

**SEATTLE RENTERS' COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

Monday, October 5, 2020  
6:00 – 7:00 PM  
WebEx Meeting  
Approved November 2, 2020

**Commissioners Present:** Dinah Braccio, Calvin Jones, Marci Taitt-Lamar, Gina Owens, Mac S.R. McGregor, Jessica Westgren, Chloe Caswell

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**Commissioners Absent:** Laurie Goff (E), Daniela Lopez (E), ChrisTiana Obey Sumner (E)

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**Commission Staff:** Shaquan Smith, Department of Neighborhoods

**Guests:** Sunaree Marshall, King County's Eviction Prevention and Rent Assistance  
Kimberly Dodds, King County's Eviction Prevention and Rent Assistance  
Xochitl Maykovich, King County's Eviction Prevention and Rent Assistance

*(Transcriber's Note: Seattle Renter's Commission meeting minutes are not an exact transcript and represent key points and the basis of discussion. The recording of the minutes is available upon request.)*

**Welcome & Housekeeping**

- Commissioner Jessica Westgren introduced the new Get Engaged Commissioner, Chloe Caswell.
- Commissioner Caswell lives in Chinatown and works as a Mental Health Case Manager with the Downtown Emergency Service Center (DESC). She is a renter and works with renters and permanent supportive housing.

**Presentation Q & A**

- Commissioner Westgren introduced Sunaree Marshall of King County's Eviction Prevention and Rent Assistance to present King County's Eviction Prevention and Rental Assistance Program.
- Sunaree commented that the pandemic had impacted the region and the nation. King County pulled significant funding to assist renters for rental assistance. King County estimated about 50,000 households are at risk of eviction. The current funding of \$41 million and available resources will likely support 10,000 households.
- The primary goals of the program are to prevent evictions, target limited resources to people most likely to become homeless after eviction, people who most likely to suffer severe health consequences as a result of the eviction, and promote equity who have not been provided equitable access to rent assistance and those disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.
- The funding for this program came from various sources including King County and the Department of Commerce.

- There are current restrictions about the program including spending the CARES Act dollars by December 30, 2020, and eligibility requirements as well as COVID-19 impact and geographic limitations.
- There are required tenant eligibility to receive assistance including income is at or below 50% of the area median income over the past 60 days and at least one month of rent is not paid or partially unpaid since March 1, 2020. There are also additional requirements a tenant must meet to be eligible for assistance.
- As a condition of receiving funds, landlords must also agree and adhere to the list of requirements including accepting three months of rental assistance on behalf of the participating tenant at the lesser either 80% of the otherwise applicable total rent for three months or fair market rent for the three months. Other conditions include not terminating or refusing to renew the participating tenant's tenancy absent good cause until March 31, 2021, and not raising the rent on the current tenant served by the program until March 31, 2021.
- Sunaree briefly explained how the process works including the Landlord Doors and Tenant Door – Tenant Lottery.
- Over 200 large landlords have submitted an interest to participate in the program, representing approximately 4,000 households.
- Sunaree also discussed language access and other considerations about the program as well as the program timeline and a grievance process if any tenant was denied assistance and can appeal the decision to King County Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS).
- Commissioner Calvin Jones asked about the program capacity and Sunaree mentioned that they are monitoring the program and is seeing an uptick of applicants due to the lack of income and the expiration of the \$600 unemployment insurance.
- Commissioner Calvin Jones asked about how the program screened the landlords for specific tenants and Sunaree mentioned that they screen each tenant for eligibility to ensure that they meet all the requirements.
- Commissioner Jessica Westgren asked about the different community outreach that exists to advertise the program and Sunaree noted that they had explored different outreach methods such as social media, websites, Facebook, ethnic media, and partnering with several community partners on their outreach methods about the program.
- Commissioner Gina Owens asked about how the tenants are notified and are the landlords get a list of tenants that are paying the rent and Sunaree mentioned that the Landlord Door process provides the names of all the tenants in the property on behalf of the landlord and each is screened for eligibility.
- Commissioner Gina Owens asked about how individual tenants apply on their own and Sunaree mentioned that they could apply through their non-profit partners and they will reach out to the landlords on their behalf.
- Sunaree added that until the tenant is selected, the non-profit partners will not contact the landlord.
- Xochitl Maykovich commented that the program relies on the eviction and state moratorium and the program does not know how many people will be served since the program is dealing with scarce resources.
- Commissioner Dinah Braccio asked the size of landlords being selected and Sunaree mentioned that the program prioritizes above 200 tenants in the portfolio of large property management properties and by delinquency rates.
- Commissioner Jessica Westgren commented that she has been hearing about self-evictions and Sunaree added that they were hearing about it through their program partners as well as landlords.
- Commissioner Jessica Westgren asked if the program also covers other fees and Xochitl Maykovich mentioned due to state laws the goal of the program is to assist and keep tenants being housed.
- Commissioner Jessica Westgren asked how the Renters Commission can help and advocate this program and Sunaree mentioned that by getting the word out and advertising about the program and directing them to the King County website where additional resources are available.

- Kimberly Dodds added that they are currently tracking the availability of the resources and is hoping that additional resources would be added.
- Commissioner Chloe Caswell asked if undocumented individuals are eligible to apply and Sunaree noted that they are only checking for tenants are low income, one month behind rent, and lives in King County.
- Sunaree added that they are not aware of any conversation regarding additional funding after it expires.
- Xochitl Maykovich commented that they have very little advocacy and resources to push for more funding for the program and King County already received a large amount of funding among all Washington State counties.
- Sunaree Marshall commented about the outreach efforts and the program is in touch with the Multi-Family Housing Association to encourage its members to advertise the program to their tenants.
- Sunaree addressed that if a tenant is not selected, they are automatically put back in the lottery and if the tenants require additional information, they direct them to contact 211 and the Housing Justice Project.

#### **Commissioner Opportunity to Share**

- There were no opportunities to share from the Commissioners.

#### **Adjourn**

- The next meeting will be on Monday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- No further business being held before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned.