Seattle Human Rights Commission

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 3, 2016, 6:00–8:00 p.m.

City Hall - Boards and Commissions Room

**Commissioners Present:** Pauline Alvarado, Jeremy Wood, Bill Dow, Yasmin Christopher, Marcel Baugh, Jonathan Nichols, Tammy Morales, Fekadu, Ashley Miller, Danielle Wallace

**Phone:**

**Guests:** None

**Commissioners Absent:** Everybody else

**SOCR Staff Present:** Marta Idowu

Welcome and Introductions

**Call to Order:** By Marcel Baugh

**Public Comment:** None

**Approval of Minutes:** Minutes approved with edits (spelling issues), motion by Bill, second by Marcel, all approve, no abstained.

**SOCR update:**

“Encampment Monitoring

OCR continues to monitor cleanups that occur at encampments to ensure fulfilment of the current MDAR protocol. I know the HRC relayed concern regarding the use of DOC work release crew. Ive checked in with staff at the City on this issue and have been told that the use of DOC is being phased out. I’m not sure of the timeline for the phase-out.

Source of Income Tenant Protection Ordinance

OCR held a public meeting on Oct 27. About 60 people attended with the majority of the audience comprised of landlords. There was strong opposition to the first in time provision of the new law, with concern of the impact it will have on small landlords. There were some concern regarding short-term vouchers but many attendees said they were less concerned with the expansion of protections for other subsidies and alternative sources of income. OCR will be documenting all comments made and sharing with the Mayor’s Office and Council. Seattle Channel taped the event and we will send the link when it becomes available. The next meeting is set for Nov 17th at Bitter Lake Community Center at 7pm. Draft administrative rules will be available for comment at that meeting. Thanks to Danielle Wallace for participating in the rule development stakeholder group.

Fair Chance Housing Legislation

We had a productive stakeholder meeting on Oct 7. OCR is now reviewing all the input received through our stakeholder meetings and developing a draft proposal for the group to review at its meeting on December 9. OCR will also share the proposal with groups like Sojourner Place Transitional Housing, the FARE Coalition, the Black Prisoners Caucus and Village of Hope (groups that originally brought this issue to the City) to ensure the proposal meaningfully addresses barriers people are facing when trying to get housing while having a conviction record. Thanks to Marcel Baugh for providing input on the development of this proposal as a part of the stakeholder group.

Transitioning Employee Guidance

Loren Othon at OCR is working with the Seattle Department of Human Resources and stakeholders to develop guidance for the City of Seattle as an employer to support gender transition in the workplace.

Criminal Justice Equity Team

As part of the Re-entry resolution (Resolution 31637), Caedmon Cahill is convening a Re-entry Workgroup composed of community members with knowledge of the criminal justice system and the Directors, or their designees of the following departments: Office of Policy and Innovation, Office of Housing, Human Services Department, Legislative Department, Seattle Municipal Court, and the LAW Department. The resolution recognizes the City’s role in identifying and addressing obstacles that often result in recidivism for previously incarcerated individuals and specifies within the Workgroup’s scope of work four main tasks:

1. Inventory the City’s current work to help previously incarcerated individuals transition into stable housing and employment.

2. Inventory and assess the City’s current imposition and collections of fees and fines for criminal violations and infractions and the impact of such on successful reentry.

3. Identify areas where the City’s efforts would be strengthened by more effective coordination with other criminal justice agencies and define steps needed to effectuate those changes.

4. Develop a set of additional policies, ordinances, strategies, or programs the City of Seattle can implement to facilitate prisoner re-entry and remove barriers to employment, housing and other benefits.

We’ll update the Commission on this work as it develops.”

Encampment monitoring **–** Bill says we should take action, Jeremy agrees, says that continuing sweeps may be of greater importance than stopping DOC from using it.

