

grounds to believe a violation has occurred, he shall attempt to conciliate the matter by methods of initial conference and persuasion with all interested parties and such representatives as the parties may choose to assist them. In attempting such conciliation he shall utilize the good offices of the Human Relations Commission. Conciliation conferences shall be informal and nothing said or done during such initial conferences shall be made public by the Commission Panel or its members or any member of the Commission or its staff unless the parties agree thereto in writing.

(b) The terms of conciliation agreed to by the parties may be reduced to writing and incorporated into a consent agreement to be signed by the parties, which agreement is for conciliation purposes only and does not constitute an admission by any party that the law has been violated. Consent agreements shall be signed on behalf of the Commission Panel by the Chairman or the Acting Chairman of the Commission Panel.

(c) It shall be a violation of this Article to violate or fail to adhere to any provision contained in a consent agreement. Any failure by the Commission Panel to enforce a violation of any provision of a consent agreement shall not constitute a waiver of any right of the Commission Panel or provision of such agreement.

(d) The Commission Panel is authorized to seek the cooperation of the licensing authorities and contracting departments of the Government of Montgomery County in connection with any investigation under this Article by the Commission Panel of any person licensed to do business within Montgomery County or having a contractual relationship with the Government of Montgomery County.

(e) If the Executive Secretary determines that the complaint lacks reasonable grounds upon which to base a violation of this Article, he shall so inform the Commission Panel and the Commission Panel may in its discretion dismiss such complaint or order such further investigation as may be necessary.

(f) If the Executive Secretary, with respect to a matter which involves a violation of this Article, (i) fails to conciliate a complaint after the parties have, in good faith, attempted such conciliation, or (ii) fails to effect an informal conciliation agreement or a formal consent agreement, or (iii) determines that a complaint is not susceptible of conciliation, he shall notify the Commission Panel immediately and the Commission Panel shall thereafter schedule a public hearing to determine whether a violation of this Article has been committed. The Commission Panel shall serve upon the respondent a statement of charges and a summons and shall serve upon all interested parties a notice of the time and place of hearing. The respondent or his authorized counsel may file such statements with the Commission Panel prior to the hearing date as it deems necessary in support of its position. The hearing shall be opened to the public, except that the respondent may request in writing a private hearing, the determination of such request shall be discretionary with the Commission Panel. The hearing shall be held not less than fifteen (15) days after service of the statement of charges and summons. The summons so issued must be signed by two members of the Commission Panel and the issuance of which shall require the attendance of named persons and the production of relevant documents and records. The failure to comply with a summons shall constitute a violation of this Article and may be enforced under Section 77-20. The interested parties may, at their option, appear before the Commission Panel in person or by duly authorized representative and may have the assistance of an attorney. The parties may present testimony and evidence, and the right to cross examine witnesses shall be preserved. All testimony and evidence shall