

SSHAP³

South Sound Housing Affordability Partners Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

November 21, 2023

5:30 – 7:42 p.m.

Advisory Board Members: Adria Buchanan, Chair – present
 Alex Harrington - present
 Amanda DeShazo – present
 April Elliott – absent
 Ben Ferguson – present
 Corey Orvold - present
 Desniege Haywood - present
 Faaluaina Pritchard - present
 Isabella Rivera Kjaer - excused
 Jay Worley – present
 Jeff Bell - present
 Judson Willis, Vice Chair - present
 Kevin Bates - excused
 Nicholas Carr - present
 Noemi Cagatin-Porter – present
 Rian Booker, Vice Chair - present
 Riley Guerrero - present
 William Towey - present
 Zac Baker – excused

Staff: Mary Connolly, Program Specialist 2
 Becki Foutz, Administrative Assistant

Guests: Debby Herbert, Jane Fox, Matt Costanti

MINUTES

TOPIC/ WHO	DISCUSSION	ACTION
<p>Call to Order Adria</p>	<p>Adria called the meeting to order at 5:33. Mary called roll, per above; a quorum was present. The land acknowledgement was made.</p> <p><i>We acknowledge that we are on the traditional homelands of the Coast Salish people. They have lived on and stewarded these lands since the beginning of time and continue to do so today.</i></p> <p><i>We honor their legacy by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Welcoming new ways of thinking about our relationship to the land</i> • <i>Asking -- not assuming -- tribal preferences and needs</i> • <i>Identifying opportunities to improve our collective stewardship</i> <p>This board commits to these objectives.</p>	<p>Welcome!</p>

TOPIC/WHO	DISCUSSION	ACTION
<p>Welcome & Thank You</p>	<p>Adria welcomed all to the first in-person meeting of the Board! She thanked Lua and Asia Pacific Cultural Center (APCC) for hosting. She reviewed meeting norms.</p>	<p>Wel-come!</p>
<p>Approval of Consent Agenda Adria</p>	<p>Any requests to modify the agenda? No. Noemi moved to approve the consent agenda. It was seconded. Vote was taken - none opposed, no abstentions.</p>	<p>The agenda was approved.</p>
<p>Public Comment Adria</p>	<p>Adria opened for public comment. No written comments have been received.</p> <p>Janee Fox is a rental housing provider who lives and rents out units near APCC. The median two-bedroom rent in Tacoma is \$1800; Janee charges under \$1300. 94% of rental housing providers with rental business licenses are small providers with gross rents of less than \$250,000, and she feels she’s typical of them. Only 6% of licensed rental housing providers have large apartments. Th small providers worked very hard together against Measure 1, losing by 360 votes. Many of them will be selling their properties. She gets offers for hers all the time. Buyers will likely raise the rents to median or above, and this could wipe out affordable housing stock. The measure’s not a good strategy.</p> <p>Debby Herbert – what can we do to reduce the massive costs anticipated as a result of Measure 1 in Tacoma? Rent will need to increase significantly to offset these costs. What can the Board or the system provide to housing providers to make it possible to keep rent affordable? The measure requires that if a household has students or school employees, they cannot be evicted during the nine-month school year, and no one can be evicted during the five months of cold weather. Rent is already increasing in preparation of this. Those with the most affordable rents are going to be the ones selling, because they won’t be able to afford renting any longer.</p> <p>Adria said we’ll need to look at data of rent costs before and after the measure, and how many people aren’t paying their rent. We’ll need to figure out how to mitigate homeowner risk. The city of Tacoma’s likely going to be working with landlords and tenants on how to address this, in hopes of mitigating their losses. It’s strongly suggested to contact your city Council representative. That will be the best way to have your comments heard by people who can do something about this.</p> <p>Corey thanked both community members who spoke. Landlords are not just big corporations. A lot of times when rentals sell, affordable units are removed from the mix.</p> <p>Not paying rent is only one reason to evict someone; there are other reasons to evict. Hold on to properties a little bit longer if you can.</p>	<p>Discus-sion</p>

