



SEATTLE RENTERS' COMMISSION MINUTES

April 5, 2023

Webex, City Hall, Bertha Knight Landes Room

Purpose: The Seattle Renters' Commission was established to represent the interest of renters located in Seattle, to advise and make recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on public policy matters of importance to renters citywide.

In attendance: Andrea Akita, Elsa Batres-Boni, Brett Lydia Felty, Kim McGillivray, Sendia Registin, Dan Godfrey, Dr. Howard J. Gale, Devin Silvernail, Christine, Peter Johnson

Staff: Zach Frimmel, Elsa Batres-Boni, Waing Waing

Welcome

6:30-6:40 PM

- Commissioners started the meeting with a land and labor acknowledgement
- Minutes from March 1, 2023 meeting were approved by Commission

Seattle Social Housing PDA Board Application Report

6:40 – 6:45 PM

- Commissioners shared they received a total of 103 applications, which included a diverse range of lived experience and credentials

Public Comment (see reverse for process)

6:45 – 7:00 PM

- Commenter 1: Brett Pepowski (representing themselves)
 - o Expressed advocating for the SRC to make sure they include queer representation in their PDA Board appointments so that the affordable housing community and ecosystem they develop and oversee create safe spaces and policies for the queer and LGBTQ2IA+ constituency/tenants.
- o Commenter 2:
 - Good evening. Howard Gale, a renter in Queen Anne. Absurd and punishing late fees, which can reach hundreds of dollars, must be reigned in by legislation. However, I, along with hundreds of other renters, find ourselves almost wishing for an abusive late fee in the coming months, instead of an eviction without cause, as landlords and developers have found a way, with the cooperation of SDCI, to nullify recent Seattle laws limiting rental increases and evictions. Over the last eight months landlords -- like Cadence Realty that famously displaced section 8 tenants from the Chateau on Capitol Hill -- have discovered a way to unjustly evict hundreds of people and raise rents 70 to 100%, without having to provide the fixed 180 day notice and without having to provide the vast majority



of tenants any relocation assistance. Instead of an occasional late fee, I will now face a monthly increase in my rent of between \$400 and \$1,000 every single month. I can no longer afford to live in Seattle. A landlord only needs to claim that they are doing renovations that supposedly require a tenant to vacate for more than three days. In my building, Cadence Realty is doing this so as to unjustly evict 48 families, without paying most people any relocation fees, and then raise rents by 70%. This is a flagrant abuse of City code, one that since last August is resulting in the displacement of hundreds of tenants. All done with the official assistance of the City. How can the City claim they are fighting homelessness while the City regularly issue permits for an end run around tenant laws that will simply produce more homeless people? What is the point of providing tenant protections that now only exist on paper and not in reality? This commission must take action to demand the council take action and realize that their much vaunted recent tenant protections are currently failing hundreds of tenants and adding to the homelessness problem.

Discuss Next Steps for PDA Board Application Review Process

7: 00– 8:00 PM

- Commissioners shared their curiosities if there was any conflict of interests regarding past SRC members and people who worked closely on the I-135 campaign, including those on the Steering Committee who helped write the Charter. Zach Frimmel had checked in with Law regarding these conflicts and Law send there was no conflict of interest for these candidates.
- Commissioners discussed their process of reviewing the 103 applications. Each application was reviewed and scored by at least two commissioners. They explicitly stated that the scores themselves were only part of the story and they would also equitably be taking into consideration other holistic details like lived experience and a well-rounded composition of backgrounds to make up the seven appointees. They wish they could interview everyone but are going to interview no more than 25 applicants.
- Commissioners were curious about what backgrounds and skill sets the other appointee from the other PDA Boad appointing bodies would have. Devin Silvernail, Policy Director for CM Morales, shared that their candidates both have deep institutional knowledge with affordable housing and working with government. He also stated it might be beneficial to have SRC consider having someone with deep knowledge of the Charter.
- Dr. Howard J. Gale replied, "Unlike EVERY commission in Seattle, the idea behind SRC appointing 7 people is to have clear lived experience representation. Other commissions appoint "experts" or heads of non-profits to "represent" the disenfranchised. This is a unique opportunity to allow disenfranchised folks to speak for themselves."



City of Seattle
Seattle Renters' Commission

Kim McGillivray & Daniel Godfrey, Co-Chairs

- By the end of the meeting the Commissioners had not decided who would move on to virtual interviews yet, and would decide in the next couple of days when they would have a special meeting to share which applicants would be notified for virtual interviews and why.

Commissioners motioned to adjourn early. Motion seconded and passed.

Adjourn

7:42 PM