

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: FEBRUARY 23, 2004

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *PS*

SUBJECT: RECEIPT OF THE FY 2002-2003 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CONSUMER AFFAIRS COMMISSION

ISSUE: Receipt of the Fiscal Year 2002- - 2003 Annual Report of the Consumer Affairs Commission.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council receive the report, which covers the activities of the Consumer Affairs Commission from July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2003.

DISCUSSION: The City of Alexandria Consumer Affairs Commission is charged with consumer education, and the review and analysis of consumer protection policies and regulations. As required by Section 2-4-4 (d) (2) of the City Code, the attached report summarizes major Commission activities from September 1, 2002 through June 30, 2003. The report reflects activities that the Commission undertook jointly with staff. Over the next year, staff will work with the Commission to expand the Office's outreach into the community.

FISCAL IMPACT: None

ATTACHMENT: Annual Report of the Alexandria Consumer Affairs Commission for Fiscal Year 2003.

STAFF: Jacqueline Levy, Consumer Affairs Administrator



City of Alexandria Virginia
Consumer Affairs Commission

REPORT OF ACTIVITES - SEPTEMBER 2002 THROUGH JUNE 2003

TOPIC	ACTIVITIES	FUTURE STEPS
<p>ESL/Multicultural Outreach & Support</p>	<p>The Commission discussed ways to reach out to the ESL community The Commission worked with Joanne Roosa, the Multicultural Services Initiative Coordinator to gain a better understanding of ways to reach out to the growing immigrant population. An Alexandria multicultural Coalition was formed in 2003. Information packets were disseminated to the multicultural community through this initiative. The Commission invited Rodrigo Guajardo (Volunteer Coordinator with the Alexandria Police Department) to speak before the Commission regarding ways to reach out to the Hispanic community.</p>	<p>Participate in Alexandria Multicultural Coalition Preparation of printed piece, in various languages, aimed at multicultural and Limited English Proficiency population, along the lines of "Assistance Available to <i>Everyone</i> in Alexandria"</p>
<p>Consumer Protection Week February 2003 Theme: Information Privacy</p>	<p>The commission drafted a proclamation to be placed in the council docket. The proclamation designated the week of February 3 – 8, 2003 as National Consumer Protection Week in the City of Alexandria. It acknowledged the City's diversity and that English was not the native language spoken in 30% of the homes in the City. It memorialized the Commission's dedication to undertake initiatives to assist non-native English-speaking Alexandrians to understand their basic rights as consumers and further efforts to provide this assistance.</p>	<p>Prioritize ESL/Multicultural efforts for the coming year Participate in 2004 Consumer Protection Week and request City Council Proclamation recognizing same</p>

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City Web Site	The Commission supported development of the Consumer Affairs department section on the City website to better serve the community with additional resources and information, including links to other consumer information sites.	Make it easier for Alexandrians to find consumer information, with direct link to Consumer Information from the home page of the city web site. Redesign page to include complaint rights and forms and informational links.
Commission Hearings	Discussion as to whether or not the right to hearings on consumer complaints is adequately publicized, and procedure to follow if hearing is requested.	Pursue using hearing process have "field leveling" information/conciliation hearings to assist LEP residents with consumer complaints. Encourage exercise of right guaranteed by city code.
Alexandria Gazette Packet	Initiated action to encourage local newspapers to highlight consumer issues.	Monthly consumer information article with Commission members urged to utilize their expertise to submit proposed articles
Certification program for businesses	Draft outline presented for customer Service Standards	Work with Chamber of Commerce to explore voluntary guidelines to distribute to city businesses
Washington Gas back billing	Requested that Council support positions of Fairfax and Arlington counties to limit extent of back billing	Issue resolved with Commission participation noted by Washington Gas
Dominion Virginia Power Waterline Protection Program	The Commission sent a letter to Dominion Virginia Power regarding the waterline damage protection program and its impact on consumers.	Response pending

Virginia American Water Increase	Reviewed rate increase request and city staff report	
Misleading e-mail solicitations	Investigation and discussion of popular e-mail scams	Distribution of information to warn city consumers about known e-mail scams

Respectfully submitted,



ALAN DUBOW, Chair



KATHLEEN BURNS, Vice Chair

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CONSUMER AFFAIRS COMMISSION

The Consumer Affairs Commission reviews and analyzes consumer protection policies and regulations and makes recommendations to appropriate agencies for improved consumer relations.

The Commission meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. Approximately two hours per month are required of Commission members.

Members: 11

3-YEAR TERM

2 Business members

2 Local consumer action organization members

7 Citizen members

City Staff: JACQUELINE LEVY, CONSUMER AFFAIRS OFFICE, 838-4350

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CONSUMER AFFAIRS COMMISSION

<u>Member</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Original Appointment</u>	<u>Current Appointement</u>	<u>Oath</u>	<u>Expiration of Current Appointment</u>
KATHLEEN BURNS 1036 N. PELHAM STREET ALEXANDRIA, VA 22304 CITIZEN	Res: (703) 824-1799 Bus: (703) 824-1799 Fax: (703) 824-0977 eMail burnskathy@earthlink.net	JOURNALIST	5/28/02	10/23/02	11/12/02	10/23/05
ANNETTE CLECKNER 4675 LAWTON WAY, #301 ALEXANDRIA, VA 22311 LOCAL CONSUMER ACTION GROUP	Res: (703) 820-6685 Bus: (703) 886-4341 Fax: (703) 886-0631 eMail see below	SENIOR MANAGER CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND QUALITY, MCI e-mail: Annette.Cleckner@wcom.com	1/9/90	2/12/02	3/1/02	2/12/05
5 GLYNN CORYELL 1105 QUAKER HILL COURT ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314 CITIZEN	Res: (703) 370-1879 Bus: Fax: eMail	PRESIDENT, GLYNN H. CORYELL & ASSOCIATES	11/23/99	11/26/02	12/6/02	11/26/05
ALAN DUBOW 601 LITTLE STREET ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301 BUSINESS MEMBER Chair	Res: (703) 684-7411 Bus: (202) 276-3328 Fax: eMail dubow@usa.net	DIR. OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT HEARTLAND HOSPICE	2/9/99	3/12/02	3/27/02	3/12/05

CONSUMER AFFAIRS COMMISSION

10/22/03

MICHAEL GAW 1013 QUEEN STREET ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314 CITIZEN	Res: (703) 739-1379 Bus: (202) 942-0158 Fax: eMail mikegaw@post.harvard.edu	SPECIAL COUNSEL SEC	5/8/01	11/13/01	12/7/01	11/13/04
ADAM PEARLMAN 5055 SEMINARY ROAD, #1614 ALEXANDRIA, VA 22311 CITIZEN	Res: (818) 438-8331 Bus: (202) 305-3143 Fax: (202) 353-9855 eMail adam.pearlman@usdoj.gov	PARALEGAL SPECIALIST DOJ	10/14/03	10/14/03		11/13/04
JAMES RORKE 3816 CHARLES AVENUE ALEXANDRIA, VA 22305 CITIZEN	Res: (703) 836-4085 Bus: (202) 273-6873 Fax: (202) 275-0608 eMail jtrorke@hotmail.com	PROGRAM ANALYST DEPT. OF VETERANS AFFAIRS	3/11/03	3/11/03	3/28/03	1/9/04
TODD RUOPP 125 CAMERON PARKE PLACE ALEXANDRIA, VA 22304 BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVE	Res: (703) 960-4314 Bus: (703) 960-7600 Fax: (703) 960-9631 eMail todd.ruopp@araggroup.com	ASSISTANT VICE PRES. ARAG GROUP	2/12/02	2/12/02	2/26/02	2/12/05
SEAN SPICER 917 PORTNER PLACE ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314 CITIZEN	Res: (703) 837-8454 Bus: (202) 479-7010 Fax: (202) 484-1154 eMail seanspicer@yahoo.com	PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER NAVAL RESERVES	10/23/02	10/23/02	10/31/02	10/23/05

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CONSUMER AFFAIRS COMMISSION

10/22/03

KENAN TORRANS
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ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314
CITIZEN

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ASSOCIATE COUNSEL
US DEPT. OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS

9/22/98

11/13/01

12/7/01

11/13/04

POSITION VACANT

LOCAL CONSUMER ACTION GROUP

Res:
Bus:
Fax:
eMail

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