

# Meeting of Advisory Committee on Consumer Protection

January 23, 2024

8:30 AM

*This meeting was conducted virtually using Microsoft Teams.*

**Members present:** Phillip Robinson, Ira Rheingold, Savitri Taneja, Harriet Kamendi, Timothy Robinson

**OCP Staff present:** Sharon Margolis, Maurice Valentine, Brittany Freeman

The Agenda was discussed. Phillip Robinson moved to adopt the Agenda. Savitri Taneja seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Minutes of the November meeting were discussed. Savitri Taneja made a motion to approve the minutes. Timothy Robinson seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

## **Old Business**

The 2024 legislative session was discussed. Phillip Robinson said the session has begun, and the Consumer Rights Coalition, now called Economic Action Maryland, has some priority bills; one is on debt collection. Phillip Robinson recommended inviting members of the Montgomery County Delegation to the next meeting, especially those who are consumer oriented. He recommended inviting Delegate Lorig Charkoudian, Delegate Vaughn Stewart, and Delegate Leslie Lopez, along with additional Delegates. Sharon Margolis let the Committee know that if the Committee members draft an email, Brittany Freeman can send it out through the Advisory Committee email. Phillip Robinson said he will send Ira Rheingold the emails of people he would like to invite to the next meeting, and copy Brittany Freeman. Ira Rheingold said he can reach out to Senator Feldman to attend a Committee meeting.

On the issue of medical debt, Phillip Robinson said that Marceline White of Economic Action Maryland and Delegate Charkoudian were both interested in participating in a program to discuss the state of medical debt in Maryland and new rights that have been enacted, and that it could be scheduled at any time. He will help Brittany Freeman connect with Marceline White and Delegate Charkoudian, and Brittany Freeman work to schedule a date for this.

Outreach to Riderwood TV club regarding programming was discussed. Brittany Freeman to follow up on with Riderwood TV Club on outreach and will report with an update for the next meeting.

## **New Business**

The meeting schedule for 2024 was discussed. Ira Rheingold suggested having one in-person meeting per year, and Savitri Taneja agreed. The Committee will keep discussing and planning the possibility of an in-person meeting. The committee also discussed moving the December 2024 meeting to December 10. Brittany Freeman will update the calendar and meeting invites.

Brittany Freeman provided an update on the Advisory Committee vacancies. She said we received four applications and asked for two committee members to volunteer to conduct interviews. Ira Rheingold and Timothy Robinson volunteered. Brittany Freeman said she will follow up to schedule dates and times for interviews.

### **Office Report**

Brittany Freeman stated that the Office of Consumer Protections celebrated their 52<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary in December 2023 with an open house. Also in December, OCP participated in a presentation on senior scams for White Oak Recreation Center, a senior town hall at Friends House Retirement Community with the Office of Councilmember Luedtke. Maurice Valentine added that OCP participated in a presentation on hiring home improvement contractors at Sligo Woods Civic Association.

### **Other**

Ira Rheingold noted that nationally there have been many complaints regarding solar panels, and the Committee discussed their thoughts on this topic. Ira Rheingold also mentioned to the Committee to think about meeting with County Council in the future.

**The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 27 at 8:30 AM.**

*The meeting adjourned at 9:09 AM.*