

King County Affordable Housing Committee Meeting Minutes

September 29, 2021 | 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Location: Zoom Meeting

Introductions

Members & Voting Alternates	Present	Alternate	Members & Voting Alternates	Present	Alternate
Emily Alvarado	X		Niki Krimmel-Morrison	X	
CC Claudia Balducci	X		CM Kathy Lambert	X	
Don Billen		Thatcher Imboden	CM Ryan McIrvin		CP Tanika Padhye
Susan Boyd			CM Teresa Mosqueda		
Alex Brennan	X		Stephen Norman	X	
Jane Broom	X		Michael Ramos	x	
Caia Caldwell	X		Mayor Lynne Robinson	X	
Kelly Coughlin		Rob Wotton	CM Nancy Tosta	X	
DM Claude DaCorsi	X		Brett Waller	X	
Mark Ellerbrook		Kelly Rider			

Non-voting Alternates

CM Zach Hall	
Deputy Mayor Nigel Herbig	X
CM Marli Larimer	
CM Dan Strauss	

* CC = Council Chair, CM = Councilmember, CP = Council President, DM = Deputy Mayor

Agenda Review

- The Chair reviewed the agenda and reminded the group that the Committee is grounded in the goal of building or preserving 44,000 affordable housing units by 2024

Action Item: Adoption of July 21, 2021 Meeting Minutes

- Vote to approve by Councilmember Nancy Tosta, seconded by Mayor Robinson
- Approved

Briefing and Discussion: Update Regulations to Increase Housing Choice, Diversity, and Affordability

- McCaella Daffern, King County, reviewed scoping research and a strategy to increase housing choice, diversity, and affordability, particularly in areas served by frequent or high-capacity transit
- Alex Brennan, Executive Director of Futurewise, and Caia Caldwell, External Relations Manager for Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties (MBAKS), presented their recommendations on actions to increase and diversify housing choice and maximize affordability
- Council Chair Balducci asked the group to respond to these questions:

1. Thoughts on the strategy that McCaela described earlier?
 2. Which actions should the Committee prioritize for rapid, widespread implementation and include in the challenge letter?
- Members discussed the following:
 - A suggestion to focus on efforts to create housing options for senior empty nesters so that they will free up the supply of single-family homes for larger households
 - A concern that people can't get landlords to accept their housing vouchers
 - A response acknowledging this is a problem. There are income discrimination laws, but they can be difficult to parse out. Local jurisdictions need to be alert to patterns of this and employ fair housing mechanisms to enforce state law.
 - The Chair will explore this further
 - A clarification that there is no lack of motivation to increase housing choice, diversity, and affordability. A concern that the challenge letter could step on efforts already underway at South King Housing and Homelessness Partners (SKHHP)
 - The Chair stated that the Committee should work with SKHHP and A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH) to build on their efforts
 - An acknowledgement of the presenter's good work, but a concern about parking minimums. Without designated parking at the complex, cars often turn up in other neighborhoods and cause issues. Although people will have fewer and fewer cars in the future, that is not happening fast enough to protect neighboring communities.
 - A question about how reducing pedestrian infrastructure around transit-oriented development aligns with Vision Zero goals. An idea that a letter combined with an updated dashboard would be compelling.
 - A second clarification that there isn't lack of political will to increase housing choice, diversity, and affordability. Burien passed significant renter protections and accessory dwelling unit policies, but they don't have the resources and technical capacity to implement the policies. Bureaucracy and public hearings are also barriers to implementation. A suggestion to review California's recent housing legislation to determine if anything is replicable in Washington.
 - A comment that more deeply affordable senior rental housing is needed in all communities. Seattle has had some recent success investing in community-driven and culturally relevant senior rental housing. Additional support and resources from the federal government, and others, are crucial to scale this. Senior housing at 30 percent area median income (AMI), in particular, is a crucial racial equity issue, as aging demographics are shifting.
 - A third clarification that there is no lack of political will. Rural areas are disadvantaged when there's a focus on transit-oriented development. There are thousands of people commuting on Highway 18, and rural communities need a better way of being part of a regional plan for housing. 100-unit projects don't fit well in small communities due to density, height, and other land requirements. If people can't live in rural communities, they need better transportation choices.
 - A fourth clarification that there is no lack of political will. Additional staff and people with expertise are needed to develop and update regulations. A suggestion to raise funding for floating staff to provide technical assistance to jurisdictions.
 - Comments made by audience members:
 - An invitation to attend Habitat for Humanity's home dedication event on October 2nd in South Park to see how zoning flexibility helped turn a single-family home into 13 permanently affordable homes

