



## SEATTLE RENTERS' COMMISSION MINUTES

March 1, 2023

Webex,

**Purpose:** The Seattle Renters' Commission 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.

In attendance: Lydia Felty, ChrisTiana ObeySumner, Matthew Mitnick, Atif Osmani, Arianna Laureano, Abel, Kim McGillivray, Dan Godfrey, Dr. Gale, Devin Silvernail, Camille Gix, Miss Kinney, Kate Rubin, Staff: Waing Waing, Zach Frimmel

### Welcome and Announcements

- Minutes from February 2023 meeting were confirmed
- Commission took public comment early
  - First comment: concern lately with developers' ability to get around protections for renters by doing renovations, it's displacing hundreds of people in Seattle. All the protections are completely obliterated, so that's really urgent. Went to an SDCI meeting, was horrible, out of 54 people there 3 people were renters and 51 people were landlords so it was slanted. They have a relationship with SDCI but never got an invite.
  - Second commenter:
    - Would like to uplift elder community of renters. There is now an elder's renter council and glad about that. Don't know how much official attention is given to that council. Haven't run into any orgs that recognize the issues elders run into with renters. Often have fixed incomes but are subject to the same rent increases as everyone else is. Vouchers are hard to get and will probably continue to be. Main choices that elders have are market-rate renter, which is not a good choice and probably won't be changing. Not all of them have adult children. Tax credit building most of them are not non-profit so corporations can make profit. Would like to see elder recognized in their own class in the SRC and in any other decisions such as the PDA Board.
  - Third commenter:
    - a renter living in Beacon Hill and I'm the organizing director of Be: Seattle and I'm here tonight to urge you to fulfill your duties as Commissioners and thoughtfully appoint 7 members to this social housing PDA board. This is a historic opportunity to give renters a much needed seat at the table. In order to ensure that social housing has a solid foundation so it can succeed here in Seattle, it's essential



to include members of historically oppressed or underrepresented communities. Black and indigenous people of color, elders the LGBTQIA plus community, people with disabilities as well as non-us born persons and members of multigenerational households. We are counting on you to select board members who are not only a part of these communities, but who are committed to listening to and advocating for renters. Thank you.

- Fourth commenter
  - I'm a Seattle human rights Commissioner, and there's a few quick things I just wanted to speak about tonight. I first wanted to thank both Ariana and Kim for showing up to last month's Human Rights Commission meeting. They both spoke out against the Seattle City Attorney's office to sue us for pursuing amicus status, and it definitely made like a huge impact. I know a lot of the other Commissioners were very excited to hear from another Commission. That's it. Just wanted to thank you for doing that. Umm. And yeah, I just wanted to provide a quick update about Amicus. Uh, we're making progress as we pursue the amicus brief. Ariana is a Co chair with me on the criminal justice task force. And if anyone else wants to get involved or, you know, anyone, I'll be loved for more community impact or input and impact, I guess I should say. And it's just really important that we have impacted community members leading this work. And yeah, the last thing I I wanted to share was, you know, you you are appointing members for the. PDA for social housing. I think that's super exciting and and just I urge you all to just consider those who are most impacted and those who have been left out of these conversations and making those appointments. I just wanted to draw attention to SDCl. I know someone earlier in public comments mentioned that I know several buildings currently that have unfulfilled maintenance requests and unfulfilled responses from. Sdci and I think it's really important as you know we engage in this work with the city and as we daylight a lot of the daily concerns that are happening that SDCl is included in that. And and I think that you know with the PDA board it's going to get more eyes on this Commission and it'll be great opportunity to take up S DCI's absolute failures.
- Fifth commenter
  - Hello, my name is Devin Silvernail. I'm the policy director for Council member Morales. I'm really happy to be here with you tonight. Also, former Co chair of the Seattle Renters Commission, so I'm glad to see



y'all are are running strong. Just wanted to come to speak to you tonight because we're the Council office that's going to be doing the Council side of things for the appointment process for the PDA, and we'll also be. You know, a reminder that we have until April 25th to appoint those folks to the board. So I also wanted to just share with you that I am here and Council Member Morales is here to offer you any kind of support that you need, logistical support, you know, if that's connecting the city clerk's office working with your liaisons. And Don, we're here to help you make the process as smooth and easy as possible.

- Sixth commenter
  - I am one of the steering committee members for the Initiative 135, which created the Seattle Social housing developer. Our coalition is still running strong working on implementation alongside Council member Morales's office. We are working closely together to make sure that the implementation of the developer is strong. When we wrote the initiative, we were, you know, we struggled to figure out how to get the. There's seven residents on the board and we were recommended using the renters Commission. I'm really glad we did. I think it's going to be a really great opportunity to appoint some really cool community members to the seven positions and so also wanted to show up to say hello. Our coalition and the folks on our steering committee are super available to you all to support the selection process. We are happy to help make recommendations of renters that we think fulfill the requirements of support. Into the initiative there are the, you know, the Seattle Renters Commission does have pretty strict requirements on who the types, the qualifications of the board members. And so we definitely would love to work alongside you all to make sure that the people who are appointed fulfill the requirements as put into the initiative. So yeah, we will be here as a resource to help as much as we can to make sure that that 60 day window doesn't seem so daunting to you all.

### **PDA Board Appointment Process**

- Devin Silvernail (from MO Morlaes' Office) and Camille Gix (steering committee for I-135) shared the appointment requirements and process from the City Council's perspective. The city clerk is putting together a roster kind of similar to how we would have a roster for like the Renters Commission for example, made-up of all the different 13 folks that are appointed on the Council side. We have two appointments. That really doesn't have to go beyond the



mayor's office. Like he can say it's good to go and it's good to go. The renters Commission, you all have the seven as well and you don't need any approval from Council or anything like that. The folks that you choose are the folks that you choose and we will add them to the roster for you. And and same thing goes with the Green New Deal Oversight Board, a member of MLK Labor and someone from El Centro de La Raza.

- Commission asked about any opportunities to extend PDA Board appointment deadline into May – Devin Silvernail shared “the mayor signed the certification today. So really as of today it's city law. And so the now that we have this on the books, we actually cannot extend beyond the 25th. That was what was written into the Charter of the initiative and now it's written into the Charter of the PDA. And we have to follow that Charter. So really unfortunately you know it's a really tight turn around that's why I'm here provide support on the 25th is the absolute last day. Like that's that's the day that we that we at Council have to say here's our roster.”
- Commissioners discussed logistics for application form launch, outreach, selection process, the creation of a rubric, and selection criteria. They requested DON support with promoting on all channels.
- House Our Neighbors volunteered to leverage their network of coalitions.
- Commissioners discussed:
  - potential application questions
  - Affidavit could be used for applicants who are appointed to attest to that they meet the requirements (AMI range, displacement, eviction, etc.) outlined in the Charter
  - Addressing conflict of interest during the appointment process
  - Outreach strategies
- Recapped what Commission would like DON staff to do:
  - Help work on application form once they send the questions
  - Help spread the word on communication channels such as newsletter, social media, etc.
- Commissioners then summarized next steps and who was going to do what
- Commissioners requested to connected with SDCI and Mayor's Office (both for May meeting)
- Housing levy is coming up, Commissioner suggested writing a letter to the Council to encourage them to encourage the Mayor's office to helping financially support the PDA Board in the first 18 months.
- How is AMI determined in a roommate living situation?



**City of Seattle**  
Seattle Renters' Commission

Kim McGillivray & Daniel Godfrey, Co-Chairs

- Usually broken down by number of people in household and income of household. Yes, that is all roommate like. If roommates live together, you count all roommates incomes.
- Discussion around accessibility:
  - Identified barriers such as language and translation
  - Leverage coalition allies for any language resources
  - Ultimately, they decided to move forward with translating marketing materials if needed, to help people initially access the information, as they don't have the resources to ensure comprehensive language accessibility
- Public comment about making sure SRC meeting links are easy to access on SRC webpage

**Adjourn**