

**September 17th, 2020**

**Seattle Disability Commision**

**Also known as;**

**Commission for People with DisAbilities**

Meeting Notes

09/17/20 4:00pm - 6:00pm

Zoom Conference Call

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87411281048?pwd=VzBrZUpxSHUvZ1Z0aWFUeExp>

[TWY3UT09](#)

Meeting ID: **874 1128 1048**      Passcode: **Ability**

One tap mobile: **253.215.8782**

## **Commission Members Present:**

- Via Zoom: Kristina Sawyckyj, Hannah Wilson, Anquida Adams, ChrisTiana ObeySummer, Jayson Morris, Eric Scheir, Kaitlin Skilton (pending commissioner), Khazm Kogita,
- Unexcused Absence: Jessica Williams-Hall.
- Excused Absence:

Guests: Tawnie Fransen (Director of Housing Operations – Compass Housing Allianace),

OCR: Janet Stafford

Facilitators: Maralise Hood-Quan, Antasia Williams

## **Meeting Called to Order at 4:10pm**

### **Meeting Norms**

- Reviewed.

### **Announcements & Public Comment**

### **Technical Check-in**

### **Approval of the Minutes**

- July 2020 Minutes- approved
- August 2020 Minutes - approved
- September 2020 Special Meeting Minutes - approved

**Guest Speaker: Tawnie Fransen** (Director of Housing Operations – Compass Housing Alliance)

Tawnie's goal is to share information about Compass Housing and demystify the process of affordable housing.

Compass Housing offers affordable housing services as well as emergency services for folks who are experiencing homelessness.

Compass Housing's one-stop-stop service center located on Alaskan Way has a multitude of services in one place where people experiencing homelessness can get their basic needs met. They can take showers, do laundry, receive mail, and do banking. There is a day center as well as housing and resource navigation services. Compass also collaborates with other service providers, like visiting nurses that come weekly and work with folks.

Compass Housing manages around 700 units of affordable housing and four homeless shelters.

**Eligibility & Income Limits:** Income limits per household size are listed on interest applications. Income percentages refer to the Area Median Income (AMI), which is around \$102,000 in Seattle. Compass utilizes an eligibility screening process to determine if an applicant is eligible to move in and if it's a subsidized unit, Compass will help get information together to calculate the applicant's portion of rent.

On the interest application there are check boxes to identify if the applicant has a disability or if they are homeless or a veteran.

Because Compass serves a lot of formerly homeless populations, some of their housing is exclusively managed through the Coordinated Entry system. Compass also has two buildings specifically for veterans.

Project-based Section 8: Some Compass sites have project-based Section 8 subsidy. This means that the subsidy is based on the building. Residents pay a sliding scale percentage in that building, however the subsidy does not follow them outside of that building / specific place of residence.

Section 8 Voucher: With a section 8 voucher individuals 30% of their adjusted monthly income. What makes Section 8 vouchers unique is that they follow the tenant wherever they go. This means that individuals with this voucher have the freedom to choose where they live. Acquiring a

Section 8 tenant-based voucher can be difficult – the waiting list is notoriously years long.

An important thing to note is a resident will not be kicked out of affordable housing because they started making more money. For tax credit units - which is a unit where the rent is lower than market rate – there is a set flat rate; it will not change because you start making more money. With a Section 8 Voucher, if your income grows your rent goes up and if your income goes down, your rent goes down.

Most of Compass's units are 30% Area Median Income (AMI) or 50% AMI.

Compass has some Permanent Supportive housing which are often staffed with a Program Manager and/or Program Coordinators and at

least two Case Managers. Residents are offered services throughout their tenancy like goal setting and the creation of housing stability plans.

Commissioner: The number of the AMI percentages - what year is that based on that?

Tawnie – It is updated annually. New numbers are released in March or April.

Commissioner – Does Compass have a list of specific properties broken down by specific combination for people with disabilities? Is the list broken down to show sites with accessibility for wheelchair users, deaf and hard of hearing, etc...



Tawnie - Most of Compass's properties, especially the newest ones, have some percentage of units that are accessible and have accessibility features. For new construction there is a tax credit for building affordable housing and they have to follow current code standards of accessibility. There is no specific list of units however I agree that there should be more actual compiled information so the information is in one spot. For now, its important that people identify their accessibility needs on their interest application.

Commissioner - How many of your properties are open to full time college students?

Tawnie - There is a full-time student rule in a lot of affordable housing because they don't want the affordable housing system to turn into student housing because the system isn't meant for transient and

temporary housing. However, you can have a household that has three quarters of the household who are full-time students. As long as one hundred percent of the unit is not full-time students then they would still be eligible for affordable housing.

