

RESOLUTION NO. 282

WHEREAS, the right of consumers to be protected against unfair business practices is an issue of mounting concern in our society and our City; and

WHEREAS, existing federal, state and local laws are often inadequate to eliminate or remedy fraudulent and deceptive practices in the sale and service of merchandise and extension of credit; and

WHEREAS, the need for consumer protection agencies at the local level has been demonstrated by the establishment of and response to such agencies in Arlington, Fairfax, Montgomery and Prince George's Counties; and

WHEREAS, Alexandrians often turn to these agencies and find that their services are not available or are insufficient for citizens outside their jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, the City conducts certain activities to protect and educate consumers and these activities should be reviewed from time to time to assess their scope and effectiveness; and

WHEREAS, the Ad Hoc Consumer Protection Committee, after a year of study, has documented a significant need for increased consumer protection activity by the City of Alexandria and recommended the establishment of a permanent consumer affairs committee; and

WHEREAS, it is in the interest of honest businessmen as well as consumers to monitor and correct the marginal business activities that undermine consumer confidence; and

WHEREAS, City Council has demonstrated interest in improving the welfare of all the people of Alexandria and wishes to have an objective review of their problems,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of Alexandria, that a Consumer Affairs Committee is created to be composed of seven members, representative of a broad spectrum of the community, including two representatives of the business community, two members of local consumer action groups, and three citizens at large. All members shall be residents of the city, except that one of the business representatives and one of the consumer action group representatives may be non-residents.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the term of membership shall be two years, and members may be reappointed. City Council shall fill vacancies for unexpired terms.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that applicants for initial appointment to the committee shall submit biographic data forms to the city clerk by the close of business Tuesday, February 19, 1974, and city council may appoint members at the second legislative meeting in February, 1974.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor shall name a convenor for the first meeting of the Consumer Affairs Committee, after which a chairperson and vice chairperson shall be elected by the Committee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, after organizing itself, the Committee's first order of business shall be to draft, in consultation with the city attorney, an ordinance for consideration by city council setting forth, consistent with this Resolution, the Committee's organization, functions, procedures, and authority.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Committee's responsibilities shall be to:

a. Clarify and mediate disputes between aggrieved consumers and local merchants when the City personnel assigned to consumer affairs are unable to resolve such disputes and

b. Study and make recommendations to Council and to any staff assigned by the City Manager to work in the area of consumer protection, on how best to respond to the needs of consumers in Alexandria, by means of conducting interviews, holding hearings on specific areas of consumer concern, reviewing reports, studying legislation and any other activities as may be appropriate.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Manager provide the Committee with clerical and administrative support, the City Attorney provide legal advice, and other city departments and agencies provide such additional assistance as may be required.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that upon appointment of the permanent Consumer Affairs Committee, the Ad Hoc Consumer Protection Committee created pursuant to City Council Resolution No. 171 of December 13, 1972, shall be discontinued.

Adopted January 22, 1974

Helen Vickers, Clerk of the City of
Alexandria, Virginia