TOPIC/WHO	DISCUSSION	ACTION
<p>Public Comment continued</p>	<p>The measure is new, and people are often hyperalert when things change. It's important to understand that housing is an eco-system; it's not "me vs. you." It's too bad when people are afraid to speak their truths in fear of being cancelled. SSHA³P can try to establish trust by listening to both sides. There are many aspects to this crisis. Members are here because they want to improve our community; all perspectives are needed.</p> <p>Jay added that we all need to stand up and tell our government that it needs to do its due diligence. What are they doing with our tax dollars?</p> <p>Real estate prices have doubled, and rents have not doubled yet (?), so we can anticipate this getting worse.</p>	<p>Discussion</p>
<p>Work Plan Subcommittee Update Mary</p>	<p>Adria, Alex, Faaluaina, Isabella, Jay, Nicholas, Rian, Riley, and Zac comprised the subcommittee.</p> <p>The Work Plan will direct 2024 workflow and will include four focus areas: advise & provide feedback, housing toolkit recommendations, education, and administration. The focus of tonight's discussion is housing toolkit recommendations.</p> <p>The Work Plan has placeholders for two policies and programs to be analyzed for inclusion in the housing toolkit.</p> <p>How are the two policies and programs being selected? The Advisory Board brainstormed and came up with 63 ideas. The subcommittee defined unique policies and programs, adding to those, totaling 94 ideas. Mary and Jason scored policies and programs using the evaluation framework created by the Advisory Board and filtered the number down to 27. The subcommittee scored them, using the evaluation framework, and selected the policies and programs presented to the Advisory Board tonight.</p> <p>The next step is for the full Advisory Board to recommend two to five policies and programs to present to the Executive Board for final decision. Jason and Mary will present the Work Plan to the Executive Board for feedback at their 12/1 meeting.</p> <p>The subcommittee shared that they met as often as they could and were pleased with the staff's role vs. theirs. Adria suggested debriefing about this process, discussing what worked and what didn't, after the process concludes.</p> <p>Both low effort and high effort policies and programs have been selected. Degree of effort is determined by the amount of time needed to set up the program or policy, the amount of time to keep it going, and to obtain financial resources.</p>	<p>Thank you, subcommittee!</p> <p>This process will be debriefed once it's concluded.</p>

TOPIC/WHO	DISCUSSION	ACTION
<p>Work Plan Subcommittee Update continued</p>	<p>How many of the programs and policies selected can be used by both large companies and smaller renters? Evaluation criteria provided analyzing for different AMI levels. The range was considered, and the policies selected for discussion apply across the board. Alex feels that the selected policies will affect smaller developments on a larger scale. Riley noted that these policies and programs impact the development process, as opposed to how housing providers get housing to users and maintain them in it. That's not ideal in the long term. There's a lot of work that can be done after developments are built. Lots more to do in 2024 for sure! Adria encouraged the group to keep in mind the Executive Board's focus – how to bring more units on line.</p> <p>Jay wants us to look at the work that we've done and keep in mind that there's housing out there that's falling apart. People are using 2x4s to lodge up appliances so they can be used, and cabinetry's falling apart.</p> <p>There are only two things on the list that a City Council can get done; everything else has to go through zoning process planning committees. Process improvement items can be accomplished by staff. (?) It might be best to put those forward.</p> <p>Lua agreed with Ben and Nicholas. It would be smart to look at these carefully and put forward programs and policies that can be accomplished in a year or two. We need to do our homework! Adria said that a point of consideration, when you make recommendations, it would be nice to make recommendations for things we know some municipalities are already working on.</p> <p>Cities need more money; they're not going to penalize themselves. It might be helpful for us to come up with some policies that are already being worked on.</p> <p>Mary anticipates that she and/or Jason will draft a policy stating what impact the proposed policies or programs will have, and how they can be implemented.</p> <p>Adria said that we can consider putting forward all of the selected policies and programs for the Executive Board to select from; they may know more about what has and hasn't worked in the past.</p> <p>There's danger in sending them the whole list without prioritizing them further. Why are universal design standards high impact? Everyone's different and many people have disabilities and other issues.</p>	<p>Discus- sion</p>

