

**SEATTLE RENTERS' COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

Monday, November 4, 2019

6:00 – 8:00 PM

Seattle City Hall, L280 Boards & Commissions Room

Approved December 2, 2019

**Commissioners Present:** Beverly Aarons, Dinah Braccio, Laurie Goff, Calvin Jones, Marci Taitt-Lamar, Marc McGregor, Regina Owens, Devin Silvernail, Felica Turner, Murphy

---

**Commissioners Absent:** Daniela Lopez (A), ChrisTiana Obey Sumner (A)

---

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

**Guests:** Ms. Grace Kim, Seattle Planning Commission  
Mr. Julio Sanchez, Seattle Planning Commission

*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.
- Ms. Westgren informed the Committee that Mr. Michael Padilla Ocampo resigned from this Committee due to other commitments.
- Ms. Verga Njuguna commented that she is working with the City Council to expedite filling in the position.
- Ms. Westgren announced that tomorrow is Election Day, and she reminded the Committee to drop off or mail their ballots.

**Minutes Approval**

- Mr. Shaquan Smith commented that the minutes from the October 7 meeting needs to be updated and adopted at the next meeting.

**Public Comments (03:39)**

- Ms. Westgren opened the discussion for public comments. There were no public comments

**Planning Commission (04:56)**

- Ms. Westgren introduced Mr. Julio Sanchez and Ms. Grace Kim from the Planning Commission for their presentation.
- Mr. Sanchez mentioned that he was from Puerto Rico and lived in Seattle since 1996. He noted that he has always been a renter, and he is beginning his second-year term for the Planning Commission.

- He commented that he initially had no idea what a Planning Commission or a Comprehensive Plan was. He became aware and involved after attending a Leadership Development training and being actively involved in his community.
- Ms. Grace Kim has been with the Planning Commission for six years. She is an architect by training and has a small practice in Capitol Hill. She became interested in the Planning Commission because it looks at citywide policies related to land use.
- Ms. Kim mentioned that the purpose of the presentation is to have a conversation and discussion about what the Planning Commission does and the Comprehensive Plan and identify opportunities for collaboration with the Renters Commission.
- Mr. Sanchez also added the “Neighborhood for All” report that was recently released.
- The Planning Commission’s primary mission is to be a steward for the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Seattle. The plan helps the city continue to move forward and acknowledge its growth.
- The Commission does not approve or disapprove project plans, but they provide critical advice to both the City Council and the Mayor’s Office.
- Ms. Kim mentioned that in order to pass legislation to the City Council, there needs to be a Comprehensive Plan that allows input from anyone to make an informed decision. These inputs can vary including housing strategies, transportation, etc.
- Mr. Sanchez mentioned about the “docketing” process where the City Council decides what they will be looking at this year based on public input about an idea, existing law, or regulation. The City Council can decide whether to pursue the topic or leave it in the docket if they choose not to pursue it.
- Mr. Sanchez briefly discussed the “Neighborhood for All” report that talked about how people that come to work for the City could no longer afford to live in the City that they work and support.
- Mr. Sanchez and Ms. Kim began the discussion about the history of segregation, discrimination, displacement, and redlining that existed in the City and the policies that were instituted.
- Ms. Kim introduced some of the strategies that the Planning Commission is working on to address these housing issues, including expanding the existing urban villages, encouraging compacted lots, and incentivizing existing houses and letting more people live there.
- Ms. Kim suggested looking at existing housing strategies that were already implemented to address issues regarding public housing, etc.
- Mr. Sanchez commented that having these difficult conversations is very important and helpful in identifying and acknowledging that there are still existing critical issues around housing that needs to be addressed.
- Ms. Kim commented that if the Renters Commission has any questions or follow up about their work to reach out to their contact liaison for more information.

### **Transit Riders Union ORCA for All Campaign Updates**

- There was a motion to defer more time to the Planning Commission presentation and discussion, and it was seconded. The Commission voted, and the motion was approved.

### **Outreach & Engagement Updates (1:30:53)**

- Mr. Calvin Jones provided an update on different strategies and a social media plan regarding outreach and engagement.
- He mentioned mobilizing more renters and raising their awareness about renter’s issues and rights through social media and introducing the Renters Commission.
- Mr. Jones mentioned sending out a survey to collect feedback about regular renters on what they know about policies and regulations, rental laws, and changes in the City of Seattle.
- A comment was made about utilizing the social media platform and making sure that it is visible to the renter’s community and inform them that they have a voice.

- A comment was made about if a general business card about the Renters Commission and its contact information can be distributed to the public.
- Ms. Njuguna and Mr. Smith will reach out to the Communications Team at DON about the use of business cards and social media internally by the Commission since any communications related to the City are subject to Open Public Disclosure Act.
- A comment was made about reaching out to other City Commissions to inform them about the Renters Commission.

#### **Commissioner Opportunity to Share (1:44:38)**

- Ms. Beverly Aarons shared a draft letter about eviction forgiveness. The proposed letter prohibits a landlord from using eviction records to determine if someone is eligible for housing after the eviction is three years old. After seven years, the eviction record is sealed.
- She is asking for feedback and input from the Commission.
- There was a motion to approve the current draft letter and will make any necessary edits or amendments before a final letter is submitted, and it was seconded. The Commission voted, and the motion was approved.
- Mr. Devin Silvernail shared a letter regarding an emergency moratorium on all evictions in the City of Seattle effectively immediately through the end of winter. He also noted about urging the City to open 24-hour emergency shelters for folks who are experiencing homelessness.
- Mr. Silvernail is asking for feedback and edits to be submitted to him by Friday, November 8.
- There was a motion to approve the emergency moratorium letter, and it was seconded. The Commission voted, and the motion was approved.

#### **Adjourn**

- No further business being held before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned.