

**SEATTLE RENTERS' COMMISSION
MINUTES**

Monday March 5, 2018

6:00 – 8:00 PM

Seattle City Hall, Rm L280 Boards & Commissions

Approved April 2, 2018

Commissioners Present: Beverly Aarons, Jack Barker, Sherry Collier, Jessie Jacobs (phone), Calvin Jones, David Mooney, Michael Padilla Ocampo, Laurie Rocello Torres, Jessica Westgren

Commissioners Absent: Clifford Cawthon, Daniela Lopez, ChrisTiana Obey Sumner

Commission Staff: Maureen Sheehan, Department of Neighborhoods

Guests: John Howell, Cedar River Group
Shefali Ranganathan, Deputy Mayor, City of Seattle
Evan Philip, Boards and Commissions Administrator, City of Seattle

Seattle Renter's Commission meeting minutes are not an exact transcript, and represent key points and the basis of discussion.

Welcome & Announcements

- Ms. Sherry Collier called the meeting in order.
- Ms. Maureen Sheehan announced that Commissioner L, Curtis Blankinship resigned from the Commission. Council is working on finding a replacement for that seat.
- The "Meet the Commissioners" opportunity is on hold due to staffing changes.

Minutes Approval

There was a motion to adopt the minutes from February 5, 2018, as amended, and it was seconded. The Commission voted, and the motion was adopted.

Discussion: Mayor's Office

- Mr. Evan Philip is the Boards and Commissions administrator for the Mayor's Office and he helps appoints all the boards and commissions for the Mayor. He will be the main point of contact for this Commission to the Mayor's Office.
- Deputy Mayor Shefali Ranganathan was there to share the Mayor's priorities, begin a dialogue, and answer questions from the Commission. She noted that the Mayor's vision and focus is on housing affordability, homelessness, and the growing economic disparity.
- The Mayor's hope is to make significant inroads in the housing affordability crisis. She would like to work with the community, city staff, and experts and distribute resources wherever it is needed. She will continue to work and partner with this Commission to provide and recognize the renter's voice.

[Ms. Ranganathan began to read questions that were submitted by the Commissioners.]

- The City is looking at monetary compensation for Commissioners, and she will ask the Law Department about this issue.
- She commented about the strategies that balances new housing construction and fighting displacement. She mentioned that she would like to have that conversation, since the City has become unaffordable.
- A commissioner asked about the Mayor's opinion about zoning around the City. Ms. Ranganathan commented that what the Mayor wants to build more housing as quickly as we can. The Mayor is supportive and fully committed of the recommendations from HALA, and she would like to look at other housing opportunities for the growing city and the current zoning.
- A commissioner commented about how the Mayor balances the issue where affluent neighborhoods continue to systematically block housing versus the neighborhoods that does not have a voice. Ms. Ranganathan commented that the Mayor's goal is to bring all these groups together and find a compromise. Her intention is to move forward with the current process forward and identify resources.
- She added that there are two items that this Commission may be interested in. One is the Mayor ordered a full review of all the land city to understand the full picture on where the City can build housing. She also convened a sub-cabinet of affordability and livable community where various City departments come together to figure out prevention and affordability strategies and look at the issue in an integrated manner.

Discussion: Working Group Report Out – Commissioners – Criteria & Applications (00:18:49)

- Ms. Sheehan commented that the press release will go out next week, with an application deadline 30 days later. It will be up to the Commission on when and how they distribute or post it.
- Ms. Torres suggested to use staff time to do send emails and if there is time, to also do outreach via personal contacts or networks.
- Ms. Torres noted that based on the previous discussion, the Commission would like to target families with children specially immigrant families, the LGBTQ communities, and districts that does not have representation, such as Districts 4 and 7.
- Ms. Torres also suggested that the Commission should create a document FAQ sheet about the Commission, time commitment, transportation and child care accommodation, etc.
- Ms. Sheehan added the bus and parking vouchers are available, and she is awaiting to hear about child care.
- She mentioned that she will engage the Interview Committee to engage at the next phase after the application deadline.

Action: Work Plan

- Mr. Howell noted that he, Ms. Sheehan and the Co-chairs went through a four-step process to determine and identify the issues the Commission plan to work on for the year: rank-choice voting, grouping the top votes, sequencing priorities to develop a month-to-month agenda plan, and work groups to present recommendations to the full Commission: rent stabilization and rent control, housing supply, rent protection control, and outreach strategy and engagement for renters.
- The goal of the work groups is to do a deep dive on the top issues outside of the monthly full commission meetings and potentially draft position statements and present their analysis to the Commission during the monthly meetings.
- The co-chairs will oversee the work groups. Work groups should collaborate with the co-chairs to identify the agenda items to be discussed.
- Ms. Sheehan is available as a resource to support the work groups. She commented about transparency about these work groups and come in a discussion with a fair and balanced perspective and continue to seek and utilize available resources.
- Mr. Howell summarized the discussion by commenting that the Commissioners agree with the priorities and sequencing of the issues. Any new topics, discussion or groupings that came along will be presented to the Commission.

- The work plan will be adjusted based on the discussion at tonight's meeting and presented at the next month's meeting for approval.

Public Comments

- There were no public comments.

Commissioner Opportunity to Share

- Ms. Westgren mentioned that she attended the King County Training for Landlords hosted by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) and Office of Planning. The training was focused on unconscious bias and micro aggression. OCR also shared their per housing testing statistics and showed that 66% of people who are looking for housing in the City of Seattle encountered differential treatment. She suggested to invite Mr. Michael Chin of OCR to present about Fair Housing training. She also mentioned that OCR is looking at Affirmative Marketing where it prevents displacement of low income residents that have cultural ties to the neighborhood. She also reminded about the upcoming public hearing about MHA and issues about zoning.
- Ms. Torres shared about language accessibility. She mentioned that survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault who are also immigrants that they need emergency and access to housing and do not get information about their rental protections.

Adjourn

No further business being before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m.