

**SEATTLE RENTERS' COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

Monday, February 3, 2020

6:00 – 8:00 PM

Seattle City Hall, L280 Boards & Commissions Room

Approved March 2, 2020

**Commissioners Present:** Beverly Aarons, Dinah Braccio, Laurie Goff, Calvin Jones, Marci Taitt-Lamar, Daniela Lopez, Mac McGregor, Regina Owens, Felicia Turner-Murphy, Jessica Westgren

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**Commissioners Absent:** ChrisTiana Obey Sumner (A)

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

**Guests:** None

*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.
- Mr. Shaquan Smith announced that the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd informed the Tiny House Village residents that they will be delaying the eviction until the end of March.
- Ms. Westgren announced that the Renter Eviction letter has been gaining attention including from the Fremont Community Council and a published article from *The Stranger*.

**Minutes Approval (02:24)**

- There was a motion to approve the January 6 minutes, and it was seconded. The Commission voted, and the motion was adopted unanimously.

**Public Comments (02:40)**

- Ms. Westgren opened the discussion for public comments.
- Mr. Devin Silvernail commented about his previous work and involvement with the Renters Commission and he is now working with Councilmember Tammy Morales. He added that the proactive work of this Commission regarding renters' issues is noticing and suggested to continue pushing the issues that affect the renters throughout the city. He encouraged the Commission to attend and speak at the upcoming City Council meeting as they vote on the Moratorium Bill.

- Ms. Westgren commented that she invited the Citizen Involvement Commission (CIC) to present their work and outreach strategies. She asked if the members from the Outreach group could contact them and provide any information about their outreach work.

### **Roster and Term Expiration Updates (07:42)**

- Ms. Westgren mentioned that there is a clause or section that states that if your term ends, you can remain as an active voting member of the Commission until your spot is filled. She added that she will be happy to stay until her position is filled.
- Ms. Vera Njuguna provided an update on term appointments and vacancies. Currently, there are 11 active Commissioners. The Commission received resignations from Mr. Devin Silvernail and Mrs. David Mooney.
- The Commission currently has 1 City Council, 2 Mayor's Office, and 1 Commission-appointed vacant positions.
- Ms. Njuguna noted that she will continue to touch base with the City Council and the Mayor's Office regarding the appointments. She also noted that she elevated their concerns to Mr. Andres Mantilla, DON Director about the challenges of filling in these vacancies.
- Mr. Smith mentioned that they had a meeting with the current Outreach supervisor at the Mayor's Office and noted that they will continue to assist in making sure that the work of the Boards and Commissions work are moving along the way.
- Mr. Calvin Jones asked if there is a way the Commission can assist in the process, and Ms. Njuguna suggested to keep contacting the City Council and the Office of the Mayor directly about the concern of the Commission regarding these vacancies and appointments.
- Ms. Westgren commented about working to fill the Commission-appointed position. She suggested creating a workgroup that will review the resume and do the interviews.
- There was a motion to form a small workgroup that would review the applicant's resume and another workgroup that will do interviews, and it was seconded. The Commission voted and the motion was approved.
- The resume review group will be composed of Ms. Dinah Braccio, Ms. Daniela Lopez and Ms. Marci Taitt-Lamar.
- The interview group will be composed of Ms. Laurie Goff, Mr. Mac McGregor, Ms. Felicia Turner-Murphy, and Ms. Gina Owens.

### **Co-chair Re-election (29:27)**

- There was a motion to vote for Ms. Jessica Westgren to continue her role in the Commission until her position is filled, and it was seconded. The Committee voted and the motion was adopted unanimously.
- The Commission nominated and voted to elect Ms. Dinah Braccio as the next co-chairperson for the Seattle Renters' Commission.

### **2020 Work Plan (42:13)**

- Comments
- Ms. Westgren suggested at the last work plan discussion to have the Rent Control workgroup be absorbed by the Rent Protection group, and just having the Outreach, Rent Protection, and Housing Supply as the active workgroups.
- There was a comment about creating a workgroup that will focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- There was a comment about liking the idea of having a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion workgroup that specifically focuses on amplifying the race and social justice policies to the different workgroups.

- Ms. Njuguna commented that the City offers internal workshops and classes about race and social justice equity issues. She will find out more information on how this Commission can benefit from this workshop that relates to the work of the Commission.
- There was a comment about having the priority of this Commission to elevate the voices of the renters including people with disabilities, families, immigrants with strong racial analysis.
- Ms. Regina Owens suggested incorporating the diversity, equity and inclusion conversation to all the workgroups.
- Ms. Westgren commented that it is critical for every commissioner to have a capacity bandwidth to work on the different workgroups including Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.
- Ms. Owens commented about outreach strategies and having the Commissioners visit have a meeting at different community centers.
- Ms. Njuguna responded that they have had previous conversations about meeting with community members about the work of the commission but cautioned about meeting the required quorum.
- There was a comment about access to different languages and interpretation materials that the Commission can provide to community members about renting in Seattle.
- Ms. Njuguna mentioned that the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) has a list of different agencies that can provide translation, interpretations and ethnic media resources.

#### **Commissioner Opportunity to Share (1:52:14)**

- Ms. Owens shared research that she is doing about health care and housing and how medical debts are one of the issues that can lose a person's home. She asked if you have any stories to share to give her the contact information.
- The Housing First Partners Conference will have a forum on putting housing first and provide people access to the care and support they need to maintain housing and achieve a good quality of life. The event will be happening sometime in March.
- Mr. Calvin Jones shared the outreach survey and the changes he made based on the feedback from the Commission including adding the citizenship question and consent. He hopes to get the survey out on social media this month. He asked the Commission for approval and submission of the survey after any last feedback and comments by Monday, February 10 at 5:00 pm.
- There was a motion to approve the survey after the last feedback and to send the survey out, and it was seconded. The Commission voted and the motion was approved.
- Ms. Westgren shared that *The Urbanist* invited the Commission to provide an annual update of the Commission's work. She mentioned that *The Urbanist* has invited the Commission before and did a presentation about its work.
- Ms. Braccio shared about HB 2453 and HB2779. She asked the Commissioners to contact their state representatives to support the two legislations that talks about expanding the Just Cause to lease renewals and repealing the ban on local municipalities. A letter is being drafted to send to the legislature and she requested feedback.
- There was a motion to approve the letter to send to the state legislature after the feedback from the Commission, and it was seconded. The Commission voted and the motion passed.

#### **Adjourn**

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