

SEATTLE RENTERS' COMMISSION (SRC) MEETING MINUTES

September 3, 2025

6:30 - 7:45pm

Webex Meeting and Capitol Hill Branch Library Meeting Room

Purpose: The Seattle Renters' Commission (SRC) was established to represent the interest of renters located in Seattle, to advise and make recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on public policy matters of importance to renters citywide.

Commissioners in attendance: Kate Rubin, Kasey Burton, Lydia Felty, Allan Francis, Adora Blue, Liz Fite, Sally Kinney, Sam Wolfson, Karen Taylor

Commissioners not in attendance: Julissa Sanchez, Daniel Lugo, Angela O'Brien, Andrew Ashiofu

City Staff in attendance: Laura Jenkins from Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, Councilmember Alexis Mercedes Rinck, Kaiden Cook from the Office of Councilmember Alexis Mercedes Rinck

Quorum: Yes

Public Comment: No

(Transcriber's note: These minutes provide a summary of key points discussed. A full recording is available upon request.)

Welcome

Meeting opened at 6:30pm with a land and labor acknowledgment. Staff liaison Laura Jenkins updated the group that E. Mandisa Subira will no longer be serving on the commission because E. Mandisa will live outside city limits. Commission quorum is 7 people (13 commissioners total) until Get Engaged appointments happen.

Approval of the Agenda (9/3); Approval of the Minutes (8/13); Public Comment

Agenda approved. The August 13th Renters' Commission minutes were approved with one change to the last name of interim co-chair Lydia Felty.

No public comment.

Conversation with Councilmember Alexis Mercedes Rinck

Citywide Councilmember Alexis Mercedes Rinck introduced herself and emphasized she is the only renter currently on Seattle City Council.

Commissioners asked the councilmember questions about:

- Roots to Roofs legislation
 - This bill was inspired by the Connected Communities legislation former Councilmember Tammy Morales brought forward previously.
 - The spirit of this legislation is that it is essentially a density bonus for affordable housing developed by community-based organizations.
 - Councilmember Rinck and her staff share more details about
 - The current iteration of the bill was voted out of the Land Use Committee on September 3. It will go before full Council for a vote on September 23.
- A commissioner emphasized the need for protections for renters who rent from small landlords and for those who sublet.

- A member asked about what may be in the Mayor's proposed budget in terms of tenant services. Councilmember Rinck did not have more information on this topic.
- A commissioner spoke to his proposal for the Renters' Commission to explore a policy recommendation that would require at least one resident renter to serve on the board of directors of every low-income housing provider operating in Seattle.
 - Councilmember Rinck's questions/thoughts on this proposal include:
 - Which organizations have something like that?
 - What is the process for selecting that person?
 - Who is selecting that person?
 - How do folks get into that position?
 - Curious about the status within current City of Seattle contracts, how many of the organizations that the City provides funding for, whether it be Housing Levy funds or funds through Jumpstart, how many of those organizations have at least some type of residents seat as a part of their board?
 - What kind of authority does the City have to require that of different nonprofit affordable housing providers?
 - She also mentioned Imagine Housing Tenants Union organizing
- A member asked about a recent article about a number of open units in non-profit housing and possible rollbacks on renter protections.
 - The Councilmember said her office has not heard anything from other offices about potential rollbacks on renter protections in the past several months.
- A commissioner asked what Councilmember Rinck would like to see the Renters' Commission accomplish and what she would like the commission's relationship with her office to be like.
 - Continued conversation
 - Know what's on the commission's radar and reflect back what's happening in the Housing and Human Services Committee
 - For 2026, looking at ways to improve renter representative
 - Setting legislative agenda for 2026 during the last part of 2025, it's a good time to talk with her office about legislative priorities
 - Councilmember Rinck also asked the commission what kind of relationship they would like to have with her office

More Details on Quorum and Public Disclosure

Laura went over a document to clarify some items related to Open Public Meeting Act, public disclosure, and ethics.