TOPIC/WHO	DISCUSSION	ACTION
<p>Work Plan Subcommittee Update continued</p>	<p>All of these policies are helpful. If we wait for all of them to be started somewhere, we won't move forward. These are hard decisions. If they were easy, this would be done already.</p> <p>We don't have adequate public transit for people to go without cars yet. Some people can't keep their vehicles safely and reliably in the their neighborhoods. We can't provide the requested tree coverage and adequate parking; can one be traded off for the other?</p> <p>Alex moved that we put forth the following policies and programs: permitting process improvement, impact fees/and frontage improvement, general parking, and general design standards. The motion was seconded.</p> <p>Discussion: Jay said that parking's great as long as we include an addendum to explore expanding public transit. Parking requirements are minimum standards. We could propose reducing or completely removing parking requirements, depending on market needs. New standards could be set according to users, not "one size fits all."</p> <p>Rian noted that the motion includes two short-term and two long-term policies/programs. Mary reiterated that this Board's recommendation will go to the Executive Board for final action. How detailed does the Board's recommendation need to be? Policies included in the Work Plan should be specific; does the recommendation need to be specific and super detailed? It will need to be fleshed out anyway. We don't want to give them a shopping list.</p> <p>Riley thinks we should be careful about the parking standards conversation. Outside the city of Tacoma, rent's not collected on parking space. Budgets are razor-thin. Parking is important; people don't want to let go of their cars because they provide a last resort for housing. We'll need to include stipulations and have more conversation.</p> <p>Parking standards don't have mean a lack of parking. It can be different sizes of parking, and/or smarter development. Member governments fund Pierce Transit. Routes will need to be added where we there's reduced parking. Perhaps we don't need to put all impact costs on developers.</p> <p>Amanda appreciates the others' comments. She doesn't feel that parking and design standards are quickly implemented. Process improvement includes three different things. Pierce County's exploring impact fees, and they're quite complicated.</p> <p>Jay said that people on SSI may own cars. The one thing that DSHS will help people keep and maintain is a car. The car and the ability to get around is the only freedom that poor people have. She encouraged the group to self-educate about what poor people are going through. Please research and don't assume.</p>	<p>Discus- sion</p>

TOPIC/WHO	DISCUSSION	ACTION
<p>Work Plan Subcommittee Update continued</p>	<p>Keeping the recommendation relatively general will help get Executive Board feedback and help us gauge “where they’re at.”</p> <p>(Ben?) He hears Jay’s comments; we’re all trapped in our own biases. He appreciates that he has something to learn. We need to assume good intent, and that we’ll do the right thing. He does know that the less rent costs, the more money people will have left. He’d like to see an ecosystem in which people spend their money on the things that matter most. We can all learn from each other and not struggle.</p> <p>As a reminder, the motion on the table is putting forth process improvement including expedited permitting, impact fee and frontage improvement, parking standards, and design standards.</p> <p>Each will take a lot of time. Can we go into in more detail and whittle them down at future meetings? The hope is that the Work Plan will be adopted at the next meeting so we can start working on it in January.</p> <p>Reiterating the motion – we’ll put forward the following programs and policies for the Executive Board’s consideration: permitting process improvements, impact fees and frontage improvements, parking standards, parking reductions, design standards, and universal design standards.</p> <p>Vote was taken, there was one abstention. The motion passed.</p>	<p>Discussion</p>
<p>Adjournment</p>	<p>Lua moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded. Vote was taken; none opposed, no abstentions. The meeting adjourned at 7:42 p.m.</p>	<p>Meeting adjourned!</p>

The next SSHA³P Advisory Board meeting will be on Tuesday, December 19, at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Becki Foutz
Administrative Assistant