



City of Portland
Remote Rental Housing Advisory Committee Meeting
Co-Chairs: Meredith Cook, Tenant Representative, Regan Sweeney,
Landlord Legal Representative
October 26, 2020 5:30 - 7:30 pm
Remote Via Zoom

ZOOM MEETING INSTRUCTIONS:

The Rental Housing Advisory Committee will hold a remote meeting on Monday, October 26, 2020 at 5:30 pm. This meeting will take place remotely using Zoom.

Virtual meetings are allowed using emergency legislation approved by LD 2167; 1 M.R.S. §403-A, that authorizes cities and towns to conduct meetings online.

Allow your computer to install the free Zoom app to get the best meeting experience. If you are not able to attend live, a recording will be uploaded to portlandmaine.gov/livestream the next day.

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85419008082?pwd=K0hGS29vRFhPbHdDT2ZZMDhDT0owUT09>

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For public comment, you will need to use the “raise your hand” feature. To raise your hand via the telephone, please hit *9. You will be unmuted by the host when it is time for public comment.

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Webinar ID: 854 1900 8082

1. Review and Approval of the Minutes of the September 28, 2020 meeting.
 - a. Minutes of the September 28, 2020 meeting.
2. Follow Up Discussion of October 14 Housing Committee meeting.
3. Discussion and potential modification of RHAC procedure and rules.
4. Discussion of RHAC's workplan and scheduling of future meetings. (Nov. and Dec. meetings currently fall on holiday weeks.)
5. Public Comment
 - a. *NOTE: The Rental Housing Advisory Committee is not a grievance committee or complaint forum for landlord-tenant issues or dispute resolution. The duties of the Committee are (1) To Provide the Housing Committee with recommendations or proposals for improvements, modifications, or changes regarding landlord and tenant policy issues; and (2) Identify educational opportunities, seminars, and materials that would be useful to landlords and tenants.*
6. Other Business.
7. Adjournment

Rental Housing Advisory Committee

Minutes of Remote Meeting held on September 28, 2020

Committee attendance: Aaron Berger, Meredith Cook, Nora Graves, Wendy Harmon, Travis Heynen, Katherine McGovern, Regan Sweeney, Crow Norlander and Amy Carole

Staff attendance: Mary Davis and Victoria Volent

Motion by Amy Carole to move for adoption of the minutes from July 27, 2020. Motion was seconded by Travis Heynen and minutes were approved 9-0.

Item 1: Discussion of City Council's drafting and passage of City ordinance regarding limit on rental housing application fees.

Meredith Cook introduce this item. She noted that during the meeting of the City Council, the Housing Committee, led by Councilor Duson, introduced an amended version of the RHAC recommendation including a limit on rental application fees, which was passed. Tonight's meeting is an opportunity for the RHAC to discuss how the process went and to lay the foundation for later conversations for work plan, and procedures and practices.

Members of the Committee discussed their confusion and disappointment with the process and transitioned into a discussion regarding the RHAC's advisory role and responsibilities.

Item 2: Discussion and potential modification of RHAC procedures and rules.

Meredith Cook introduced this item. The RHAC is a year old and has accomplished a major item with a lot of snags along the way. This is a good opportunity to reflect and propose changes if need be.

Nora Graves- The RHAC can make some changes and tweak the process. The Housing Committee leadership will change with the election. The two new members may want to proceed in a different direction with a different agenda, - which we need to keep in mind.

Travis Heynen- It would be smart for the RHAC to think about how we bring items to the Housing Committee to get closer to consensus. We may never arrive at one hundred percent agreement but there is a way to get to more of a consensus that is more of a collaboration that the majority of the group feels good about. I am proposing more of a consensus model to bring items forward that represent true collaboration and not one side.

Aaron Berger- Not sure if this Board can move forward with unanimous votes. Seating of the Board sets up confrontation, but compromise should be made. Requiring something other than simple majority may not be feasible.

Crow Norlander- No matter how much of a compromise the RHAC comes to, still expect other Committees or the Council to introduce change. We should embrace our confrontational bent and use these conversations as a way to make our case and do our best to advocate for the people we represent. It is not reasonable of us to expect to have a unified front.

Aaron Berger- Committees and City Councilors have access to staff time that the RHAC is not granted. We should be more reciprocal with the Housing Committee, especially as leadership changes.

