduling conflicts should indicate them. Commissioners King, Price and Sutton noted conflicts with four of the tentative 2013 hearing dates. Mr. Wilds next noted that there had been a problem contacting and/or receiving return calls from selected commissioners in 2012. He requested that all commissioners respond to calls and/or emails from the COLTA Executive Director as soon as possible. He noted that all 2013 hearing dates are tentative pending the scheduling of a hearing. He also noted that all hearings will continue to be held on Tuesday evenings with the possible exception of an emergency hearing which could be scheduled on a day other than Tuesday. Such hearings it was noted by Mr. Wilds generally include a notice to vacate issued to a tenant that requires that the commission hear and rule on a complaint more expeditiously.

The commissioners next discussed possible changes to the Landlord-Tenant and COLTA Codes. Selected commissioner comments included:

- Electronic transmission of documents may be appropriate if receipt of the document can be confirmed. May be appropriate depending on the landlord-tenant relationship;
- Addition of the Utility Transfer and Entry Requirements to the lease seems like a good idea. Assume landlords that don't use city lease would be required to add as a lease addendum;

- Leave the Security Deposit Section in the city code-currently provides a service to tenants; having to provide copy of state law would be a duplication of effort;
- Some landlords may be imposing unacceptable charges for preparing apartments for bedbug extermination; elderly tenants may not be able to comply with prepare your apartment for extermination list; Can landlords be required to advise applicants about prior bedbugs issue in a rental unit?
- Based on hearings, tenants appear to be using landlord retaliation as defense to 2 month Notices to Vacate.
- General acceptance of all the proposed changes to the COLTA Code Section particularly #3.

All commissioners agreed to provide their written comments on the proposed code changes as soon as possible after the meeting.

Mr. Wilds next reminded Commissioners to submit information for inclusion in the bi-annual COLTA Newsletter and the importance of their timely responses to his email and phone calls. He also reminded those Commissioners whose terms expire in 2013 to provide their reappointment information directly to the City Clerk.

Chairperson Price wished the Commissioners a safe and happy holiday season, then made the meeting adjournment motion which received a second and the meeting was adjourned at 8:20pm.