Jeremy suggests doing a public records request, Bill complains that it will take too long and we need immediate action. Jeremy suggests including it in pending resolution. Ashley suggests doing this and a separate press release. Concern whether a gradual phase out is satisfactory.

Criminal justice equity team – Marcel will follow up with more information.

Tenant updates – Yasmin is wondering if there were attempts at balancing community/renter outreach with that of landlords. We will follow up with resumes.

Fair chance housing – Marcel believes some legislation will be finalize at the 12/9 meeting.

**Appeals and Hearings Update:** We need three volunteers to sit on the appeals panel the 4th Monday of this month (28th), in case there are appeals to hear. There are no hearings pending.

Marcel and Pauline will sign up. Yasmin also volunteers, but may have to rescind based upon new job starting 11/14 and whether she can logistically make it work.

**Action items:**

**Encampment sweep moratorium resolution**

Tammy asks what the process is for resolution, Marcel/Jeremy say we must first pass at this level and then deal with city bodies, including the Council, for resolutions.

Yasmin wonders if strategy wise it makes more sense to reach out to stakeholders, or CM Herbold.

Jeremy wants to make a change now that OCR has told us that the DOC crews are sweeping, we should change language. Tammy asks the concern, Jeremy says that it is concerning that they are doing it despite the ethical quandary—the sweepers might end up there upon release.

Jonathan asks who is the body that was meant to do the sweeps, says it is concerning that whoever was meant to do that duty delegates to DOC, particularly to save money. Bill says he believes who has jurisdiction is where the cleanup is occurring, near highways is WSDOT, parks is Parks Dept. Yasmin says regardless they are communicating, that Mayor has communicated with WSDOT on cleaning the greenway. Hopes they cannot avoid blame or responsibility.

Bill thinks citations need to be added and a few changes, also to get rid of the unequivocal notion. Yasmin agrees. Bill asks what the point of it is, worries about devaluing voice and putting out too much, Jeremy says they should not keep the sweeps going on until we figure it out.

Jonathan says we are in a unique position to say there is a critical piece of transparency missing, HRC and public deserves to know about potential due process violations and be a part of policy development. This body could have a stronger punch about why there isn’t active transparency.

Tammy says this could be a progression from the letter, now says public should be included in decision making. Yasmin thinks that we should vouch for transparency, and to keep bottom line of message.

Yasmin says include a WHEREAS about transparency as well.

Bill says a realistic timeline will be Monday. We will include title of taskforce.

Ashley says that while it would slow the process down, there is some value.

Action item: Monday we release press release and resolution on Monday, we beef up with citations and edit, add DOC and transparency hook, Bill will talk to Alison. Bill moves, Marcel seconds. All approved, no objections or abstentions. Small group will convene to finalize.

For Monday, small group will also have a few talking points and maybe a point person.

**Task force updates**

**CPR –** spoke on the Renee Davis shooting, did right thing in contacting family before. Contacted from KUOW. It was taken up by the Stranger and Public Broadcasting. Dow Constantine and his office stepped in, as well. Urquhart was transparent initially, they got some oversight going, but Marcel is look to see if there is impetus for training.

Reentry legislation will be coming after the budget cycle ends, task force will likely have something coming.

The statement on dash cam footage was also released.

**ECOSOC –** had been talking about move-in fee legislation before CC. The other issue is that we are using Housing Levy Stability Fund to help low-income tenants, we can use that $ in different ways. There will be another hearing on the bill in committee in 11/22. Tammy wants commission to write a letter in favor of the bill. Tammy says some amendments were added, there will be amendments added around anti-retaliation and landlord flexibility around payment plans if there is a smaller up front cost. Juarez is working on an amendment.

Amendments are TBD. Pauline will go to the hearing on 11/22, Jonathan may as well.

Yasmin and Tammy agree that they commission should say they support the proposal as-is at the committee meeting, and then we will send a letter after.

**CIRT –** On divestment issue, Edlira met with committee partners. They have asked us to have a letter about anti-sweatshop activity on the backburner if something arises locally.

