

**CITY OF SEQUIM
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
ONLINE MEETING
SEPTEMBER 21, 2021**

1. **CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & ROLL CALL:**
Commissioners: Butler, Carter, Coonts, Downer, Hall, Lowe & Mahalick.

Present: Jeff Carter, Kathy Downer, Dan Butler, Julianne Coonts, Vicki Lowe, Elizabeth Hall
Absent: None
Excused: Karen Mahalick

Commissioner Carter asked the commission if they wanted to have the pledge of allegiance on the agenda moving forward. The commission held a discussion about who would like to say the pledge, and it was determined that some commissioners wanted to do it, and the rest of the commissioners agreed to support this choice. Commissioner Downer will lead the pledge at future meetings and Commissioner Hall said she would be willing to lead if Commissioner Downer was absent.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES: September 7, 2021**

MOTION to approve Minutes as conditioned.; moved by Dan Butler seconded by Kathy Downer.

YES: Jeff Carter, Kathy Downer, Dan Butler, Julianne Coonts, Vicki Lowe, Elizabeth Hall

NO: None

ABSTAIN: None

The vote Passed.

3. **NEW BUSINESS**

4. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- a. **Transient Accommodations (10/6/20)**

Nothing to report.

- b. **Rules and Procedures (6/1/2021)**

Nothing to report.

5. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Tim gave a brief update on Barry's behalf. Some provisions in land division code that could be coming in the next few months. Lots of effort being put towards code scrub at the moment.

6. GOOD OF THE ORDER

a. Presentation on Homesharing

Commissioner Lowe introduced Rebekah Miller and Andra Smith who came to meet and speak with the Planning Commission about housing in our area. Commissioner Lowe started off by sharing an informal presentation with some statistics regarding housing in Sequim. Some highlights were that there are 183 persons/households who identify as experiencing homelessness. The number one demographic of homelessness in Sequim is senior women. 400+ homes are nearing foreclosure. There are very few rentals currently available and most apartment buildings have year long wait lists.

Andra and Rebekah spoke to what the Sequim Health and Housing Collaborative represents and is focusing on. There are five main service areas: homelessness/housing, substance use, behavioral health, physical health and food insecurity.

Commissioner Lowe shared some statistics that show the effectiveness of the Sequim Health and Housing Collaborative. 27 households have engaged formally into intensive case management programs. 52 households have been prevented from homelessness. 146 hotel emergency shelter nights have been provided to families/individuals who are unable to access traditional emergency shelter options. 964 other services have been provided to Sequim residents (car repair, clothing, work supplies, food/grocery, fees and more).

Commissioner Lowe talked about Homesharing and what it entails. This is a strategy to address housing instability with more formal, reliable and relationship-based solutions. The kind of partners that are needed for this include - home matching agencies, Washington Host Home and Home Sharing Coalition, Peninsula Housing Authority and the Olympic Area Agency on Aging.

Commissioner Butler asked for an explanation about how senior women are the highest demographic of homelessness. Rebekah Miller explained that in many cases these women come from vulnerable backgrounds that did not qualify for social security or Medicare and are now struggling to afford to shelter themselves.

Rebekah added that around 2 years ago that there were 170 students in Sequim self reporting homelessness.

Commissioner Coonts asked if there was anything in our code that didn't allow for homesharing and if there were any recommendations that the commission can make to the council about homesharing. Tim replied that homesharing (in cases with 6 or more unrelated individuals) falls under the category of a group home which can be limiting, but it is possible that we could make a conditional use to allow this. No real restrictive ordinances, but not any welcoming ordinances either.

Commissioner Downer asked about bed and breakfast taxes for vacation rentals and putting the taxes towards housing assistance. Travis informed the commission that taxes and financial avenues from rentals is more of an issue for our Finance department rather than DCD. Rebekah added that the booking agencies (Airbnb, VRBO, etc) collects taxes and that they send some to government channels. Rebekah also added that it would be nice to see governments de-incentivize these types of uses.

Commissioner Carter asked about the 400 potential evictions coming in the near future and was wondering on the timeline. Rebekah stated that a Port Angeles Council Member has some information regarding this that she encouraged everyone to reach out to for more info on this subject. Andra added the Clallam County EDC has been having discussions about housing to discuss the current climate of housing and all the recordings are available on the EDC's website.

b. Open Discussion

7. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION to adjourn; moved by Dan Butler seconded by Julianne Coonts.

YES: Jeff Carter, Kathy Downer, Dan Butler, Julianne Coonts, Vicki Lowe, Elizabeth Hall

NO: None

ABSTAIN: None

The vote Passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Travis Simmons

Travis Simmons
Commission Clerk

Jeff Carter

Jeff Carter
Commission Chair

Minutes approved at a regular Planning Commission meeting held on 10/5/21.