

**SEATTLE RENTERS' COMMISSION
MINUTES**

Monday, July 1, 2019

6:00 – 8:00 PM

Seattle City Hall, L280 Boards & Commissions Room

Approved August 5, 2019

Commissioners Present: Beverly Aarons, Farah Ali, Dinah Braccio, Calvin Jones, Marci Taitt-Lamar, Daniela Lopez, Mac McGregor, David Mooney, Christiana Obey Sumner, Michael Padilla Ocampo, Regina Owens, Devin Silvernail, Jessica Westgren

Commissioners Absent: Laurie Goff (A)

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

Guests: Ms. Jennifer LaBrecque

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.
- The two new commissioners, Mac McGregor and Dinah Braccio, gave brief introductions.

Minutes Approval

- There was a motion to adopt the June 3, 2019 minutes as amended, and it was seconded. The Committee voted, and the motion was adopted.

Public Comments (1:22:28)

- Ms. Westgren read aloud Ms. Lisa Barnes comments that were submitted via email.
- Ms. Barnes noted that affordable rent, by definition, should mean not paying more than 30% of one's income on rent and that the City of Seattle should push for more affordable units for those making 30-50% AMI.
- Ms. Barnes added that existing buildings should be able to convert market-rate units into MFTE affordable units, which would enable seniors to remain in place longer on their fixed incomes and support those who have become disabled.
- She urged the commission to consider her points in light of the MFTE presentation by Ms. Jennifer LaBrecque.

Multi-Family Tax Exemption Program

- Ms. Jennifer LaBrecque of the Office of Housing presented the [Multi-Family Tax Exemption Program](#)

- She asked the Commission to provide feedback about the current program in efforts to identify areas that are currently working and those that could be improved.
- Ms. LaBrecque discussed the current program, the list of expiring projects, program costs, and the geographic distribution and benefits of the program.
- The Commission discussed and inquired about having this program as a long-term solution for affordable housing in the City as well as the source of data to analyze the effectiveness and benefits of the program.
- Ms. LaBrecque asked the Commission to contact her and provide additional feedback and questions as well as Councilmember Teresa Mosqueda's office about the future of this program. She added that they are in the process of preparing recommendations to renew the program.

Addition to By-laws Discussion (1:17:42)

- Mr. Smith commented that he is in the process of checking the bylaws addition regarding tardiness and absenteeism to the Clerk's Office and the Law Department, and he will provide an update at the next meeting.
- Commissioner Westgren mentioned that the September meeting needs to be rescheduled because it is a Labor Day holiday.

Work Group Report Out/Work Time (1:18:47)

- There was a discussion about workgroup composition and the work each of the group does.
- Commissioner Westgren noted that the minimum workgroup composition could not go above the quorum of 7.
- The **Housing Supply** group is composed of four Commissioners and the group discussed topics including MHA, backyard cottages, increasing affordable housing in Fort Lawton, etc.
 - The group reported that the ADU legislation was passed by the City Council and are in the process of gathering feedback on how AirBnB's are affecting the affordability of backyard cottages. Their other focus is on financing and providing affordable loans to build backyard cottages.
- The **Outreach Strategies** group is composed of six Commissioners and the group discussed ways to elevate the renter's voice and avenues to reach out to specific neighborhoods to inform them about the Commission's work.
 - The group gave a social media update and are looking at the City's guidelines and policies around social media for Boards and Commissions. The group will give an update at the next meeting.
- The **Rent Stabilization/Rent Control** group is composed of five Commissioners and the group researched rent control across the country. The group also worked on a joint effort on the Rent Notification time frame that was extended to 180 days.
 - The group reported that the Rent Notification legislation is at Councilmember Sawant's office and the City Attorney's office is currently reviewing the legislation and making minor changes before it moves forward
- The **Renter Protection Law** group is composed of six Commissioners and is looking into existing renter protection laws and introducing newer and updated protections.
- Commissioner Westgren commented that all the workgroups meet outside the normal Commission meeting considering that each workgroup functions differently.

Commissioner Opportunity to Share (1:51:35)

- Commissioner Aarons suggested having a roll call of votes among the Commissioners when voting on hot-topic issues that will be documented in the meeting minutes.

- Commissioner Silvernail shared that the Renters Rights group have a resolution they are pushing through the King County Council to support the Just Cause evictions in King County. He added that it would be a good gesture from the Commission to publicly support and endorse a statewide Just Cause legislation.
- Commissioner Silvernail shared a rally event on Saturday, July 20th at 6:00 pm at the All Pilgrims Church to build and support the Just Cause law that was adopted by the City of Seattle.
- Commissioner Westgren thanked Ms. Njuguna and Mr. Smith for being the Commission's liaison.

Adjourn

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