

**SEATTLE RENTERS' COMMISSION
MINUTES**

Monday, December 3, 2018

6:00 – 8:00 PM

Seattle City Hall, L280 Boards & Commissions Room

Approved January 7, 2019

Commissioners Present: Beverly Aarons, Laurie Goff, Marci Taitt-Lamar, Daniela Lopez
David Mooney, Michael Padilla Ocampo, Devin Silvernail,
ChrisTiana Obey Sumner, Jessica Westgren

Commissioners Absent: Farah Ali, Clifford Cawthon, Laurie Rocello Torres

Commission Staff: Maureen Sheehan, Department of Neighborhoods

Guests: Ms. Waing Waing, Department of Neighborhoods

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

Welcome & Announcements

- Ms. Jessica Westgren opened the meeting. Brief introductions followed.
- Ms. Maureen Sheehan introduced Ms. Waing Waing, the new External Relations Division Director at DON.

Minutes Approval

- The Committee decided to adopt the November 5, 2018 minutes at the January 7 meeting.

2019 Collaboration Opportunities

- Ms. Westgren introduced Ms. ChrisTiana Obey Sumner to present the result of the workplan survey.
- The Commission members decided to reconvene to their assigned workgroups at the next meeting to review, identify, and prioritize workplan topics for 2019.

Public Comments

- Ms. Westgren opened the discussion for public comments.
- Mr. Dinah Braccio of the Tenant's Union that does renter's rights education and advocacy. He presented a wish list that he would like to see changes in the renter's laws in Seattle. The list includes expanding just cause to include lease renewals, eliminate pet rent, require landlords to provide discount rent or offer other accommodations when there are repair issues to fix the rental property, eliminating or raising the income limits for the tenant's relocation assistance.

Work Group Report Out/Work Time

- **Housing Supply** reported that they are planning on meeting with Nieman Taber Architects to get information about the developers and architects challenges in building SRO's and keeping smaller affordable aPodments and the type of legislature they face. Ms. Westgren reported about an article

in the Seattle Times from the Planning and Development Commission about a change in single-family housing. She suggested to visit the Commission soon to get more details.

- Ms. Sheehan suggested when the groups meet with groups outside Commission meeting time to keep a log.
- **Outreach Strategies** reported that they are looking for additional data from Mr. Geoff Tallent regarding the City of Seattle's rental portal.
- **Rent Stabilization/Rent Control** reported that they will be collecting data about rent notices and investigate cities that offer rent notices for 90-days or more. Mr. Silvernail created a Google sheet with data. Ms. Sheehan suggested reaching out to Mr. Tim Thomas from the University of Washington that did a presentation gentrification and rent and he could be a good resource for additional information.
- **Renter Protection Laws** group proposed an amendment to the ordinance that regulates how rental contracts works in the City of Seattle and informs landlords to provide a safe and efficient way for renters to pay their rent, and if a payment is lost or mishandled, the tenant has an opportunity to repay without incurring any penalties. Ms. Sheehan suggested to read the memo that was presented by Mr. Devin Silvernail and decide if the Commission would like to move forward with the proposal. She suggested reaching out to the Mayor's Office and the City Council for support, and Mr. Jones commented if there are any data that is available that they could present to make the case stronger.
- The group also reported reaching out to the City of Seattle Intergovernmental Relations Office to be involved in contacting the legislature in requesting to reintroduce Initiative 1631 in combating climate change since the people that is most affected are renters, immigrant and lower income communities. About 74% voters from the City of Seattle voted in favor of. The group is proposing drafting a letter to the City of Seattle Office of Intergovernmental Relations to assist in moving it to the State Legislature. Ms. Sheehan mentioned that she will add this ask to the list of agenda items in January/February and she will send out a draft letter to the Commission for review when she receives it from the work group.
- The group reported that the Tacoma City Council passed a 60-day notice for rental increase. The group felt that the Commission needs to support the Tacoma City Council decision and ask for the Seattle City Council for a 90-day notice instead of a 30-day notice. The group is drafting a letter to the City Council and have the Commission review. Ms. Sheehan suggested on waiting for the draft letter to be reviewed by the Commission and see if the Commission would like to move forward.

Commissioner Opportunity to Share

- Ms. Westgren opened the discussion for Commissioner Opportunity to share.
- Ms. Beverly Aarons shared that she will be doing a VR (Virtual Reality) demonstration on Friday, December 21st at the Ethiopian Community Center from 6:00 to 8:00 pm.
- Ms. Westgren shared two book signings: *The Color of Law* that talks about zoning and segregation and how the housing laws has been applied throughout the United States to increase racial disparity and poverty and *Generation Prized Out* written by Randy Shaw that addresses how hard it is for youth to afford housing and ways to fight against gentrification in a rapidly growing area.
- Mr. Calvin Jones shared that MHA (Mandatory Housing Affordability) cleared a legal hurdle from the Office of the Hearing Examiner, and the City Council is planning to pass into law in April. He also shared that the Fort Lawton also passed a legal hurdle from the Office of the Hearing Examiner. He will provide more details on the next steps.
- Ms. Sheehan shared about the three vacant Commission member positions and a decision to fill these positions may come by February from both the Mayor's Office and the City Council's office

Adjourn

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