

**COMMON INTEREST COMMUNITY BOARD
OMBUDSMAN COMMITTEE MEETING**

MINUTES

The Common Interest Community Board Ombudsman Committee met on February 11, 2015, at the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation, 9960 Mayland Drive, Richmond, Virginia, with the following members present:

Mary Elizabeth Johnson
Christiaan Melson (Chair)
Lucia Anna Trigiani (Ex-Officio) (arrived 10:06 a.m.)

Committee members Kristie Helmick and Thomas Mazzei were not present at the meeting.

Board staff present for all or part of the meeting were:

Trisha L. Henshaw, Executive Director
Heather Gillespie, Ombudsman
Jill Hrynciw, Board Administrator
Amy Goobic, Administrative Assistant

Agency staff present for all or part of the meeting were:

Jay W. DeBoer, Director
Mark N. Courtney, Senior Director for Regulatory and Public Affairs

No representative was present from the Office of the Attorney General.

Mr. Melson, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Call to Order

Mr. Melson advised the Committee members of the emergency evacuation procedures.

**Emergency Evacuation
Procedures**

Ms. Johnson moved to approve the agenda. Mr. Melson seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by members: Johnson and Melson

**Approval of
Agenda**

There was no public comment.

Public Comment Period

Ms. Henshaw advised the Committee that she provided a report at the last workgroup meeting on the activities of the Committee, specifically as those activities relate to education and outreach. In addition, Ms. Henshaw provided specific legislation for the 2014 and 2015 session that relate to the need for increased education and outreach. Those bills included House Bill (HB) 332 (2014), Senate Bill (SB) 1008 (2015), and House Joint Resolution (HJR) 592 (2015). While HJR 592 was tabled in Committee this Session, the Virginia Housing Commission has been asked to consider the resolution, which includes a study of common interest communities in Virginia.

**Update on CIC
Workgroup of the
Virginia Housing
Commission**

Committee members were provided a draft of an Education and Outreach Plan prepared by staff. Ms. Henshaw stated that the plan is a working document, but is a foundation to build on and requested feedback from the Committee. Committee members discussed possible methods to provide

**Education & Outreach
Plan**

education and outreach to those involved in community associations. Committee members suggested Board members or staff attend and/or host a booth at a Community Associations Institute (CAI) event as a means of outreach. Ms. Trigiani added that there is a constant need for education, to not only homeowners, but groups such as real estate agents, banking institutions and auditors. Ms. Henshaw reported that the Virginia Association of Realtors had reached out to her and Ms. Gillespie on opportunities to collaborate.

Discussion was held on the various groups, in addition to homeowners, that should be reached through the education/outreach plan including lenders, resale providers, real estate agents, insurance professionals, localities and legislators. Committee members also discussed short term strategies - realizing that development of an education program will take time, resources and involvement. Mr. Melson suggested a bulleted flyer to be posted online and/or sent out to registrants. Ms. Trigiani suggested the Committee explore development of a training program by a professional company, provided there is funding for such. She added that an RFP would need to be outlined, and it might be a lengthy process. A more immediate response would be the one page flyer, newsletter or possibly an FAQ on the Ombudsman's website.

Ms. Gillespie provided the Committee with a handout containing information for a survey, and draft survey questions. Information gleaned from the survey would enable the Ombudsman's office to make certain they are meeting the needs of the people involved with associations, and to ascertain if there are underlying issues. Ms. Gillespie reported that she is researching online survey services, emphasizing that an online survey could broaden the base of responses and therefore provide better data.

Ms. Henshaw informed the Committee that although there are funds set aside for education and outreach, the Board may be able to host an intern that could assist in the development of an education program. Ms. Trigiani suggested inquiring with the University of Richmond Law School, as they have a program for students to work and obtain college credit. She further added that VCU and Virginia Tech both have programs that may be able to assist.

Ms. Henshaw reviewed discussion items requiring action. She stated that the owners bill of rights will be reviewed and discussed by the Board at its March meeting. In addition, Ms. Henshaw and Ms. Gillespie will create a worksheet of what services and information the Ombudsman can and cannot provide, as well as information related to the Board's function. Finally, as suggested, staff will contact the various CAI chapters to request information on obtaining a booth for the Ombudsman and Board staff to be available to provide information at upcoming events. Ms. Henshaw added that the Outreach and Education Plan document will be revised with suggestions from the Committee.

Ms. Gillespie requested Committee members provide feedback on the survey questions, and the survey will then reviewed by the CIC Board.

In order to provide ample time for staff to determine the appropriate course and resources for education and outreach, Committee members proposed

**Resources, Methods
and Potential Industry
Collaborations**

Next Meeting Date

waiting until May or June for the next meeting.

There was no other business.

Other Business

Conflict of Interest forms were completed by all members present.

**Conflict of Interest
Forms**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:32 a.m.

Adjourn

Christiaan Melson, Chair

Jay W. DeBoer, Secretary

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