There are certain exceptions that an individual can meet and be a full-time student.

Example - A single parent with two kids, and the two children in elementary school, and the mom says I'm going to go back to school full time. As long as the mom meets the exception criteria which is they file tax returns as the sole individual claiming the children as dependents, then they are good to go.

There are different exceptions but for the most part if you just apply by yourself and you are a full-time student and you are the only person in the unit, that's when it is real tricky to work around that.

Commissioner - Now you understand why I'm homeless and why I have been on the streets for so long.

Tawnie - I would love to talk with you offline and go over ideas and help troubleshoot because it's really my passion to help folks that are in that in between.

Commissioner - I don't qualify for any of that stuff because 100% of my income goes to Seattle University to pay for my college as a full-time student so I don't have a penny left and they don't consider that.

Tawnie - There are some areas/units that are not tax credits but also have affordable units. Being a full-time student is a stumbling block but one good thing about tax credit applications, if there is no federal subsidy it's like Section 8, there is no citizenship requirement.

Commissioner - I know we are really pressured for time. The reason why I brought our guest here today was because I know we have constituents trying to figure out how to get housing. If you have time after this meeting please get to know Compass Housing and reach out because it's very important.

**Guest Speaker: Hannah Wilson – Commission Collaboration with SLGBTQ Commission (presentation) 10 min**

Coordinating Team would like the commission to make a motion for \$300 to be given to the panelists from each Commission to compensate them about \$200 each.

Event Details: The date of the event will be October 21<sup>st</sup>. We are working with Seattle's Town Hall on organizing the event - virtually, with tech support, as well as marketing support. Emails with marketing materials will be sent out so that the commission can support with marketing as well. There will be three panelists and one facilitator (Hannah).

Coordinators are currently working with Janet to secure a sign language interpreter and CART accommodations for the event.

Event Panelist:

Alyia Storm - a black deaf individual who publishes videos and content around disability activism and deaf awareness. She has done a lot of research on Black Deaf history.

Neve - a disabled artist, dancer, singer, painter, and actor whose work focuses on making dance accessible.

ChrisTiana - Community and advocacy work.

The ask to the commission is to compensate panelists for their time, especially given the fact that they will be sharing hardships and traumas associated with having a disability and being LGBTQ+. The plan is to compensate each panelist \$200 for their time. This includes prep meetings with Hannah and Nate, individual preparation, and actual time on the panel which will be 60 – 90 minutes. We are asking each

Commission to approve a motion for \$300, which for each commission covers 50% of the overall compensation.

Commissioner – Is having ChrisTiana as a paid panelist a conflict of interest? What is the policy related to that? I just want clarification before I vote.

Janet - There would only be a conflict of interest if the commissioner that was on the panel had participated in organizing the event, specifically around the programming and choosing who would be on the panel and voting on these matters. ChrisTiana does need to abstain from voting on items pertaining to this event.

Facilitator - As long as ChrisTiana abstains from voting and it clearly appears in minutes that there was an abstention, and that she didn't use

Commission time to do the planning of it, then there is no conflict of interest - Correct?

Commissioner – Okay, No objection to that. That's what I needed to know.

Commissioner - What kind of platform will this event be facilitated on?

Hannah – Similar platform to Zoom, it's just going to be more interactive with the audience.

Hannah - I make the motion that the Commission approves \$300 for the compensation of these panelists.



Commissioner seconds the motion.

Commissioners voted to fund event at \$300, ChrisTiana abstained from voting.

## **Seattle Office for Civil Rights Report**

New Commissioner(s): Kaitlin's appointment as commissioner has been officially confirmed!

A couple of emails are on the way.

- 1) Policy will be more present at commission meetings. At least one policy advisor should be coming to each official meeting so they can consult on policy issues that arise as well as to collaborate and support any policy issues that may arise.
  
- 2) The second email will be the Commission handbook. Many of you already have this handbook, which is general information as well as answers to questions that may arise. This is especially helpful for some of those new commissioners who are coming on board or are newer to the commission.

## Budget Update

1,700 after \$300 is deducted.

Follow up on proposal to utilize budget for technology investment:

As of now, there isn't capacity to support this ask because IT support is limited at this time, regarding software as well as any technical difficulties that may arise. This is something that we'll have to be tabled this year, however we can definitely revisit and propose for next year.

Commissioner – Funds don't roll over. What will happen to the funds?  
What is your suggestion?

