

**SEATTLE RENTERS' COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

Monday February 5, 2018

6:00 – 8:00 PM

Seattle City Hall, Rm L280 Boards & Commissions

Approved March 5, 2018

**Commissioners Present:** Beverly Aarons, Jack Barker, Clifford Cawthon, Sherry Collier, Calvin Jones, David Mooney, ChrisTiana Obey Sumner, Michael Padilla Ocampo, Laurie Rocello Torres, Jessica Westgren

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**Commissioners Absent:** Jessie Jacobs, L. Curtis Blankinship, Daniela Lopez

**Commission Staff:** Maureen Sheehan, (DON)

**Guests:** John Howell – Cedar River Group

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*Seattle Renter's Commission meeting minutes are not an exact transcript, and represent key points and the basis of discussion.*

**Welcome & Announcements**

- Co-Chair Laurie Rocello Torres called the meeting to order.
- Ms. Maureen Sheehan announced that the “Meet the Commissioners” event has been postponed.
- She announced that the DON has extended an invitation to the Mayor’s Office to attend a meeting of the Seattle Renter’s Commissions.
- Ms. Westgren offered if they want any support to any upcoming HALA outreach events to contact Ms. Sheehan and she will forward the information to her.

**Minutes Approval**

There was a motion to approve the minutes from January 11, 2017, and it was seconded. The Commission voted, and the motion was approved.

**Discussion: Fort Lawton**

- Mr. Calvin Jones shared that Fort Lawton is a piece of property and currently owned by the federal government once used by the military. The federal government would like to give it to the City of Seattle. If the City of Seattle uses the land for affordable housing, it will be free.
- The City is currently working on a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the deadline to submit comments was January 29<sup>th</sup>. The next opportunity to provide comment is around June when the proposal goes to City Council.
- Mr. Jones provided a draft statement to gather feedback and comments from the Commission on what the Commission would want to say.
- Mr. Jones also proposed having a Fort Lawton presentation series as part of the work plan in the coming months by inviting presenters from Office of Housing, Magnolia residents, and others who are opposed in having affordable housing in Fort Lawton, etc. Mr. Jones will provide any new updates during the Commissioner’s Opportunity to Share item on the meeting.

- Ms. Jessica Westgren mentioned that there are concerns about public transportation access and infrastructure around Fort Lawton. She suggested to discuss with SDOT regarding their goals to increase bus service in the area.
- Ms. Christianna Obey Sumner commented about access to people with disabilities is also a concern, and would want to make sure that their voices and feedback are represented.
- Commissioner Rocello Torres mentioned they are a member of the Move Seattle Levy Oversight Committee that oversees construction projects and equitable transportation access issues and they invited the Commission to attend and provide public comments with regards to Fort Lawton.
- Mr. Cawthon invited advocates from affordable housing and homeless organization to present their idea about Fort Lawton.
- Ms. Westgren suggested about reaching out to indigenous rights and indigenous people of Washington to make that they are also represented since Fort Lawton is used to be a Native land. Mr. Cawthon suggested reaching out and inviting representatives from the Duwamish and Puyallup tribes.
- Ms. Sheehan will forward the draft EIS to the commissioners.

#### **Discussion: Proposed Rent Control Legislation**

- Mr. Cawthon began his presentation that the proposed legislation is not rent control but the opportunity to do such that if the City chose to do so.
- HB2583 is legislation that addresses the rental and housing crisis, and what it does is it lifts the ban on rent control instead of imposing a new rent control law. It is not a rent control bill. This bill allows local jurisdiction to enact rental control stabilization or incentive programs.
- He suggested in forming a subcommittee that will research and design appropriate rental destabilization measures and urge the City Council to have a definitive action to pass a specific and targeted rental pricing regulations and reinforcements to enforce what already exist.
- The action item is to have the Commission's support to form this subcommittee to formulate a statement and know what kind of rent control to recommend.
- Ms. Sheehan suggested to consider putting this item in the work plan for this year.

#### **Action: Working Group Report Out – Commissioners – Criteria & Applications**

- Mr. Cawthon reminded the group that a target outreach draft list was created that shows the different community organizations, community spaces, and locations such as unincorporated areas in Skyway and White Center as well as a draft solicitation letter.
- Ms. Westgren added that different demographics, groups and populations were also targeted from the last conversation asking for the Commission's thoughts on what other different organization, places, demographics to send the solicitation that captures the criteria.
- Ms. Beverly Aarons raised a concern about targeting low-income and single parent applicants, and, if it is possible, to provide an incentive for being on the Commission such as a monetary compensation.
- Ms. Sheehan noted that there is no set deadline for the application.
- Mr. Cawthon made a motion to send their comments on the targeted outreach by close of business Friday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>; and it was seconded. The Commission voted, and the motion was adopted.
- A commissioner asked if children are allowed at the Commission's meeting and Ms. Sheehan commented that she will work on how to phrase it.

#### **Discussion: Draft Norms, Rules & Procedures**

- Mr. John Howell provided a draft copy of the norms, rules and procedures with comments discussed at the January commission meeting.
- Ms. Sheehan noted that there was an addition to the draft that describes a practice that the Commission is already incorporated regarding introducing a topic at a meeting and waiting to act on

the topic at the following meeting, and on occasion, also have an opportunity to take an immediate action if there is a sense of urgency.

- Mr. Clifford Cawthon commented if there is a provision that allows the Commission to decide outside of the normal meeting hours. A response was made that the bylaws address holding a special meeting.
- A motion was made to adopt the draft norms, rules and procedures as amended, and it was seconded; the Commission voted, and the motion passed.

### **Discussion: Work Planning**

- Mr. Howell mentioned that there were 43 different items that were suggested to be in the work plan.
- To develop a work for the Commission, there needs to be prioritizing and narrowing of these important items.
- The Commissioners had a back and forth discussion and presented each of their top items and provided feedback.
- Mr. Howell ask the Commissioners to prioritize the list of items and provide the information to Ms. Sheehan by Friday February 9.
- The co-chairs will work on compiling the list in the draft work plan to bring to the March meeting for review and discussion.

### **Public Comments**

- Mr. Thomas Lorenson commented about providing his service for the Commission to broadcast its message to a larger audience and communities and inform them about the important work that the Commission does.
- Ms. Monica Mendoza, a King County Affordable Housing Task Force member invited Commissioners to attend the next King County Affordable Housing Task Force meeting on April 19<sup>th</sup>. She mentioned that this is a new affordable housing task force comprised of King County Council members, City Council member Rob Johnson and Mayors from around Puget Sound such as North Bend and Kenmore. This task force talks about issues that affect both renter's and homeowners. She also urged this Commission to consider the legislation regarding lifting the ban on rent control.

### **Commissioner Opportunity to Share**

- Ms. Collier suggested to the Criteria & Applications work group to post solicitations for new Commission members at community centers.
- Ms. Westgren mentioned that she taught renters how to submit public comments by conducting a community workshop from her home. She encouraged other Commissioners to reach out to their constituents and host an informal community workshop.
- Mr. Cawthon suggested holding one Commission meeting at the South Park Community Center.

### **Adjourn**

No further business being before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm