

King County Affordable Housing Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: May 5, 2025 | 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Location: Teams Meeting

Call to Order and Roll Call

Members	Member Present	Alternates Present
Affordable Housing Committee Chair King County Councilmember Claudia Balducci	Absent	
Affordable Housing Committee Vice Chair Alex Brennan, Futurewise	X	
Saghar Amini, Habitat for Humanity Seattle-King and Kittitas Counties	X	
King County Councilmember Jorge L. Barón	X	
Jane Broom, Microsoft Philanthropies	X	
Allison Butcher, Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties	X	
Kelly Coughlin, SnoValley Chamber of Commerce	X	
Kirkland Councilmember Amy Falcone on behalf of Sound Cities Association	X	
Kenmore Mayor Nigel Herbig on behalf of Sound Cities Association	X	
Thatcher Imboden, Sound Transit	Absent	
Sunaree Marshall, King County Department of Community and Human Services, on behalf of King County Executive Dow Constantine	X	
Renton Councilmember Ryan McIrvn on behalf of Sound Cities Association	X	
Seattle Councilmember Cathy Moore	Absent	
Carter Nelson, Washington Multi-Family Housing Association	Absent	
Bellevue Mayor Lynne Robinson on behalf of Sound Cities Association	X	
Robin Walls, King County Housing Authority	Absent	
Maiko Winkler-Chin, Seattle Office of Housing, on behalf of Mayor Bruce Harrell	X	
	X	City of Shoreline Councilmember Annette Ademasu on behalf of Sound Cities Association
	X	Maple Valley Deputy Mayor Dana Parnello on behalf of Sound Cities Association
	X	Jazmine Smith, Futurewise

	X	Issaquah Council President Lindsey Walsh on behalf of Sound Cities Association
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- Affordable Housing Committee (AHC or Committee) Vice Chair Alex Brennan welcomed Committee members and called the meeting to order.
- Vice Chair Brennan invited AHC Manager McCaela Daffern to call the roll.
- Vice Chair Brennan shared that Chair Balducci was unable to attend the AHC meeting and as such, he would facilitate the meeting.
- Vice Chair Brennan reviewed the AHC meeting agenda, which included:
 - a briefing on the Washington State legislative session; and
 - a discussion on the AHC charter amendments.
- Vice Chair Brennan welcomed King County Councilmember Jorge L. Barón to the AHC.

Action Item: Adopt April 3, 2025 AHC Meeting Minutes

- Issaquah Council President Lindsey Walsh moved to approve the April 3, 2025 AHC meeting minutes.
- Microsoft Philanthropies Jane Broom seconded the motion.
- The AHC unanimously passed the motion to approve the April 3, 2025 AHC meeting minutes.
 - Maiko Winkler-Chin with the City of Seattle arrived late to the AHC meeting and did not vote on the approval of the meeting minutes.

Discussion: 2025 Washington State Legislative Session

- Vice Chair Brennan expressed excitement for how the bills from the Washington State legislative session results would impact the Committee's charter amendments, particularly related to the State's new accountability mechanisms.
- Vice Chair Brennan invited King County Senior Planner Isaac Horwith to share some personal news and brief the Committee on the legislative session.
 - Isaac shared he accepted a job with the City of Seattle and that he would not be present for future AHC meetings.
 - Vice Chair Brennan thanked Isaac for his hard work.
- Maiko arrived at the AHC meeting.
- Isaac briefed the AHC on the Washington State legislative session.
 - He recalled the four legislative priorities the Committee approved in December of 2024, which were to:
 1. provide stability for affordable housing, housing providers, and residents;
 2. preserve and increase the supply of affordable housing;
 3. help jurisdictions implement housing policies in comprehensive plans, and state housing laws; and
 4. strengthen renter rights and protections.
 - He presented on legislative actions related to the AHC's first goal, noting that, while there were budget cuts, the state legislature maintained or increased funding for affordable housing and homelessness programs. He shared there was a notable reduction in funding for addressing encampments along right of ways. Finally, he highlighted House Bill (HB) 1858 that will raise several million dollars for King County annually by eliminating an exemption for the document recording fee.

- He then presented on the legislative session's outputs related to the AHC's second goal, noting the increase in funding for the Housing Trust Fund and the Children's Health Insurance Program. He highlighted Senate Bill (SB) 5686, which increases funding for foreclosure mitigation. He shared that several bills for funding affordable housing did not pass. He noted AHC members could review the bills that did not pass and consider them for the AHC's 2026 legislative priorities.
- He then presented on the legislative session's outputs related to the AHC's third goal, noting that many bills passed that require local jurisdictions to take action, but did not come with funding for local jurisdictions to do so. He shared Commerce received \$3.8 million in funding to provide technical assistance to implement new land use and planning bills. He highlighted SB 5148 and SB 5587, noting he would share more details on them later in the presentation. He shared that HB 1195/SB 5497, a bill concerning compliance with siting, development permit processes and standards, and requirements for permanent supportive housing, transitional housing, indoor emergency housing and shelters, did not pass.
- He then presented on the legislative sessions outputs related to the AHC's fourth goal. He shared that the legislature authorized increased findings for Housing and Essential Needs and the Office of Civil Legal Aid. He shared the most substantive renter protection bill that passed was HB 1217, which caps annual rent increases.
- He highlighted SB 5148, also known as the Housing Accountability Act. He shared the bill allowed the Department of Commerce to review and certify each year up to ten jurisdictions' comprehensive plans that had not already been passed. He shared the bill additionally would allow the Department of Commerce to require noncompliant jurisdictions to approve permits for affordable or moderate-income housing. He shared the bill would also prioritize jurisdictions for public works funding if their comprehensive plans are in compliance. He shared Commerce staff will start working on implementation of the bill in coming months and that AHC staff meet monthly with Department of Commerce and Puget Sound Regional Council staff.
- He highlighted SBI 5587, which increased funding for the Washington Center for Real Estate Research to report biannually on housing metrics. He shared Commerce had met with the Center of Real Estate Research's staff to ensure the data they collect and report align with each other.
- Vice Chair Brennan thanked Isaac for his briefing and opened the floor for discussion.
 - Bellevue Mayor Lynne Robinson expressed concerns about lowering parking minimums. She shared that as a home care provider for senior adult family homes, she was concerned about providing parking to facilities where residents weren't able to take transit. Mayor Robinson wondered if the AHC could investigate parking alternatives such as municipal parking possibilities and increased investment in transit. Mayor Robinson shared her understanding was that affordable housing developers did not have to pay document recording fees. She wondered if closing the document recording fee exemption meant affordable housing developers needed to pay those fees.
 - Isaac shared he was unsure, but could get back to her on that. He shared the bill closed exemptions for transfers of deeds of trust. He shared affordable housing providers may transfer deeds of trust and as a result pay the document recording fees. He reiterated he was not certain.
 - Mayor Robinson applauded SB 5587 and underscored the AHC's efforts to maintain the dashboard that shows how cities are doing against county progress.

- Vice Chair Brennan noted it was unclear if the planning bills included grant programs attached to them. He shared he was aware that the transit oriented development bill had grants attached to it, which would impact Vancouver, Spokane, and Bellingham. He noted while the allocation of grants was small for the upcoming biennium, the biennium afterwards could see impacts to central Puget Sound.
- Vice Chair Brennan acknowledged the loss of State Senator Bill Ramos and former Speaker Frank Chopp.

Discussion: Revised Draft Committee Charter Amendments and Preliminary Draft Strategic Direction Recommendation Statement

- Vice Chair Brennan recalled the substantive AHC discussion in May and shared AHC staff revised the charter to reflect AHC input. He shared AHC staff prepared a preliminary draft strategic direction recommendation statement to the Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC). Vice Chair Brennan shared that Chair Balducci reviewed and supported the charter amendments.
- Vice Chair Brennan invited AHC Manager McCaela Daffern to brief the Committee on the revised draft AHC charter amendments and draft recommendations statement.
- McCaela reminded the AHC of the charter amendment timeline, the AHC's history of charter amendment discussions, and the intent of the current meeting, which was to provide input on revisions to the charter amendments and provide initial input on a draft recommendation statement.
- McCaela shared that the meeting packet included the preliminary draft recommendation statement, which detailed recommendations to the GMPC, summarized key findings from the AHC's evaluation of its effectiveness, and included a reference to the exhibit comprised of the recommended charter amendments.
 - She noted several key excerpts from the recommendation statement regarding the AHC's structure and purpose, as well as Committee activities to achieve its new purpose and then briefed the AHC on the revised draft charter amendments, which were informed by AHC, King County Executive staff, Housing Interjurisdictional Team member, and AHC leadership input during the month of April. Based on this feedback, AHC staff had revised the charter amendments to:
 1. empower the AHC to advocate for revenue and financing strategies and monitor and annually report affordable housing data on a public-facing dashboard;
 2. clarify that subject matter experts are organizational appointments;
 3. require GMPC approval of the AHC Chair and Vice Chair and for the Chair or their designee to serve on and represent the GMPC;
 4. indicate the Committee should meet at least quarterly; and
 5. replace all references to "AHC" with "Committee" for clarity.
- McCaela shared AHC staff sought direction from AHC members on changes to the preliminary draft recommendation statement or any further charter amendments.
- Vice Chair Brennan shared that the goal of the AHC meeting was to ensure the new changes to the charter amendments reflect the consensus of the Committee. He reminded the Committee that a final vote would not be taken yet, so there was still an opportunity to provide further feedback. He shared the Committee would vote on a final version of the recommendation statement at the next AHC meeting in June.

- Mayor Robinson shared she would like to see in the introduction of the recommendation statement wording changed to say, “. . . recommend the GMPC adopt in collaboration with the AHC, the AHC’s proposed recommendations or amendments.”
- Saghar Amini agreed with Mayor Robinson’s suggestion. She added that Councilmember Balducci mentioned at the last AHC meeting a similar approach that would allow the AHC to have more authority. She couldn’t recall the exact proposal. She asked if that was something the AHC wanted to revisit and/or incorporate into changes along the lines of what Mayor Robinson suggested.
 - McCaella asked Saghar to clarify the conversation she’d like the Committee to have.
 - Saghar clarified that she wanted to know what it would take and what the Committee would need to do to have more independence, which she believed was the right word. She noted that the AHC is a committee under GMPC, so she wondered if it would be possible for the AHC to start a conversation on independence.
 1. Mayor Robinson noted that the word Saghar was searching for was “initiative” and not “independence.”
 - McCaella answered that as a committee of the GMPC, if the AHC wanted more initiative or independence, it would need to not be a committee of the GMPC.
 - Mayor Robinson shared that “initiative” meant the AHC makes recommendations, the GMPC reviews the recommendations, the GMPC gives the AHC feedback, and then the AHC and GMPC work together. This is in contrast to the GMPC telling the AHC what to do and the GMPC approving what the AHC does.
- Vice Chair Brennan shared it felt like there was a deeper philosophical discussion last month about the direction of the Committee on how much it wanted to engage in the revenue space. He doubted the Committee needed to significantly participate in maintaining the existing dashboard. He shared he was curious to hear a range of perspectives from members on what the Committee should be in the future and how active it should be over the next few years. He shared that how active the Committee was would be related to Saghar’s question about the relationship between the Committee and the GMPC about what the AHC is and what the AHC is taking on. He asked the AHC what they felt like were the biggest benefits or opportunities the AHC would see over the next few years now that plan review was complete and the mid-cycle check in was not for another few years.
 - Kenmore Mayor Nigel Herbig shared that the greatest obstacle to affordable housing as a region was the level of investment necessary to build the housing needed. He observed many people did not want to discuss the cost of building affordable housing because the cost was so high. He shared that the AHC could identify the costs of building the affordable housing the region needed and propose recommendations to achieve those levels of funding. He stated that to solve the problem, the AHC needed to have those tough conversations about cost and revenue. He expressed he wanted to see the AHC most active in the space of examining the costs and the revenue that the region needs to generate or procure to meet the goals from HB 1110.
 - Vice Chair Brennan asked Mayor Herbig if the language in the proposal gave the AHC space to have the conversations about affordable housing costs.
 - Mayor Herbig shared he thought the charter’s statement of “revenue and financing strategies to help meet affordable housing needs in King County” was broad enough to meet the goal of spelling out what the financial needs are.
 - Maple Valley Deputy Mayor Dana Parnello shared there were two ways to approach Mayor Herbig’s comments::