Meredith Cook indicated that this conversation might be better served at the next meeting of the RHAC because the Housing Committee has requested the RHAC attend their October meeting. Maybe it would be better to learn what the Housing Committee wants from us.

Mary Davis agrees with Meredith's suggestion. The RHAC will be attending the October meeting of the Housing Committee at which time they may receive direction from the Housing Committee. Additionally, staff, with the assistance of Corporation Counsel, could craft process and procedures about how to get policy recommendation passed. And put that into a more structured form so everyone understands what will happen. Such as if the Housing Committee has any thoughts for changes, then that would go back to the RHAC to weigh in on those changes. Mary can discuss this with Corporation Counsel.

Regan- Supports Mary's suggestion and Aaron's suggestion. He would like to go into the Housing Committee meeting with some suggestions on how the process might work better from the standpoint of the RHAC and learn what the Housing Committee expectations are of the RHAC.

Item 3: Discussion of Housing Committee's request for presentation at October 14 meeting.

Mary Davis- The meeting with the Housing Committee on October 14 is an opportunity to have a dialogue between the Housing Committee and the RHAC. The Housing Committee envisions contact and communication between the two groups on a regular basis. The Housing Committee likes to have memo placed in their committee packet, but the RHAC can provide a verbal update without a memo. Mary can contact Jill Duson for her direction. Mary also explained staff's role with the RHAC; that with the level of expertise coming from the RHAC, some of the work staff would prepare for a committee can be done by members of the RHAC. Mary is happy to have an open discussion about her role and the role of her office and what kind of work could be done for the RHAC as far as putting together information. Staff, however, does not want to write memos that should be in the voice of the RHAC. Mary welcomes recommendations and criticisms about how she could further assist the Committee.

Aaron Berger- He would like to see the Housing Committee ask the RHAC to look into items on their behalf and tap into their expertise and contacts throughout the community. He would like to serve without necessarily providing just policy recommendations.

Mary Davis asked the Committee if they could provide one page of questions/concerns/discussion items for the Housing Committee that could be included in the Committee packet. Mary expressed her support that all nine members attend the Housing Committee meeting to be available to weigh in on the conversation. The RHAC will be the first item on the Housing Committee's October agenda.

Meredith Cook noted the main objective is to hammer out the relationship between the RHAC and the Housing Committee, and she supports Aaron's suggestion of having a work plan trajectory.

Amy Carole- While listening and taking in the conversation she sees the meeting with the Housing Committee as an opportunity to forge a relationship with the Housing Committee; meeting twice a year

does not forge a relationship. Could the RHAC have quarterly check-ins instead, or is that too much? She would like to continue the momentum and also supports bringing back suggestions from the community for the RHAC. She is looking for better guidance from the Housing Committee.

Regan Sweeney- Offered the plan of going into the Housing Committee meeting without an agenda and having an open-ended conversation and see what questions they have of us. Supports appearing regularly on the Housing Committee agenda- not necessary to present or bring policy but as a check-in and to forge a better relation.

Katie McGovern- The Housing Committee work plan and RHAC work plan do not dovetail as the Housing Committee spend a lot of time on approving affordable housing financing.

Mary Davis emailed the Housing Committee's work plan document for 2020 to the RHAC to provide an understanding of the business discussed by the Housing Committee and the recommendations for 2021. Mary suggested that the work plan could be a standard item to be included in the RHAC agenda. Also, she can work with the chair of the next Housing Committee to discuss their relationship with the RHAC and how each group can support and benefit from the other.

Item 4: Discussion of RHAC workplan and scheduling of future meetings. (Nov. and Dec. meetings would currently fall on holiday weeks.)

Mary Davis asked the Committee if they would be meeting in October.

Regan Sweeney- It may make sense to hold a meeting in October to discuss what happened at the Housing Committee meeting.

The Committee agreed to keep the October 26 meeting and meet in November or December on a date to be decided during the October meeting.

The Committee agreed to discuss procedures, rules and work plans during the October 26 meeting.

Item 5: Public Comment – Members of the public will be given an opportunity to address the Committee. Any person wishing to address the Committee shall give their name and address, and, if applicable, organization represented, and restrict comments to three (3) minutes.

Meredith Cook opened the meeting to public comment. Seeing no one, the public comment period was closed.

Item 6: Other Business.

Meredith Cook requested a motion to adjourn. Aaron Berger moved and Regan Sweeney seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 6:38.

Respectively submitted,

Victoria Volent