



**Consumer Protection Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 9, 2021, 7:00 PM
Virtual Meeting via Webex**

The meeting was called to order at 7:09 PM by Sandra Price, Board Chairperson.

Present:

Sandra Price – Board Chairperson
Richard Weisenhoff -Board Member
Patricia Branch – Board Member
Judy McCormick – Board Member
Young Smith – Board Member
Jennifer Jones – Deputy Chief of Staff, Howard County Administration
Cheryl Mattis – Deputy Director, Howard County Department of Community Resources and Services
Lila Boor – Investigator, Howard County Office of Consumer Protection
Jarrett Carter – Manager, Communications Team, Howard County Department of Community Resources and Services

Absent:

Ellen Kuhn – Board Member
Jerome Rollerson – Board Member

Business Discussed:

- The minutes from the last meeting held on Thursday, January 28, 2021 were approved.
- Jarrett Carter explained how the Board's ideas can put out on social media, and that they can be planned around important dates, or times of importance, i.e.: "Valentine's Day Scam" was posted on February 9, 2021. He explained that lead time needs to be given in advance.
- Sandra Price spoke about the Board's plans for doing five videos relating to COVID-19 scams for "National Consumer Protection Week," February 28, 2021 through March 6, 2021. Jarrett Carter stated that each video should be about 90 seconds, but could be longer, if needed. The Board discussed possible dates of February 16th through February 18, 2021 for taping the videos. Jarrett Carter

stated that he would be available in the evenings.

- Cheryl Mattis stated that she wants Jarrett Carter to put together talking points for “National Consumer Protection Week.” Jarrett asked for “head shots” of the Board members. Sandra Price asked Jennifer Jones if County Executive Calvin Ball would be able to participate in a group video to introduce “National Consumer Protection Week.” Jennifer Jones stated that she thinks Dr. Ball would be interested, and that she will speak with him.
- Jarrett Carter explained to the Board that sometimes things can be pushed back from going out on social media if something should take precedence, for example, a snowstorm.
- Cheryl Mattis instructed Sandra Price to work through Lila Boor to get their ideas out on the social media platforms used by the County; i.e.: County webpages, Constant Contact, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Cheryl Mattis informed the Board that the Advisory Board has a place on the Office of Consumer Protection webpage.
- The Board discussed and agreed to meet with Jarrett Carter on February 17, 2021 at 3:00 PM. Judy McCormick wrote three scripts: “Text Messages Scams,” “Robo Calls,” and “E-Mail scams.”
- Jennifer Jones mentioned scam calls telling seniors that they can get their COVID-19 vaccines at home.
- Cheryl Mattis suggested that the Board can tell the public where they can get help paying utility bills.
- Discussion on which members will do specific topics for the videos:
 - a) Young Smith will do vaccine scams;
 - b) Sandra Price will do vaccine testing;
 - c) Patricia Branch will do utility bills;
 - d) Richard Weisenhoff will do Social Security scams.
- Patricia Branch asked where help can be found in the County to pay utility bills. Cheryl Mattis will investigate this.
- Jennifer Jones will speak with County Executive Calvin Ball regarding participating in the first video and introducing the Board. Sandra Price told the Board to have their scripts ready for February 17, 2021. Cheryl Mattis said that Jarrett Carter will help review the scripts.

- Patricia Branch reported that she is still researching vehicle warranty scams and moving scams. Richard Weisenhoff reported that he is researching vehicle warranty scams and will have a report at the next meeting.
- Sandra Price discussed ideas for using the annual \$1,000.00 budget. She showed the Board two “give-away” items: a mask holder, and a mask lanyard. She will get prices for the lanyards. Cheryl Mattis gave suggestions that the budget can also be used to pay fees for trainings. Sandra Price likes that idea of giving out lanyards in person at events. Lila Boor suggested that they can be distributed at vaccine clinics. Cheryl Mattis suggested giving them out when the grab and go meals are distributed.
- Sandra Price asked Lila Boor about focusing on just two areas in the next six months. Lila Boor gave suggestions on focusing on Landlord/Tenant issues since this is the area where the office receives the most calls and complaints. Lila Boor suggested looking more closely into specific areas and gave examples of the problems the office is seeing. She stated that foreign-born, low-income, and senior residents are most vulnerable. She also suggested that the Board could reach out to foreign-born organizations and to work with them to better inform residents on their tenant rights and landlord responsibilities.

Office of Consumer Protection Updates:

- Lila Boor gave the following Office of Consumer Protection updates: the Office will participate in two presentations during “Money Matters Month” in March. One on “Scams and Frauds,” and one on “Identity Theft and Credit.” Lila Boor will give a presentation to Sandra Price’s “Getting Ahead” group on “Tenant’s Rights and Responsibilities” to be held on February 17, 2021. Lila Boor also mentioned that June is “Elder Abuse Awareness” month, and that they may want to think about participating in some way. Beth Silverman is on the planning committee. Lila Boor will ask her to investigate how the Board can participate and get back to the Board at the next meeting.

Announcements:

- None.
- Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 9, 2021.

Adjourn:

- Sandra Price made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:14 PM. The motion was seconded by Patricia Branch.