

Meeting minutes of the Hybrid
Arlington Tenant Landlord –Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)
Subcommittee

February 27, 2023

Present in-person: Commissioner Emily Camardo, Commissioner Kristin Clegg.

Absent: Commissioner Chris Whimbush

Summary of Presentations/discussion

Saul Reyes of BU-GATA presented information of the type and number of complaints that his organization handled from renters for the period 2020, 2021, and 2022. Primary categories of complaints are management related issues which are customer service related issues- poor customer service dismissive, attitudes. Rental assistance and referrals to THRIVE, DHS, broad housing related issues, request for maintenance formed the other major categories. He discussed how the organization helps and follow up on complaints. Commissioners asked questions about BU-GATA's website, analytics and how services are advertised to tenants. It was suggested that a FAQ section would be useful to have. When asked what his recommendations for an ADR process might be he commented that County staff or a third party such as the Commission could bring value to resolving tenant complaints; interaction with management companies such as sending letters or attending Commission meetings. ADR could be useful for residents unable to afford legal assistance.

Hector Mercado, Housing Information Center, presented calls report for 2020-2023. He categorized the calls according to the lease periods – Beginning, duration and end of tenancy. He reported on the number of calls from tenants and landlords and by VRLTA and non-VRLTA properties. In response to the question, where ADR should focus, he responded that this could be a bridge to help communication between management and upper management regarding tenant complaints. Help management to better understand and communicate with tenants.

Next steps: Discussion of information received about types of complaints; possible form that collects detailed information about complaints received by the Commission and follow up action Comparison of other jurisdictions and look at VRLTA.