

# **Howard County Consumer Affairs Advisory Board**

## **Meeting Minutes for June 1, 2016**

**The meeting was called to order at 7:08 pm.**

- Present: Sue Rogan, Ashlyn Hood, Jill Bussey, Richard Green (by telephone), Felicia West
- Absent: Jerome Jackson, Katherine Bronstein
- Guests: Phyllis Madachy, Marshall McLeod, Young Smith, Shahram Khan, and Carmen Moultrie

### **Introductions of Guests**

**Recognition of service of retiring Board member Felicia West**

**Minutes of the April meeting** were approved as amended.

### **Department of Citizen Services Update**

Phyllis Madachy, Director of the Department of Citizen Services provided information to the Board on changes that will take effect on July 1, 2016. These changes included name changes for the Department and the offices within the Department. Of relevance to the Board: The Office of Consumer Affairs will become the Office of Consumer Protection, the Consumer Affairs Advisory Board will become the Consumer Protection Advisory Board and the Department of Citizen Services will become the Department of Community Resources and Services. These changes are being made to better reflect what the Department, offices, boards and commissions do and make them easier for people to find.

In addition, the following new offices will be created within the Department: Office of Veterans and Military Families, Office of Community Partnerships, Office of the Local Children's Board and the Office of ADA Coordination.

The new names and new offices are also accompanied by the implementation of Departments "no wrong door" policy. This policy expands on the Department's mission of ensuring that residents have full access to the services they need whether provided by the Department, other County agencies or non-profit organizations. The approach will be multi-generational, multi-cultural and include full community engagement for individuals with disabilities.

### **Discussion of Potential Landlord-Tenant legislation**

Becky advised the Board of her discussion with the Department's Data Analyst about the best way to obtain public comment on the need for County landlord tenant legislation. Based on that discussion, Becky recommended that the Board, OCA staff and other partners (such as other boards and commissions and non-profit agencies) conduct a series of focus groups. Participants will be asked about their experiences as tenants, problems that they have encountered and how County legislation could improve the lives of tenants. Information obtained from the focus groups would then be collated into a list of possible legislative changes. The Board may then hold one or more meetings with landlords, property management companies and realtors to obtain their reaction to the suggestions of the tenants. Information from all parties would be presented to Councilperson Mary Kay Sigaty (who requested the Board's involvement) for her use in determining whether to proceed with legislation. Becky provided the Board with a preliminary list of steps that will need to be taken for the Board's review and discussion at the next meeting.

### **Student Loan Forum and Resource Fair #2**

Becky provided the Board with a timeline that could be used to hold another Student Loan event in October. Given that the Board will also be conducting landlord-tenant focus groups, Becky suggested that the event be moved back to late January or early February and presented as both a webinar and in-person event. This will ensure participation even if weather conditions are poor. The Department's Technology Coordinator has agreed to assist the Board with the technical needs for the webinar. Becky will also contact Howard Community College to see if they would be interested in co-hosting the event. The Board agreed to proceed in per Becky's suggestion.

**The Board adjourned into closed session to discuss new Board member recommendations at 8:15.**

**THE NEXT MEETING OF THE BOARD WILL BE HELD ON JULY 6, AT 7:00 PM**  
**OFFICE OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS CONFERENCE ROOM**  
**6751 COLUMBIA GATEWAY DRIVE, COLUMBIA, MD 21046**