

**SEATTLE RENTERS' COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

Monday, September 9, 2019

6:00 – 8:00 PM

Seattle City Hall, L280 Boards & Commissions Room

Approved October 7, 2019

**Commissioners Present:** Beverly Aarons, Laurie Goff, Calvin Jones,  
Marci Taitt-Lamar, Daniela Lopez, Mac McGregor, Michael Padilla  
Ocampo, Regina Owens, Devin Silvernail (phone) Christiana Obey  
Sumner

---

**Commissioners Absent:** Dinah Braccio (EA), David Mooney (EA), Michael Padilla Ocampo

---

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

**Guests:** *Mr. Chandler Gayton, Legislative Aide, King County CM Larry Gossett  
Representative Nicole Macri, 42<sup>nd</sup> Legislative District  
Representative Cindy Ry, 32<sup>nd</sup> Legislative District*

*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.
- Ms. Beverly Aarons asked about the time commitment and requirements for being a member of the strategic land acquisition advisory group that will advise on how to utilize funds from the Mercer Mega Block sale.
- Ms. Vera Njuguna responded that time commitment and requirements have not been defined. She added that the Commission is gathering names that they would want to recommend.
- Ms. Aarons asked about the Commission members whose term will be ending, and Ms. Njuguna responded that the details are being finalized.
- Ms. Westgren mentioned that the requirements include a background in organizing, development, and banking.
- Ms. Westgren also mentioned parking pass information for the Commission members.

**Minutes Approval**

- There was a motion to adopt the August 5, 2019 minutes at the October meeting, and it was seconded. The Committee voted, and the motion was adopted.

**Public Comments (04:24)**

- Ms. Westgren opened the discussion for public comments.
- Mr. Chandler Gayton, a legislative aide to King County Councilmember Larry Gossett, commented that King County is looking to implement its own Renter's Commission. This will be presented at the Health

and Housing Services Committee meeting on September 17<sup>th</sup>. He added that CM Gossett would like feedback from this Commission regarding what the King County Renter's Commission could do in collaboration with the City.

#### **King County Renter's Commission, Haglund (06:14)**

- Mr. Gayton mentioned that there is a motion to implement a study on how to get community land trust inclusionary zoning, rent to own options, and community preference policies. He noted that the purpose of the study will be to gather knowledge on how to implement such policies.
- Ms. Westgren asked about community outreach, and Mr. Gayton responded that they have done any outreach yet. They have been meeting with SkyWay solutions and several partnerships within the community.
- Mr. Gayton mentioned that King County Renter's Commission will be very similar to the City of Seattle's. The Commission will be composed of 15 members and will be a combination of King County Council, Executive County Supervisor and Commission appointments. He added that King County would like to hear the most pressing issues from renters in King County.
- Mr. Gayton commented that Councilmember Gossett will be introducing a Just Cause legislation protection for King County.
- He also mentioned that they are working on the Haglund (Slumlord) legislation. The County is trying to set a basic standard on raising rent and ensuring that the renters' necessities are met before rent is raised.
- He noted that the City has the tools and resources available and the County does not have a similar type of legislation. He added that they have been reaching out to other Commissions and communities for feedback.
- The Commission suggested having a strong enforcement mechanism, and Mr. Gayton noted that they are working in partnership with the Seattle Police Department and the King County Sheriff Department and the Department of Local Services in inspection enforcements.
- The Commission also suggested having the funds and capacity to support these enforcement mechanisms.
- The Commission commented that any barriers in filing or reporting complaints should be addressed efficiently.
- Mr. Gayton mentioned Councilmember Gossett is seeking any public comments and feedback to strengthen this piece of legislation and he will provide any update to this Commission.

#### **Just Cause Eviction Bill (41:34)**

- Ms. Westgren introduced Representative Nicole Macri of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Legislative District and Representative Cindy Ryu of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Legislative District to provide an update on the affordable housing and renter protection policies and implementation.
- Ms. Macri commented that 2019 is the biggest year for tenant protections in the State Legislature. The Legislature passed the first major reform to the Residential Landlord-Tenant Act by reforming the eviction process extending the three-day vacate period to 14 days and allowing, in certain instances, the courts to have more judicial discretion in permitting tenants to remain in their units.
- She also noted a bill that was passed to require landlords to give 60-days notices in the instance of any rent increase.
- She mentioned that another tenant protection bill that was passed was to provide a 120-days' notice in the instance of substantial renovation or demolition of a building. This has been part of the City of Seattle Just Cause eviction ordinance. It was not considered a new protection for the City of Seattle but for the rest of the State of Washington it was. She noted that the bill that was passed in Olympia does not include relocation assistance but does include the extended notice.

- Ms. Macri commented that she has heard positive feedback regarding the stated legislations, especially the 14 days' notice. She added that they do not have enough data or information about how effective it has been since it was just passed this past July.
- Ms. Macri mentioned that the Legislature is currently working on issues and potential fixes to address some of the challenges of this legislation. She asked any positive or negative feedback from the Commission about how these eviction reform changes affect the renters and landlords.
- Representative Macri added that one another low profile legislation that was passed was to have a study to look at the impact of legal representation in cases of eviction. The State Office of Civil Legal Aid is working with the researchers from the Evans School of Public Policy at the UW to look at the impact of legal representations in four Counties (Pierce, Snohomish, Clark, and Spokane). She mentioned that the results of the evaluation are expected sometime next year.
- Representative Macri introduced a Just Cause Bill in 2018 and 2019 to extend protections to all renters in the state or eliminate No Cause evictions. She heard that due to eviction reforms, it is causing some landlords to exploit the limits of the reforms, and it is critical to work on the Just Cause statute in 2020.
- Both Representatives Macri and Ryu asked this Commission to provide any input on issues that they hear or encounter, share their stories and continue to help the Seattle Delegation at Olympia.

#### **Letter from residents re Airbnb property violations (9:39)**

- There was a motion to review the letter at the October meeting and it was seconded. The Commission voted and the motion was passed unanimously.

#### **Planning Commission Feedback**

- Ms. Westgren asked the Commission to review the booklet that was distributed and if there are any questions or concerns from the Commission to send them to her by Monday so she can forward them to the Planning Commission for their upcoming presentation.
- Mr. Silvernail shared a draft letter regarding Just Cause and its support for countywide and statewide legislation. He asked if the Commission could vote in support of the letter.
- There was a motion to approve with a letter with the suggested edits, and it was seconded. The Commission voted and the motion was adopted unanimously.

#### **Commissioner Opportunity to Share (30:10)**

- Mr. Silvernail shared that the Rent Control/Renter's Rights Committee meeting was rescheduled from Tuesday, September 17<sup>th</sup> to Monday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, at 6:00 pm at Seattle City Hall.
- Ms. Goff shared that she spoke with Mr. Billy Hancock of Wellspring Family Services about doing a presentation about homeless and rent to this Commission.
- Ms. Aarons shared that she is currently drafting a letter about Eviction Forgiveness and she will share it with the Committee.
- Mr. Jones shared a discussion that was held regarding the proposed changes to SEPA.
- Ms. Westgren shared that the Queen Anne Community Council has vacancies and has no renters on the council. She encouraged the Commission if they know of someone who is a renter that will be interested to be at the Queen Anne Community Council to let her know.
- Mr. Silvernail shared that if anyone is interested to be part of an advisory committee for the Mercer/Mega Block Public land acquisition to let the Commission know so they can submit their names.

#### **Adjourn**

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