Janet - You're right, if the Commission does not use those funds, they do not roll over. One option is to consider donating the leftover balance. I believe other commissions are gathering speakers, similar to like the event that's coming up for the panel. One thing to remember is that there needs to be money left for the retreat as there will likely be some expense

associated with it; usually that entails a breakfast and lunch. At the same time, we will most likely still be constrained to virtual meetings.

Commissioner – Remember when we had a card that was just dedicated for food? Can we do that again but price out the actual items of a computer, tablet, and marketing?

Commissioner - I remember last February were talking about adding a banner, a tablecloth, so that we could go out and table at markets, community events like Black Lives Matter, LGBTQ events, etc events, etc. Maybe we can use the money for marketing materials like a banner, brochures, etc. Maybe we can put the new a new name on them for the Commission.

Commissioner - We could also look at starting to plan our Jubilee now and use that money as a down payment for a venue. A lot of people are starting to look for venues for events that were planned this year but were canceled due to COVID so spaces are filling up.

Commissioner - There is someone I'd like to nominate for an award. She is a published and bestselling author and was just in an episode of a dream works show as a character who has a disability. She is around 18 years old. I can't remember her name at the moment.

Commissioner - I have a question for Janet. Are we allowed to have a debit card or prepaid card where we can put the remainder of our money and put a hold on the card and then we can spend that for next year? Is that a possibility?

Janet - My thoughts are that it's not feasible, because the gift cards we did the previous year barely slid through and there was still some disagreement regarding the policy.

I am inclined to take the approach of putting that money towards specific items that can be bought now. Items that can go towards something with a contract is more feasible than a gift card that can't easily be tracked because it leads to questions in regards to accounting.

Facilitator – Are there any updates on the name change? Waiting on the name change is the only reason the banner was not made back in February.

Janet - There hasn't been an update since the last one. I believe that their goal was before the end of the year come around November. It could also be that the name change won't be voted on until early next year.

This doesn't mean that the commission can't connect with a marketing agency and pay for the banner in advance.

## **Jubilee Celebration**

Vote on recommendation to cancel this year's awards as well as to create a 2021 award centered on advocacy people are engaging in during COVID.

Commissioner - I wanted to make a proposal that \$1,000 go to the Jubilee for 2021, to spend before the end of 2020. This money is to go to

securing the venue. If money is left over we can buy an award or put an award on hold.

Commissioner - If we are going to dedicate \$1,000 for Jubilee, how much are we going to dedicate for marketing?

Commissioner – there will be \$700 for marketing

Commissioner – I'd rather do \$1,000 for marketing and seven hundred for the Jubilee because we have more money next year for Jubilee and we can engage fundraising for Jubilee.

Commissioner - I proposed \$1,000 for the Jubilee to reserve the venue and \$700 for marketing deposits. While we get more money in January,



we'll spend more money for the marketing then, but it's important to secure a venue for Jubilee.

Commissioner - We have said we would do more fundraising for Jubilee in the past and it hasn't come through and so I really want us to secure a place and get what we need now for that and then we can look at adding more money to marketing.

Commissioner – The commission said we want to do it at the same space. Khazm is on the line now and he has the information for the building. I don't think it's going to cost the entire \$1,000 for the deposit.

Facilitator - You also have the possibility to make a proposal to say: The \$1,700 dollars must go towards the marketing and towards securing the Jubilee venue. Between the September meeting and the October meeting

find out what is the place, how much does it cost, and create a budget based on that, rather than guessing - that's also an option.

Commissioner - I withdraw my proposal. I have a new proposal.

Let's all do research, find potential properties, collect the numbers of the costs and crunch numbers. Also, find out the cost for a banner and marketing supplies. We can all take our time and we can work together and then bring all that information to the next month's meeting. We can ask questions, have a discussion, and go ahead and vote on that.

Facilitator - You like to have the minutes reflect today that the \$1,700 should be invested in marketing and Jubilee – that's one. The second proposal is: Every member of the Commission go find options for places and crunch numbers so that in October we will have time on the agenda

to actually layout what would this budget look like. We are going to let the minutes reflect that's the decision of the Commission.

Commissioner - An idea of a day – we need a date.

Commissioner - Why not do it on our commission night?

Facilitator – that would be the third Thursday of October 2021

Commissioner – So October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021

Facilitator - The proposal on the table is that Jubilee be held on Thursday, October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021. Also, the October 2020 meeting will be working on the

budget for that, the space for that, the marketing for that, and we will make a plan.<sup>[P]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>That is right now up for a vote.

Vote passed unanimously.

### **Letter on Mayor Durkan's Performance**

Commissioner - As a commissioner I was doing research on our mission and our committee statement. We are responsible to advise and make recommendations to the city council and the Mayor. I feel that our commission should be neutral – there shouldn't be any involvement in the politics. It can definitely hurt us.

