



September 19th Meeting Summary

Members Present: Laura Golino de Lovato, Allen Hines, Regina Amodeo, Amber Cook, Angelita Morillo, Vivien Lyon, Stephanie Phillips Bridges, Kristina Goodman, Matthew Maline, Pippa Arend, Moriah McSharry McGrath

Staff Present: Justin Barrieault, Ryan Davis, Antoinette Pietka, Tim Orr, Mesha Jones, Chris Gustafson, Rennin Davidson

Others Present: Diana Nichols (*captioner*)

Agenda Topic

Lead

Recording Time

<i>Agenda Topic</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Recording Time</i>
Call to Order, Roll Call	Justin Barrieault (PHB)	0:00:00 – 0:05:05
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roll was taken, quorum confirmed, chat disclaimer read, and meeting was called to order. 		
Staff Updates	Justin Barrieault (PHB)	0:05:05 – 0:42:39
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of new Interim Housing Director, Michael Buonocore. Public testimony engagement clarification. Leadership and interim housing director clarified that it is the role of the commission to listen to testimonies and use that feedback to help form recommendations to City Council and/or PHB leadership to influence policy and programming. It is not the commission's role to provide individual resources or feedback to those who publicly testify due to issues with equity, access, and limited resources. Public testimony information web pages are being set up and are set to go live soon. PHB has been in contact with Commissioner Rubio's office regarding RSC commissioner reappointments (some commissioners terms are expiring this month and some in December) as well as appointments to the RSC executive committee, but nothing has been confirmed yet. Two subcommittees had been approved during the last meeting. One did not receive enough interested commissions to staff it, so it was dissolved. The second, a FAIR policy review subcommittee, had to be suspended until further notice due to transitions and staffing shortages at PHB as well the RSC not having a current executive committee. Comment about wanting RSC meetings to happen more frequently with subcommittees also taking place, response from PHB Interim Director Michael Buonocore. Comment to group to think about how they want to approach the FAIR policy topic so they're prepared when the subcommittee resumes. Group discussion on hosting a winter listening session. Discussion topics included how the sessions are advertised/promoted, how barriers can be reduced and accessibility increased to allow more people to speak/testify, what sort of feedback can be given to those who attend, confirming ahead of time with those who signed up for testimony and then following-up on those who signed up for testimony but then didn't speak. A vote was held to hold a winter listening session and it was approved unanimously by all present commissioners. 		

- Reviewed the four recommendations that had been proposed during the July RSC meeting.
 - Ask City Council to determine if 10% rent increase cap from SB611 could be made lower by the city.
 - Ask City to set aside ~\$10 million for long-term rental assistance (i.e., longer than six months) and work with county to advocate faster spending on supportive housing services funds toward long-term rent assistance vouchers.
 - Requiring property owners/landlords to meet with a mediator to discuss whether rents are at a fair/affordable rate if tenant has to receive rent assistance twice in a 12-month period.
 - Explore the idea of average rent having outpaced the ability of BIPOC and native Portlanders being able to pay.
- Discussion follows on breaking up recommendations into smaller parts rather than one large unified recommendation, as well as including public testimony to strengthen proposals. The benefits and also the potential pitfalls (e.g., that it may be driving rent increases) of rent assistance.
- Argument made against the proposal for requiring landlord mediation, clarity sought for the \$10 million rent assistance proposal, and argument made against the proposal for a separate, lower rent cap increase at the City level.
- Comment made on benefits of rental registration system to accumulate data City-wide on rent costs.
- Discussed how average rent in Portland has outpaced the ability of many black, Latino, and natives to afford it and addressed concerns with subsidizing increases in rent payments without doing something to address why they're increasing in the first place. Mentioned that not having a rent cap may incentivize bad behavior from landlords. Another member noted how situations where a tenant has accessed financial assistance then the landlord raises the rent within the same 12-month period may deserve some additional scrutiny and questions regarding the justification or need to raise the rent, as well as the tenant's ability to continue pay that increased amount.
- Summarized the potential recommendations:
 - Request City Council to work with State legislators to determine if the rent increase cap of 10% from SB611 could be made even lower by the City.
 - Ask City Council to allocate funds and a directive to PHB to recommend the City to set aside approximate \$10 million for rent assistance for 138 households for four years at \$72,000/year, and work with the County to advocate for faster spending on supportive housing services funds being allocated to the long-term rent assistance vouchers.
 - Educate City leaders about the potential impact of rent assistance on rent increases. Several ideas such as tax incentives to landlords to keep rents low, a rent cap for all landlords, etc. As part of this, fund PHB to study the reasons why a renter might need rent assistance.
- Clarification on proposal 2 regarding the 138 households. Point was that it may be more or less households the ultimately need the assistance and for varying amounts of money, but as a proposal to City Council it would need specific numbers. Also clarified the reasoning behind \$72,000 a year and the four-year timeframe.
- Comment made about exploring tax credits and how to leverage those as opposed to offering rent assistance or vouchers.
- Comment made about suggesting the City build more housing they own to better regulate the price of rents, i.e., more public low-income housing.
- Fourth proposal was presented in a more refined form:
 - If the tenant has had to access financial assistance to pay rent/utilities/fees twice in the last year, then the landlord wants to raise their rent within 12 months of provision of assistance, then landlord must provide reasons and substantiating documentation for the rent raise or agree to participate in mediation with resolutions or another group that provides no-cost mediation you. If the landlord does neither, then that triggers relocation assistance requirements, and not necessarily with the full range of exemptions or exceptions.
- Points of the fourth proposal were clarified regarding expected potential outcomes of mediation and the reasoning behind holding mediation the second time assistance is sought and not the first. Also comment

made on how something like this may disincentive a housing provider from renting to someone they may see as potentially needing assistance.

- More discussion on possibly crafting a recommendation focusing on public housing.

Public Testimony

Justin Barrieault (PHB)

2:11:04 – 2:40:58

- One member of the public testified about the Portland rental market from the viewpoint of property management and explained how regulatory restrictions proposed by the committee could have a damaging effect on housing providers and those in need of need of housing services.
- Written testimonies from the 2023 RSC Listening Session were read aloud.

Continued Discussion & Wrap-Up

Laura Golino de Lovato (RSC)

2:40:58 – 2:55:18

- Discussion included making proposals/recommendations to the state legislature, exploring recommendations geared toward public housing and the risks involved, and about making sure housing needs are met over the next 20 years.
- Discussed timeline of having the executive committee narrowing topics down for recommendations, then polling and prioritizing during the next RSC committee in November, with a goal of turning those into formal recommendations for City Council to be voted on during the January RSC meeting.

Materials for all meetings will be posted on the Housing Bureau’s website:

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/phb/RSC>

Upcoming Public Meetings: RSC Executive Committee Meeting, Wednesday, October 25th, 2:00pm – 3:00pm, virtual (Zoom)