Seattle School Board passed resolution on treaty rights, Duwamish tribe wants something focused on Duwamish alone, like the School Board resolution. CIRT is adjusting that resolution and referencing that one for momentum. Bill asks if we ever figured out the concern/politics of supporting one tribe? Jeremy says there are some issues, but Duwamish treaty rights are important to focus on. If the tribe wants them to go alone, Jeremy understands their prerogative. School Board addressed this in a brief. Timeline—hopefully will have something for passage by December commission meeting.

Yasmin asks what it means to only focus on one tribe, Marcel says making Duwamish focused because they are a forgotten tribe, and state/locally other tribes do not recognize it because it is a watered-down lineage. Muckleshoot and other tribes have raised that they are the descendants of the Duwamish people, Duwamish say they are. One Duwamish tribe asking us to move on is just them.

**Executive Team Update:**

Commissioner development: Has met with four candidates, first step in terms of setting expectations with them. That is where we move from here. Ready to start to work on increasing the number of commissioners.

LGBTQ is doing it, we will follow the language.

Proposed legislation: add five more, all commission appointed seats. Right now we have 7-7-1, we want 7-7-1-6 (M, CC, GE, commission). Bill will spearhead it.

Human Rights Day planning: Pauline provides general update, really not a lot whole new. Angela Davis won’t make it. Jose Antonio-Vargas will be the speaker. He will speak for 45 minutes, then Q-A. They are going to cut down on the number of awards—Disability Rights is not going to be presenting, but the UN Awards will. We need two awards that are from the community, but we’re cutting it down from just videos.

First Baptist will hold 800 people and is a nice facility. Reception from 6-7, 7 is the event. Yasmin is the MC. Tammy will partner potentially, and then the Co-Chairs will give the awards.

Patty suggested all the awardees do a quick video to avoid the speaking. Marcel would rather keep it short and sweet, person presenting gives information and the person accepts awards—no speeches.

Danielle – conclusion that we came to is because we want to keep the honorary/legacy Four Amigos award, we would do 1-2 community awards: focus on one individual and one community group. SOCR (Patty) had committed to finding a videographer and letting us hire one to do interviews with those award winners as part of their presentation. Also the idea of creating some sort of video with the Four Amigos award—that is the recommendation from the HRD planning group.

Tammy community leader award, emerging organization, emerging leader, Four Amigos award.

Danielle says we need to be realistic about the videos, if we do two awards the videos can only be a few minutes long and pull out snippits of what they say. Videos could be done in an area that is comfortable for the person.

Nominations process – Patty wants the awardees to the videographer by 11/21. Closing nomination process around 11/12 so we have time to review and assess as a small group. There is already a template that is already there, we just need to do a little more work on it. Ready to go. It is in a google form and an event description that can be copied and pasted in an email. Pauline will look for a letter and send it out tonight/soon.

Marta: When we send out we should do so on our letterhead, awards, and then link to vote/submit. All that needs to happen is it be put on the letterhead and we can send it out. Still has not been sent out.

Deadline is going to be the 11/15. The small group can meet thereafter.

Pauline will get in touch with Mijo about videographer and what to do. She will do the program and flyers.

We will send out the form and letter through large list serv, emails, social media. Also sent out through the City, goes to 2000+ people. Marta will coordinate outreach through SOCR, commissioners through their own networks.

There is usually a pre-event reception, which will happen this year. Planning committee is in charge of picking nominees.

Town Hall will take charge of everything they do at First Baptist. Individuals or organizations can nominate.

Marcel and Danielle to give awards; Yasmin and Tammy to MC. Patty will provide some statement on behalf of City. First half will be the keynote (one hour), second half will be the awards. There are no conflicts with being on the nomination committee.

Five commission meeting 11/9 5:30-7:30pm. This would be a good meeting to talk to other commissions about expanding.

**Meeting adjourned at 8:09pm.**