- Some items to note:
 - A one-way chat, email, or electronic message by a Commissioner to a majority or more of their colleagues on the Commission is allowable when the message is to provide only documents or factual information.
 - All recorded information in relation to Commissions, such as emails, letters, notes, agendas, minutes, procedural rules, statements of general policy, and any other form of recorded information are public records that must be available for public inspection and copying, unless a specific exemption to disclosure applies.

Some additional questions came up that Laura will work to get answered including:

- Would a group chat that is publicly accessible be permitted? Example: on a Facebook group open to the public
 - Adora plans to reach out to Laura to continue to discuss chat alternatives.

- Is a draft version of a shared document publicly disclosable if the virtual document has been updated/changed?
- Clarification around the retention schedule for publicly disclosable items.

Laura will also try to invite an expert on public disclosure to a future Renters' Commission meeting so they can answer questions from the commission directly.

Next Steps in Relation to Ratio Utility Billing Systems (RUBS)/Junk Fees

Kate met with the two people who spoke in public comment at a previous meeting. They believe that RUBS is not tied together with junk fees. The community members are interested in presenting at a future commission meeting about RUBS and they will plan to include an ask of the commission related to this topic at that point.

For now, the commission will hold on any action related to RUBS until the community members reach out to Laura to get on a future Renters' Commission meeting agenda.

Update from Retreat Planning Workgroup and Budget

Kasey Burton provided updates on the retreat planning on behalf of the retreat planning workgroup. The retreat will take place this fall on likely on a Saturday or Sunday and will go from 10am-4pm. Initial goals for the retreat include:

- Having a better sense of who each other are
- Work plan – better sense of priorities and action items established
- Jump start on what needs to go into Seattle Social Housing Board appointments and workgroup
- Establishing our understanding of what group does, what it can do, and limits – direction
- Foundation – biases, race and social justice
- Norms, Rules, Procedures

Laura said she will follow up with link to survey to figure out the best date for the retreat based on commissioners' availability. She asked that the commission finalize the budget ask/vote at the October commission meeting.

Proposal for Renter Representation on Housing Provider Boards and Possible Vote

The commission voted in favor of creating a workgroup to investigate renter representation on housing provider boards – related to the proposal discussed earlier in the meeting. They plan to do a deep dive on what is already in place (current processes, board elections, etc.) and go from there.

- Allan Francis, Kate Rubin, Kasey Burton, and Liz Fite volunteered to be on the workgroup at the meeting.

Unfinished/New Business

- Comprehensive Plan Discussion and Possible Vote
 - The commission voted on two items related to this topic:
 - The commission voted in favor of supporting amendments to the Comprehensive Plan that include additional Neighborhood Centers.
 - The commission voted in favor of allowing any member of the Renters' Commission to speak as a representative of the Renters' Commission stating

views contained in the [2024 letter](#) from the commission and support of additional Neighborhood Centers (as voted on above).

- Laura will share additional links and background information with the commission about this topic.
- Meetings with Councilmembers
 - Councilmember Rinck attended the September 3 Renters' Commission meeting.
 - The interim co-chairs, Kasey, and Laura have a meeting scheduled with Councilmember Saka on September 24th.
 - Laura is still waiting for follow-up from Councilmember Juarez's Office on whether the Councilmember would be able to attend a Renters' Commission meeting because there is so much interest from commissioners to meet with her. She will keep the commission updated.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.

Decisions and Votes made during this meeting:

1. The commission voted in favor of creating a workgroup to investigate renter representation on housing provider boards – related to the proposal discussed earlier in the meeting.
2. The commission voted in favor of supporting amendments to the Comprehensive Plan that include additional Neighborhood Centers.
3. The commission voted in favor of allowing any member of the Renters' Commission to speak as a representative of the Renters' Commission stating views contained in the [2024 letter](#) from the commission and support of additional Neighborhood Centers (as voted on above).