

July 28th HRC Meeting Minutes

Present: Skyler Pro-Tem Chair ran meeting

Andrea Fallenstein, Commissioner

John Lemus, Commissioner

Ronald Toston, Commissioner

Jaimie Sijohn, Commissioner

Absent:

Blaine Stum, Chair, Commissioner

Kitara McClure, Commissioner

Barbara Ann Bonner, Commissioner

Guests:

Matthew Charles Cardinale, guest to speak about affordable housing issues in Spokane

Naima Quarles-Burnley, President of NAACP

Meeting called to order 5:35PM

Motion to accept minutes from last meeting made by AF/JL second. All in favor, motion carried

Mr Cardinale's presentation on affordable housing

Passed out the executive summary and table of proposals to his study. Link to whole study was forwarded yesterday by Commissioner Stum. Came out in March 2015. Began report with Councilwoman Mumm, then finished while completing second year law at GU. Wanted documentation for housing crisis in Spokane, make recommendations. Was mentioned mentioned nationally in magazine involving nonprofits operating in lieu of Federal funding. Also local organizations such as SLIK (?)

Came to us today to discuss the role Spokane HRC might have in this issue.

Seattle is getting fired up about affordable housing. Rent increases are increases, gentrification. Spokane is planning for growth, already seeing increases in market rate rent, gentrification occurring. Hotel Ruby Suites, apartments downtown with high rent. Need to be proactive and careful so our rental market doesn't change quickly and end up with a dramatic shift as larger cities have seen.

Used Census data to determine the low income family rate and their income. Housing Authority and SLIC added the vouchers, are 6,065 households living with housing cost burden, including homelessness. Still

have a serious problem here even though our rents aren't as bad as Seattle. Consequently we have lost tons of money over the last few years from Federal sources. Congress is in control of these cuts. Two years without Affordable Housing Trust Fund monies from State of WA. Etc.

What the city does now? Multifamily Tax Exemption (12 years) for those developers providing affordable housing. However, quite high. Their definition is 50% of median income. Around \$45000. So affordable is \$22,500 a year. High. So impacts \$600-700 units. However, those are already available in Spokane. Demand is around those numbers. We are giving away tax revenue that city isn't using to provide units that are affordable. Additionally we are subsidizing apartments that are higher in value. Change definition to 30% AMI.

Our downtown places have ability to build more apartments than usually able to in return for "affordable housing." Flaws: three types of problems. 1. Def of affordability. 2. Existing zoning does not have a requirement of time to ratio code requirement. So they could offer reduced rate for one year and that meets the requirement. No data or information about how many developers who have these options available. Long term monitoring and enforcement. Targeting to produce affordable units. A lot of these projects are receiving more than one pot of money. Then additionally receive tax benefit. Why aren't these units more affordable given the multiple sources of money??? Not reaching those at 30% AMI.

Recommendations

Adoption of affordable housing impact statement policy.

Adoption of inclusionary zoning policy.

Creation of Spokane affordable housing trust fund.

Revision of 12 year multiple family property tax exemption program.

Revision of existing unit bonus programs.

Cardinale provided draft ordinances as examples for the City to follow. These decisions are impacting the poor inequitably. Make decisions based on lack of information. Need numbers and long term records to see what the City is doing. If we support this proposal it might mean budgeting a position to keep the information intact.

Inclusionary zoning

Mandatory inclusionary zoning is part of city, specific area. Proposing city wide that anytime new multifamily housing came up that there would be a required set aside of at least three units or ten percent whichever is more of affordable units. And define as 30% of AMI. Must up zone and requirement at same time or tie them together. In return we give unit bonuses to build above and beyond the zoning planning as an incentive. Ends up being a trade, especially since market rate apartments are usually in higher amenity areas, then adding housing for less rich persons.

Affordable housing trust fund

If developer doesn't want to do the affordable housing thing, they write check up front to our trust fund.

Others require monitoring and enforcement as well as making a better 30% AMI rule for affordability. There are drafts to avoid stigma for the affordable units. Must be comparable and have access to them along with the rest of them. Ha!

Cardinale ran out of time to discuss the Comprehensive Plan in detail, but mentioned that it has a chapter on housing and they anticipated Inclusionary Zoning. Also want incorporation of low income housing into all new developments. Need incentives such as exemptions, priority processing, tax referral, and inclusionary zoning requirements. Already in the Comprehensive Plan! He is looking toward providing impact statements to the committees that need them. Can request PSAID hold meeting on this before end of calendar year.

Question: rent and utilities be under 30% together according to HUD. SLIC has been asking for lower water rates and stuff from the City Council but not making much progress. CHHS Rob Crow and Arlene Patton and they both loved Cardinale's work. He attended June meeting, and will be on the affordable housing committee agenda in Sept.

Our City Council all have copies of this report but there is no active discussion. What is our boundary as a commission and recommendations for specific legislation? Should we be more aligned with putting faces to the things happening, paint a picture of those affected, might be another component of this issue that might help City Council have a complete vision of the issue. Current elections are hampering Council efforts. Also asked if there's data about race and gender impact which there is none in the larger report. Some testimonials from SLIC and how affordable housing has improved and impacted their lives. Cardinale curious about how to find meeting with power brokers and having testimonial speakers come to help empower them in the process. Zone Project: uses data from District 81, etc to create story or mosaic for cradle to college. Commissioner Lemus asked if the HRC can write letter to recommend that Cardinale is given opportunity to speak at specific commission. PCED Planning Community Economic Development.

Matthew.Cardinale@gmail.com.

Commissioner Ronald mentioned friends whose subsidies help with rent but her light bill is awful!

Gender and Racial Pay Equity meeting report: moving forward month to month then making recommendations in January.

Earned Sick Leave: Commissioner Stum says work group recommended 7 employees, reconvened to 5 then Council ended up recommending 3. Tabling discussion until next month meeting.

Commissioner Kitara distributed information about the Courageous Conversations planning to address. Community center might be better because avoids challenges of parking and the like downtown. Commissioner Sijohn recommended locating the Conversations to community center. Tabled until next meeting because Commissioner Kitara absent.

Commissioner Stum drafted letter regarding in custody deaths in Spokane County Jail. Ask DOJ to investigate the deaths and patterns of care. Ran this past Piccolo who said we are not stepping past boundaries in doing this. Comm Sijohn said she thinks the letter should be stronger. Comm AF / JL second proposing letter be completed and put out in 30 days. Drafted strongly and asking for action!! Comm Sijohn and Toston pushed to complete this week. Comm Lemus recommended Google doc. Deadline Friday 5pm.

Wage theft and labor standards ordinances: Comm Stum wants these endorsed to move on to Council. Discussed the summaries of each ordinance. Motion to approve RT / AF second. Motion carried without any no or abstentions.

Question: is NAACP a guest at HRC meeting, or do they have a regular position on HRC?

Updates:

ARC of Spokane having annual picnic Friday from 5-8pm. They also had an ADA celebration and showed "Menschen" as the cornerstone to the event.

Sidewalk summit for ADA Compliance-

Interfaith Council- Unity in the Community 8-15-2015 Blaine donated to pay for registration and booth. Council meets tomorrow to discuss #meettheneighbors. Planning to visit various religious locations around town to foster discussion and stuff.

Action Items for next meeting:

Complete Google doc so we can edit letter to DOJ.

Next meeting August 25 Tuesday. Adjourned 6:57pm.