

**SEATTLE RENTERS' COMMISSION
MINUTES**

Monday, March 4, 2019

6:00 – 8:00 PM

Seattle City Hall, L280 Boards & Commissions Room

Approved April 1, 2019

Commissioners Present: Farah Ali, Laurie Goff, Calvin Jones, David Mooney,
Michael Padilla Ocampo, Regina Owens, Devin Silvernail
ChrisTiana Obey Sumner, Jessica Westgren

Commissioners Absent: Beverly Aarons, Marci Taitt-Lamar, Daniela Lopez, Laurie Rocello Torres

Commission Staff: Maureen Sheehan, Department of Neighborhoods

Guests: Ms. Susie Levy, Legislative Assistant to Councilmember O'Brien
Ms. Aly Pennucci, City Council Policy Analyst

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 mentioned that Mr. Calvin Jones has been officially appointed to the Commission and is now a voting member. Mr. Michael Padilla Ocampo has been reappointed, and Ms. Gina Owens has been appointed as a new Commission member.
- As of March 1st, there are three reappointments still pending, 1 Council-appointed seat vacant, and 1 Mayoral-appointed seat vacant.
- Ms. Dominique Stevens from the Mayor's Office provided a status update on the appointments. She noted that the reappointments are moving along she will continue to work with DON to ensure this Commissions' voice is being heard and a transparent and collaborative process is being followed.

Minutes Approval

- There was a motion to adopt the January 7, 2019 minutes as amended, and it was seconded. The Committee voted, and the motion was adopted.

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

Ms. Susie Levy, Legislative Assistant to Councilmember O'Brien

Ms. Aly Pennucci, City Council Policy Analyst

- Ms. Levy and Ms. Pennucci briefed the **Housing Supply** group and they are now presenting to the full Commission.
- Ms. Levy is the legislative assistant to Councilmember Mike O'Brien. Councilmember O'Brien has been working on addressing code changes and increasing ADU's in single-family neighborhoods for many years.
- Ms. Pennucci is the policy analyst for the City Council. Her focus is on land use, and housing, tenant protection legislation and the lead to the ADU's EIS and she works closely with Councilmember O'Brien's office.

- Ms. Levy and Ms. Pennucci briefly summarized the definition of an ADU and its policy goals, EIS objectives and alternatives, current status and timeline.
- They also presented the use of the Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) in addressing the discrepancy and challenges around ADU's.
- They explained the different strategies they continue to explore including better access to financing, creating resources to help homeowners, developing pre-approved backyard cottage designs, and navigating the permitting and construction process.
- Other strategies they will continue to focus on this year include a pilot program to create a more habitable space, community outreach and urban sustainability accelerator.
- Ms. Sheehan mentioned that the Commission would like to draft a statement about this work and asked if any other housing or renter related policies that will be coming out of the City Council's office.
- Ms. Pennucci mentioned that Councilmembers O'Brien and Herbold are working on legislation around evictions in response to the Women's Commission report that came out recently. She also mentioned about a moratorium on permits on new development of the mobile home parks.
- Ms. Sheehan asked if the Commission would be interested in a briefing on the mobile home park, and a comment was made that if the Commission decided to pursue it is to have representatives from the Halcyon Mobile home park to present their case
- Ms. Sheehan suggested the work groups discuss it and if one of the work group decides to pursue it, she will contact Councilmember Sawant or Juarez's office.

Public Comments

- Mr. Choy Vong commented about the excellent job the Commission is doing in taking questions and tackling the problems in a different perspective. He added that as a regular citizen of the City that he is happy about the work the Commission is working on.

Commission Process & Procedures Discussion

- Ms. Sheehan commented that this discussion is in response to the January meeting. It was suggested that there were gaps in the processes and procedures infrastructure within this Commission and an ad hoc work group was formed to look at the process and draft a language.
- Ms. Laurie Goff commented that the group identified two areas: personal responsibilities as Commission members and dealing with personal issues and issues among multiple Commission members. The group is working on simplifying these areas.
- Ms. Sheehan suggested the group send out their draft work to the Commission by the end of the week for comments and edits and have a discussion and a decision at the April meeting.

Work Group Report Out/Work Time

- **Housing Supply** reported that Mr. Jones wrote a statement letter about Fort Lawton and asked for the Commission to read and make comments.
 - Mr. Devin Silvernail commented about the importance of stressing the word "affordable".
 - Ms. Gina Owens commented about the 30% of wanting people to be able to rent rather than 60% threshold.
 - Ms. Westgren commented that she personally likes emphasizing the opportunity for lower income renters to be able to live near and access to public parks.
 Ms. Sheehan mentioned that there is a public hearing that is scheduled tonight. Ideally, a representative from this Commission would be at the hearing to read the comment letter. The letter can also be sent out to the Office of Housing, City Council and the Office of the Mayor. Mr. Jones is in favor of sending the letter to as many outlets as possible.

- Ms. ChrisTiana Obey Sumner commented that any important policy issues this Commission would like to amplify to reach out to the DON Director, Mr. Andres Mantilla, and he will try to raise the issue.
 - Ms. Sheehan mentioned that DON will also be sending out a press release and posted at the Renter's Commission website.
 - There was a motion to approve the comment letter with the additions and it was seconded. The Commission voted and the motion passed.
 - Ms. Sheehan will send out the final comment letter to the Office of Housing, City Council, and the Mayor's Office. She will also work with the Communications Team at DON on how to push the message.
- **Outreach Strategies** reported that the group met with the Tenant's Union and had a conversation about protection issues. The group will continue to reach out to different groups and will be sending out a summary report to the Commission.
 - Ms. Sheehan suggested to create a spreadsheet log to document the meetings with the different groups.
- **Rent Stabilization/Rent Control** reported that they are collaborating and working with the **Renter Protection Law** group on rent increase notices. Mr. Devin Silvernail mentioned that he was in Olympia, WA to show support on advocating a rent control legislation. He recommended about having the Commission write a letter to the City Council and the Mayor's Office encouraging them to support a rent control legislation at Olympia, WA and pushing a rent control resolution.
 - Ms. Sheehan suggested having this discussion formalized at the April meeting and have a Commissioner request a briefing at the next meeting.
 - Ms. Westgren mentioned that Mr. Mantilla will be discussing about opportunity zones at the next meeting. Ms. Sumner added that it is important for the Commission to understand what an opportunity zone is.
 - Mr. Silvernail commented that now is a good time to advance the rent control discussion in order to gain momentum. The group will draft a letter about rent control, present it to the Commission and have a discussion on next steps at the next meeting.
- **Renter Protection Laws** reported that Ms. Westgren was in Olympia, WA with the WA Low-Income Housing Alliance for Affordable Housing and Homelessness Advocacy Day. She has a list of laws that are going statewide that she will share to the Commission. She provided a handout of the three on the list including the Housing Trust Fund, Real Estate Excise Tax, and the Homelessness Bill of Rights.

Commissioner Opportunity to Share

- There was no Commissioner Opportunity to Share.

Adjourn

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