1. find new sources of revenue to address the existing costs of affordable housing; or
 2. examine the actual costs and identify opportunities the AHC had to temporarily or even permanently reduce the costs of building affordable housing. He recommended lobbying at the state level for other tax incentives or investigating local development fees to incite developers to build affordable housing rather than market rate housing. Councilmember Parnello emphasized creating incentives to build affordable housing in a way that the front-loaded costs are either deferred, eliminated, or reduced.
- Maiko shared that, whether or not jurisdictions cut down on the cost of affordable housing, it was important to clearly articulate how much building affordable housing will cost. She shared she'd love to see a cost reduction in building affordable housing, but it would still cost money to build affordable housing. She suggested adding to the AHC work plan a project to articulate the cost of building affordable housing regionally. She noted it may be cheaper to build in Bellevue than in Seattle due to varied zoning, available land, or tax strategies. Maiko also shared that, even when jurisdictions have the right zoning, jurisdictions didn't see the affordable housing development they needed. She also shared jurisdictions didn't clearly define their affordable housing needs. She recalled that for years, 30 percent of area median income (AMI) encompassed seniors with fixed income. She noted that today, 30 percent of AMI encompassed individuals who are homeless. She shared it was important to clarify who 30 percent of AMI serves, what it is, and how to achieve service to households at 30 percent of AMI as well.
 - Jane shared that reducing costs was not limited to the AHC's state legislative agenda and should be expanded to include revenue, cost saving, and financing strategies. She shared many reports say the problem is too big and would require both policy change and cost reduction strategies to solve the affordable housing issues the County is facing.
 - Vice Chair Brennan summarized that he heard both identifying revenue needs and strategies to reduce costs could be encompassed by the AHC charter language stating "recommends action to further the goals and policies of the CPP Housing Chapter, including but not limited to State legislative agenda items and revenue and financing strategies to help meet affordable housing needs in King County" and the language stating "identifies significant shortfalls in planning for and accommodating..." Vice Chair Brennan shared his personal stance was that the language didn't necessarily need to be amended, but that maybe the AHC should have a meeting in 2025 where members dig into issues of revenue and cost reduction where staff could provide members with the information they needed. He suggested AHC staff provide members with key categories that drive up costs. He noted such a meeting could allow AHC members to identify a few key areas where they could have some influence and reduce those costs. Vice Chair Brennan recalled that last month, the AHC discussed having a strategic planning conversation in addition to adopting the charter amendments. He shared a discussion on costs would be a potential way to focus future efforts.
 - McCaela shared that, with recent AHC staffing reductions, there would be limited staff capacity to add a new work item on costs and revenue until they are fully staffed, likely near the end of the year. She shared she could work with Chair Balducci and Vice Chair Brennan to try and adjust the work plan accordingly.

- Vice Chair Brennan suggested some conversation didn't need lots of staff preparation. For a financial analysis, yes, but other conversations could draw from the expertise of Committee members. Vice Chair Brennan suggested discussing that in planning meetings with the Chair.
- Vice Chair Brennan summarized that Committee members were generally comfortable with the charter amendments and the language of the transmittal document with a few suggested changes.
- Kirkland Councilmember Amy Falcone shared that the Committee heard both consensus and individual input from Sound Cities Association members.
- Vice Chair Brennan asked if McCaela had everything she needed. McCaela confirmed she had everything she needed.
- Vice Chair Brennan reminded the Committee that they would make a final decision on the charter amendments on June 5.

Wrap Up and Adjourn

- Vice Chair Brennan reminded the Committee the next AHC meeting was scheduled for June 5 from 2:00 P.M. to 3:30 P.M. He shared the AHC will reflect on the Housing-focused Draft Comprehensive Plan Review Program and finalize charter amendment recommendations.
- Vice Chair Brennan adjourned the meeting.