- The Chair asked Alex and Caia which of their recommended actions hold the best chance of moving the needle on the 44,000-unit production and preservation goal by 2024
 - Alex stated increasing development capacity in specific places and incorporating inclusionary requirements or incentives as part of upzoning
 - Caia stated shortening permit review timelines and upzoning
- A comment that a letter can allow jurisdictions to be specific in identifying the actions they want to take. Maybe reducing parking in rural areas won't make much of a difference cost-wise, but minimum lot areas, impact fees, developer-provided public infrastructure, etc. would make a difference. Focusing land efficient development to rural town centers would be another strategy.
- A comment that Seattle gets some level of scale from reinvesting inclusionary housing in-lieu fees into rental and ownership housing. Households earning 0-60 percent AMI are served through the creation of affordable rentals, and 80 percent AMI or below households qualify for homeownership. There is a focus on serving households at 60 percent AMI.
- The Chair stated that there will be a more specific proposal to respond to at the next meeting

Briefing: Advance Shared Revenue Principles

- The Chair reminded members that she asked members from Seattle and the Sound Cities to identify an action or actions that they and their subregional collaborations (ARCH and SKHHP) will take to rapidly increase the preservation and production of permanent affordable units by deploying available revenue sources
- Emily Alvarado, Director of Seattle's Office of Housing, presented on Seattle's actions, including:
 - Publishing more Notices of Funding Availability
 - Facilitating faster project completion by coordinating interdepartmentally to decrease regulatory barriers, expediting permitting review, passing legislation to create permanent supportive housing efficiencies, and offering significant technical assistance for public funding readiness
- The Chair shared that King County Council introduced legislation to expedite deployment of revenue by removing the step where the Interbranch Team approves revenue decisions. King County Council is still exploring earmarks. At a minimum, they are advocating to avoid earmarks since it limits how quickly money is deployed if it sits.
- The Chair shared that at the November AHC meeting, others can report out their actions to rapidly increase the preservation and production of permanent affordable units by deploying available revenue sources
 - There will be an update from Redmond in November
 - Bellevue began collecting House Bill 1590 revenue at the end of March. They have spent those funds on human services and have a Request for Proposals out for an affordable housing project in Bellevue

Briefing: Work Plan and Committee Functioning Survey

- McCaela encouraged members to take the work plan and committee functioning survey to be released the following day

Briefing: 2022 State Legislative Agenda

- Kelly Rider, Government Relations Officer with King County, reviewed the contents of the draft 2022 state legislative agenda, rationale for inclusion, and tentative adoption timeline
- The Chair invited members to ask questions. Members discussed the following:

- A suggestion to review California’s recent housing legislation to determine if anything is replicable in Washington.
 - Kelly stated she will work with McCaela and see if they can partner with city staff to further explore this

Briefing: Health Through Housing Implementation Plan

- Mario Williams-Sweet, King County Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) Major Initiatives Manager, Health Through Housing and Puget Sound Taxpayer Accountability Account, reviewed Health Through Housing Implementation Plan progress
- Mario invited members to ask questions. Members discussed the following:
 - A question about how the 15 percent minimum local referral could be increased and what the outreach process is to get people in housing
 - Mario stated the 15 percent is the minimum written into the implementation plan, but conversations are taking place to increase that amount. The vetted providers for Health Through Housing sites will coordinate outreach with local communities.
 - Kelly added that they are trying to balance prioritizing local referral and referral of populations disproportionately impacted by homelessness
 - An acknowledgement of the great presentation and work. A suggestion to brief Marc Dones and the Regional Homelessness Authority about this innovative effort since this can serve as a model for other efforts.
 - Kelly stated that Leo Flor, DCHS Director, has kept Marc apprised. Housing work will continue to be held by DCHS, Seattle’s Office of Housing, and others, but there is a lot of intersection in regional collaboration and serving households experiencing homelessness.

Briefing: Federal Legislative Priorities

- Andrew Calkins, King County Housing Authority, provided an update on the Committee’s federal legislative priorities

Wrap-Up and Next Steps

- Members should take the work plan and Committee functioning survey and listening session meeting poll which McCaela will email on September 30
- Members should submit any proposed 2022 state legislative amendments to McCaela by 11/3 and share with McCaela legislative agendas as they become finalized.
- Next meeting (November 17, 2021, 1-3 p.m.)