

**SEATTLE RENTERS' COMMISSION
MINUTES**

Monday, August 5, 2019

6:00 – 8:00 PM

Seattle City Hall, L280 Boards & Commissions Room

Approved October 7, 2019

Commissioners Present: Beverly Aarons, Farah Ali, Dinah Braccio, Laurie Goff, Calvin Jones, Marci Taitt-Lamar, Mac McGregor, David Mooney, ChrisTiana Obey Sumner (phone), Regina Owens, Devin Silvernail, Jessica Westgren

Commissioners Absent: Daniela Lopez (EA), Michael Padilla Ocampo (A)

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

Guests: Ms. Dulcie O'Sullivan, SDCI
Ms. Amanda Pleasant-Brown

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.

Minutes Approval

- There was a motion to adopt the July 1, 2019 minutes, and it was seconded. The Committee voted, and the motion was adopted.

Public Comments (01:40)

- Ms. Westgren opened the discussion for public comments.
- Ms. Yifan Zhang, CEO and co-founder of Loftium, a Local Housing Affordability Startup and, member of the Mayor's Advisory Council working on initiatives such as affordable housing commented that she's interested in learning what the SRC does, current initiatives and get familiar with the work.
- Interim City Councilmember Mr. Abel Pacheco mentioned that the City Council is presenting the "Neighborhood for All" report on Wednesday. He added that there is a recommendation in the report to change the naming of single-family zone to residential housing zone. He noted that any recommendations from all Commissions are being heard by the City Council.
- Mr. Jones asked about the process of having a language change and Mr. Pacheco responded that every City Council goes through a process where recommendations are submitted and reviewed before it gets approved.

SDCI Renting in Seattle (02:40)

- Ms. Dulcie O’Sullivan of the Seattle Department of Constructions & Inspections presented on Renting in Seattle.
- Ms. O’Sullivan started a new role in outreach and education. She has been working with SDCI for the past ten-years in the enforcement of Tenant Protection laws.
- She mentioned that her goal is to increase outreach and education capacity, increase comprehensive training and attend public events to educate the community on renting in Seattle. She added that her focus is to continue building relationship and trust with the community members and service providers while informing them about the available resources regarding renting laws.
- She added that SDCI is looking to replace the information in the tenant’s and renter’s handbook with more consumer-friendly information and simplified language for tenants
- Ms. O’Sullivan introduced Ms. Pleasant-Brown to discuss available tenant service grants.
- Ms. Pleasant-Brown mentioned that City Council redirected funds from HSD to SDCI which allowed for grant funding to be opened to more community-based organizations. She emphasized that the goal is to educate the community on Tenant Protection Laws The maximum size of these grants is \$5,000.

Seattle Planning Commission Meeting Update (33:26)

- Ms. Westgren and Mr. Jones met with the Seattle Planning Commission and asked the Renter’s Commission for assistance in spreading their mission.
- A brochure about the Commission was distributed for more information regarding what the Planning Commission does.
- Ms. Westgren asked the Commission to review the material and forward their questions to the DON SRC Liaisons or the Renter’s Commission co-chairs in order to forward to the Planning Commission.
- The Planning Commission is preparing to do a presentation at a future meeting depending on their availability.

Addition to By-laws Discussion (44:32)

- Ms. Njuguna commented that the Commission had previously discussed about making an amendment to the bylaws to address attendance issues.
- She noted that she and Mr. Smith reached out to the Boards and Commissions Office to review the suggested amendments and share their recommendations with the Commission.
- The next steps are to incorporate the recommendations and have a final vote.

Co-Chair Re-election (1:04:13)

- The Commission nominated and voted Ms. Jessica Westgren and Mr. Devin Silvernail to be the next co-chairs for the upcoming term.

Commissioner Opportunity to Share (1:22:08)

- Ms. Westgren shared a letter she received from concerned residents about zoning, residential disturbance and short-term rental violations relating to a AirBnb property. She encouraged the Commission to read through the letter and discuss how to respond to the issues raised at the next meeting.
- Mr. Devin Silvernail shared that the 180-days and Rent Control legislations will be going to the Human Services Equitable Development and Renter’s Rights Committee on Tuesday, September 17th. He encouraged all Commissioners to attend and give public comments. He also added that the Economic Evictions Assistance will also be presented.
- He also shared about Tenant Research Portal where the public can look at buildings that has code complaints, violations and landlord eviction history.

- Ms. Dinah Braccio shared about an upcoming Renter's Assembly on September 13-15 at Olympia, WA.
- Ms. Regina Owens shared if Seattle State Representative Ms. Nicole Macri and State Senator Ms. Patty Kuderer could attend the next Renter's Commission meeting to discuss the Just Cause bill.
- Mr. Mac McGregor shared about his meeting with the LGBTQ community leaders to tour and review the plans for the City of Seattle's first LGBTQ affordable senior housing facility. There will be a community input meeting on Wednesday, September 7th. He will send the information to the SRC liaisons to distribute to the Commission.
- Ms. Njuguna mentioned that if the Commissioners would like to share a particular events to forward them to DON_SRC_Liaison@seattle.gov
- Mr. Calvin Jones shared the DON will be hosting a Tenant's Forum on Wednesday, September 7th to discuss landlord issues with tenants. He will provide more details about the event to the liaisons.
- Ms. Westgren shared that the Mayor is looking at freezing the use of AMI (Area Median Income) numbers in relation to affordable housing. He encouraged the Commission to pay close attention to this issue.
- Ms. Njuguna mentioned that the September meeting will be on the 9th due to Labor Day Holiday.
- A suggestion was made if future SRC meeting start time could be moved to 6:15 or 6:30 pm due to the challenges of arriving on-time because of traffic or parking issues.

Adjourn

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