Commissioner - Who did the revision? Who created the new document for us?

Facilitator - There is no second letter. There was not agreement to sign onto the letter that was. The letter contains data concerning people experiencing homelessness that is incorrect so there was no way anybody was going to sign that letter. Commissioners agreed to do some heavy thinking and consider if this commission needed to write a letter and if so, then you all would create an ad hoc committee.

Commissioner – I spoke with 10 people outside of my network. Two of them said we need to get rid of the mayor, 7 said they are at least satisfied, and the rest have said one is no better than another. I did exactly what I was asked to do and I didn't come to any other thoughts so my answer is still going to remain the same.

Facilitator – Were there any issues concerning the Mayor's performance?  
Not necessarily to kick her out of office...

Commissioner - I still am standing on what I said at the meeting. I'm not for that. I'm more for building bridges, helping to make things better in the community and working with everybody, because we've got a new police chief and things are even worse now out there as a homeless person. The behavior is ten times worse.

Commissioner - Considering the conversations I have had with people around me, there has been a big call for an accountability process or something that will make sure Mayor Durkan gets held accountable for the horrific way that she has been like leading this city through some of the Black Lives Matter uprisings, and also the pandemic with the

homeless population, I think we should consider who would take Mayor Durkan's place. I think that Lorena Gonzalez has a different position and might be a better fit in terms of addressing some of these issues.

Commissioner - I'm on the fence. I feel as though, similar to how things were when I started on this commission, there was a lot of chaos with people going against each other in the background, trying to get one another removed from the commission - back biting and stuff like that. Instead of talking to the person and connecting with the person and holding them accountable in certain ways we are taking approaches like this letter. I think all of us have open access. We can actually go through the process of getting a meeting with the mayor as a commission if we want to do something. We are here as advisors to the Mayor's Office and to the council members, to sit down and talk to them. If we were disgruntled, that's how we should do it.

Commissioner -I'm very concerned about our community. As a commissioner, I read something where if I don't agree with it, then I feel like there is going to be another group of people that are going to be vengeful. It's a very hot bodied situation in our community so if we don't take a step, they will take action back against us. My concern is that we have to be neutral. We are advisors to the city council. That is our mission. So whatever the issue is relating with the mayor, there's always two sides of the story and I'm hearing it everywhere. As a commission we serve people with all political affiliations. We have to consider the political and practical implications of our actions.

Commissioner - Before we move to the next subject you asked a question really quickly. You said what do you want to do? I think doing nothing could communicate that we just wanted to just wash our hands of it.



If we are wanting to make sure that our constituents know that we are behind them and also are neutral, because of what the mission says that we are supposed to do, I think the best thing to do is engage in heavy outreach and ask our constituents what they need when it comes to housing and then create a list of what they said that they need. Then we can actually go to the Mayor's Office and say: "Hey, we're here to be a part of the solution. These are some things that we talked to our group about that they are wanting. And if there are some items, we can actually work on to get those things done, we're happy to be here to help you with those things." I think this approach won't create hostility.

**Committee Updates** -Delridge Neighborhood construction leading to lack of accessibility.

Commissioner - Regarding the signs that are blocking the sidewalk on ramps – I have been told that the reason they put the signs in front of the cutouts is for blind and visually impaired individuals so that they don't accidentally walk onto a site. The city clearly has a valid reason to be doing that, however, it is not a great solution for me or other individuals who use mobility aids.

So the question before us as a commission is how do we create a solution that benefits everybody?

Commissioner - Can you email me so that we can develop a template letter? We can type it up, and we submit a letter of complaint to the construction company or the permit office for the city of Seattle. We can let them know they are violating the code and that it's not an appropriate

location for people with disabilities. I can help you with the research on that as well.

Facilitator - What's important that I heard is there is an issue of competing accommodations. They are accommodating the blind but not those who utilize mobility aids, so how does that get resolved? I know that Holly Delcambre from the ADA could give some advice.

Janet - Holly has been out of office however she will be returning at the end of this month. I don't have any information from Holly, but our policy support team is on board to meet with Kaitlin and anyone interested in this conversation on next steps and how to best support this process. If you are interested, please email me and then we can get on a call with Kaitlin and other policy folks.

## **Technical Check-out**

**Meeting Adjourned at 6:03pm**

## **Action Items**

## **Future Agenda Items**

- Funding and Marketing for Hannah + Nate's event.
- Delridge accessibility follow up – Kristina, Anquida, Eric, and Kaitlin are all interested in following up on this issue.
- Invest money in computers and tablets.
- Invest in promoting the new name of the commission.