

**Los Angeles County
Consumer Affairs Advisory Commission
Meeting**

Minutes

Wednesday, January 16, 2013

Present:	Dionne Faulk Helen Levin Vivian Chan	Joseph Lee Stanley Rogers	Ronnie Jayne Joyce Ayvazi
Staff:	Brian Stiger Wendy Myring	Kirk Shelton Adriana Gallegos	LaTayvius Alberty (County Counsel)
Excused:	Ho-Jeong Eun Dennis Arguelles	Karine Bagdasarian	Sylvia Southerland
Public:	Suzan Rogers Anabella Mazariegos Hector Di Laudo	Antionette Thomas Isaac Nissim Angie Thomas	Neil Rubenstein Ruth Sarnoff

Call to Order and Confirmation of Quorum:

Chair Faulk called the meeting to order at approximately 1:34 p.m. The quorum requirement was met during the entire meeting. The agenda was reviewed by the commissioners present.

In accordance with the Brown Act, the agenda for the Commission Meeting was posted in advance on the outside door of the Department of Consumer Affairs (Room B-96), the meeting location (Room B-83), and online at <http://dca.lacounty.gov/Commission.htm>.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes for the meetings of November 14, 2012 were unanimously approved on motion by Commissioner Jayne and seconded by Commissioner Rogers.

Subcommittee Updates:

**Public Information Subcommittee
Commissioner Jayne – Subcommittee Chair**

Commissioner Jayne updated the Commission on the activities of the subcommittee. The subcommittee had not met since the last Commission meeting due to staffing changing in the Department's Consumer Education and Public Outreach unit. The subcommittee is planning to meet again before the next Commission meeting. They did not have any suggested recommendations at this time.

**Foreclosure Subcommittee
Chair Faulk – Subcommittee Chair**

Chair Faulk updated the Commission on the activities of the subcommittee. The subcommittee had held two meetings since the last Commission meeting including a meeting with a homeowner advocate to discuss community recommendations. The subcommittee had one

suggested recommendation. Members of the public provided comments on the suggested recommendation and foreclosure issues in general.

Chair Faulk made the following motion, seconded by Commissioner Levin:

Recommend that the Director review online financial literacy resources provided by the Department of Real Estate to evaluate if those resources could support the Department of Consumer Affairs' new financial literacy efforts to help homeowners.

The motion was unanimously passed by the commissioners present.

Volunteers and Interns Subcommittee Commissioner Chan – Subcommittee Chair

Commissioner Chan updated the Commission on the activities of the subcommittee. The subcommittee had not met since the last meeting and is currently on hold pending a report back from the Department on the results of their previous recommendations. They did not have any suggested recommendations at this time.

Administrative Subcommittee Chair Faulk

Chair Faulk shared that the Administrative Subcommittee is seeking a third member to review the Commission Administrative Manual and work on other projects such as reviewing an upcoming draft of the Department's updated Strategic Plan. Commissioner Lee volunteered to fill the third seat on the subcommittee. Chair Faulk also shared that the subcommittee met and reviewed the proposed outline for the Commission Administrative Manual and is planning another meeting before the next Commission meeting.

New Business:

Public Concerns about Local Utility Rates

Chair Faulk shared with the Commissioners that issues relating to local utility rates had been raised during Public Comment at the past two Commission meetings in September and November.

Chair Faulk made the following motion, seconded by Commissioner Lee:

The Commission has received input from a member of the public that is concerned about fraud relating to local utility rates. The California Public Utilities Commission has the regulatory authority over private sector utility companies such as those mentioned in the Public Comment. Since this state agency has the expertise and regulatory authority in this area, the Commission recommends that the Director compile the complaints and data submitted by Mr. Said Said and send a letter to the Public Utilities Commission indicating that the County has received this information and is asking the Public Utilities Commission to review this consumer's concerns.

The motion was unanimously passed by the commissioners present.

Commission 2013 Meeting Schedule

The Commission reviewed the meeting schedule for 2013. The schedule includes 6 full Commission meetings held every other month starting in January. Months in between the Commission meetings will be used to schedule subcommittee meetings.

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Department Update:

Director Stiger recognized Tim Bissell, Department of Consumer Affairs Chief Deputy Director, on the occasion of his retirement. Mr. Bissell had been recognized by the Board of Supervisors at their meeting on January 15.

Mr. Stiger introduced the Commissioners to Wendy Myring, the Department's Admin Deputy, who was attending the Commission meeting.

The Department continues to move forward with the annual budget process. The Department will meet with the County's Chief Executive Officer in February to discuss the Department's budget for fiscal year 2013-14.

County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas has asked the Department of Consumer Affairs to participate in a Foreclosure Workgroup with the Chief Executive Office, Registrar-Recorder / County Clerk, and County Counsel.

Director Stiger shared with the Commissioners that National Consumer Protection Week is coming up in March. The Department plans to host events to help bring attention to consumer issues.

The Department is currently working on the design of a new departmental webpage. The new webpage is scheduled to be launched in May 2013.

Director Stiger also answered questions from the Commissioners.

Public Comment:

Six members of the public spoke to the Commission during public comment. Four people spoke about issues relating to tenant rights and foreclosures. One member of the public expressed concerns about a nonprofit legal service provider the Department referred her to when she needed legal assistance. One member of the public commended the work of Nicholas Aquino and the Small Claims Advisors that assisted him with a Small Claims Court case.

Chair's Final Remarks:

Chair Faulk thanked the public for attending the meeting and sharing their input. She also thanked the Commissioners present for attending.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, **March 20, 2013**.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:36 p.m.