

**SEATTLE RENTERS' COMMISSION
MINUTES**

Monday, September 14, 2020
6:00 – 7:00 PM
WebEx Meeting
Approved October 5, 2020

Commissioners Present: Dinah Braccio, Calvin Jones, Marci Taitt-Lamar, Gina Owens,
Mac S.R. McGregor, Jessica Westgren

Commissioners Absent: Laurie Goff (E), Daniela Lopez (E), ChrisTiana Obey Sumner (E)

Commission Staff: Shaquan Smith, Department of Neighborhoods

Guests: None

(Transcriber's Note: Seattle Renter's Commission meeting minutes are not an exact transcript and represent key points and the basis of discussion. The recording of the minutes is available upon request.)

Welcome & Housekeeping

- Commissioner Jessica Westgren mentioned that they have a Get Engaged applicant to fill in the vacancies. Commission staff Shaquan Smith commented that three applicants were interviewed, and he will be sending the recommendations to the Mayor's Office
- Commissioner Westgren made a motion to approve the July and August meeting minutes, and it was seconded. The Commission voted and the motion was approved.

Commission Conversation

- The Commission began a brainstorming exercise to identify and prioritize the work the Commission would like to focus on by the end of 2020.
- Commissioner Dinah Braccio commented that the uncertainties and challenges the renters are facing currently regarding the eviction ordinance.
- Commissioner Calvin Jones agreed with Commissioner Braccio about the uncertainties and lack of energy and enthusiasm about the issues facing the renters. Commissioner Jones suggested to look at the rental regulations report from different municipalities and invite SDCI to come and present about the report.
- Commissioner Westgren agreed on inviting folks to do an up to date presentation especially about how the statewide renter moratorium and the Housing for Urban Development (HUD) works.
- Commissioner Gina Owens commented that the Commission could invite a representative from King County and talk about a new program on helping the renters who are unable to pay on their rent because they were affected by the pandemic.
- Commissioner Mac McGregor mentioned about a payment plan system when the rent moratorium expires. Commissioner McGregor hoped that the moratorium will be extended due to the pandemic.

- Commissioner McGregor added that Councilmember Kshama Sawant was advocating for a payment plan system.
- Commissioner Westgren commented that a payment plan system could work but it needs to figure out how the plan is structured.
- Commissioner Braccio added that the Seattle City Council passed legislation that requires landlords for up to six months at the end of the moratorium for renters to enter in a payment plan depending on how much a renter owes. Commissioner Braccio noted that this is inadequate and suggested having the Commission begin drafting a letter to the Governor to extend the eviction moratorium.
- Commissioner Braccio commented that the City of Seattle does the moratorium differently than the state and the Governor's plan is adequate but vague.
- Commissioner Braccio suggested having the Commission begin using a workgroup structure to start working on this priority.
- Commissioner Westgren agreed that having a workgroup structure to start working on these priorities is important to make the tasks more feasible to tackle.
- Commissioner Jones commented that he could take the lead in drafting a letter and invited other Commissioners to assist in drafting the letter.
- Commissioner McGregor commented that the moratorium expiration was stressful and agreed with Commissioner Braccio that a payment plan is not the only option. There is a need to voice their opinion to the Governor's office because it affects everyone and not only the renters.
- Commissioner Marci Taitt-Lamar about a need for more visioning and brainstorming to happen regarding the moratorium.
- Commissioner Westgren agreed about the focusing on the eviction moratorium issue in addition to the credit checks issue and getting the credit checks out of the rental applications.
- Commissioner Owens agreed that the eviction moratorium is an important issue for the Commission to pursue. There should be a language around strengthening the moratorium and the eviction process protections once the pandemic is over.
- Commissioner Westgren added the eviction moratorium and credit checks as potential issues to focus on by the Commission.
- Commissioner Westgren asked the Commission about what they would like to see and presented for the upcoming Commission meetings.
- Commissioner McGregor would like to see a presentation about the payment plans when the moratorium expires and ways to extend it to help the renters deal with their back-pay rent.
- Commissioner Braccio could work on drafting a letter to the Governor's Office about extending the eviction moratorium. Other Commissioners mentioned that they could help provide comments and feedback about the letter.
- Commissioner Jones could work on finding more information about rental regulations.
- Commissioner Westgren will work on having public comments at the next meeting.

Commissioner Opportunity to Share

- There were no opportunities to share from the Commissioners.

Adjourn

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