

# King County Affordable Housing Committee Meeting Minutes

June 5, 2025 | 2:00 P.M. – 3:30 P.M.

Location: Teams Meeting

## Call to Order and Roll Call

Members	Member Present	Alternates Present
Saghar Amini, Habitat for Humanity Seattle-King and Kittitas Counties	X	
Affordable Housing Committee Chair King County Councilmember Claudia Balducci	X	
King County Councilmember Jorge Barón	X	
Affordable Housing Committee Vice Chair Alex Brennan, Futurewise	X	
Jane Broom, Microsoft Philanthropies	Absent	
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	Absent	Deputy Mayor Dana Parnello, Maple Valley, Sound Cities Association
Thatcher Imboden, Sound Transit	X	
Sunaree Marshall, King County Department of Community and Human Services, on behalf of King County Executive Dow Constantine	Absent	Rick Malley-Crawford, (on behalf of Executive Shannon Braddock) King County DCHS
Renton Councilmember Ryan McIrvine on behalf of Sound Cities Association	Absent	City of Shoreline Councilmember Annette Ademasu on behalf of Sound Cities Association
Seattle Councilmember Cathy Moore	Absent	
Carter Nelson, Washington Multi-Family Housing Association	X	
Bellevue Mayor Lynne Robinson on behalf of Sound Cities Association	Absent	Issaquah Council President Walsh on behalf of Sound Cities Association
Robin Walls, King County Housing Authority	Absent	Jessica de Barros, King County Housing Authority
Maiko Winkler-Chin, Seattle Office of Housing, on behalf of Mayor Bruce Harrell	Absent	
	X	Councilmember Christina Rustik, Sound Cities Association
	Absent	Councilmember Mark Solomon, Seattle City Council

- Affordable Housing Committee (AHC) Chair King County Councilmember Claudia Balducci welcomed AHC members and called the meeting to order.
- Chair Balducci invited AHC Manager McCaela Daffern to call the roll.
- Chair Balducci reviewed the meeting agenda. She shared the AHC will consider and potentially approve the AHC strategic recommendation to the Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) and reflect on the Housing-focused Draft Comprehensive Plan Review Program.

#### **Action Item: Adopt May 1, 2025 Meeting Minutes**

- Kirkland Councilmember Amy Falcone moved to approve the May 1, 2025 meeting minutes.
- King County Councilmember Jorge Barón seconded the motion.
- Saghar moved to amend the meeting minutes, proposing a change that would read:
  - *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.*
    - *McCaela 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.*
      - *Mayor Robinson noted that the word Saghar was searching for was "initiative" and not "independence."*
- Councilmember Falcone seconded the motion to amend the meeting minutes.
- The AHC unanimously passed the motion to amend the AHC meeting minutes.
- The AHC unanimously passed the motion to approve the May 1, 2025 AHC meeting minutes
- Washington Multifamily Housing Association Carter Nelson, Futurewise and AHC Vice Chair Alex Brennan, Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties Allison Butcher, Sound Transit Thatcher Imboden arrived late and did not vote.

#### **Action Item: Approve AHC Recommended Strategic Direction**

- Chair Balducci reminded the AHC that the current charter required the AHC to review the charter and discuss amendments to it. She recalled the substantive participation in the AHC charter amendment workshop from 2023 and the many AHC meetings on the committee's effectiveness.
- Chair Balducci thanked Vice Chair Brennan for facilitating the May 1, 2025 AHC meeting while she was away and noted the AHC was very close to approving a revised recommendation statement.
- Chair Balducci invited McCaela to brief the AHC on the AHC's recommended strategic direction.
- McCaela briefed the AHC on the committee's two year effort to develop a recommended strategic direction. She reminded the AHC that if the AHC approved the recommended strategic direction, the committee would then submit their recommendation to the Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) for consideration at their September 17, 2025

meeting and possibly approve the recommendation in November. McCaela summarized AHC feedback on the charter amendments from the last AHC meeting, noting the AHC was supportive of the draft charter amendments, so the draft under consideration remained unchanged. She shared the AHC suggested changes to the recommendation statement to the GMPC. She shared the revised language in the GMPC recommendation statement which had been amended to read “Based on this evaluation, the Committee recommends the GMPC adopt amendments to the Affordable Housing Committee charter, as proposed by the Committee.” She noted the AHC did not reach consensus on the AHC’s authority in relationship to its role as a GMPC committee, the role the AHC should play in advancing affordable housing revenue solutions, and if the statement and charter amendments provided enough flexibility for the AHC to pursue such revenue strategies.

- Carter, Alex, Allison arrived during the briefing.
- Chair Balducci asked McCaela to briefly summarize what the charter said about the AHC and its authority.
  - McCaela shared that the AHC would remain a committee of the GMPC and as such, the AHC’s authority would be to make recommendations on matters related to the King County Countywide Planning Policies to the State or other entities, including achieving housing needs. She shared that the AHC retained its authority to explore topics intersectional with land use planning.
- Chair Balducci clarified the charter amendment process did not take two full years of work, noting the charter amendment work was tabled to prioritize comprehensive plan review. Chair Balducci reiterated that if she had sole authority, she would do something different from what the AHC had distilled. She shared her thoughts that the AHC had limited but valuable authority and ability to make change. She recalled the AHC was effective in shaping land use policies and decisions because the AHC was structured under the GMPC. She recalled the AHC’s original hope to develop a broader set of recommendations that the AHC would be able to implement that came from the Regional Affordable Housing Task Force in 2028, including funding and potentially even having some development authority. She noted the recommended strategic direction accurately reflects the interests of the entire scope of this broadly representative committee and was prepared to support it. She asked McCaela to confirm that, following AHC approval, the recommendation statement would be sent to the GMPC.
  - McCaela confirmed AHC staff would send the recommendation statement to the GMPC as an exhibit in a staff report.
- Saghar asked if more time would be helpful for the AHC in further developing its recommended strategic direction, or if the strategic direction work was time sensitive.
  - Chair Balducci responded that she didn’t believe more discussion would lead to a dramatically different result. She also shared that the AHC had participated in the strategic direction process for 18 months and returned to similar places. She shared the work was not time sensitive.
- Saghar moved to approve the AHCs recommendations to the GMPC to improve AHC effectiveness.
- Councilmember Falcone seconded the motion.
- The AHC passed the AHC’s recommendations to the GMPC.
- Chair Balducci noted there wasn’t a lot of enthusiasm. She applauded the AHC for good thinking, identifying gaps in advocacy, and organizing infrastructure around housing affordability. She noted there were a lot of other partnerships, formal groups, and informal

groups working in the affordable housing space. She shared her contentment with the AHC's decision to move forward. She noted her desire to try something different would require a lot of work and possibly involve duplication of efforts happening elsewhere. She encouraged members interested in advocacy for affordable housing funding increases to get more involved. Chair Balducci thanked AHC staff for their hard work.

### **Discussion: Housing-focused Draft Comprehensive Plan Review Program Evaluation**

- Chair Balducci shared that the year and a half of comprehensive plan review had been an exercise in local control. She noted the program would need continuous improvement as it was the first time the AHC had done it. She reflected that previous comprehensive planning efforts planned for adequate housing and jobs, but didn't consider housing costs. She shared the AHC will evaluate the plan review program and pass along learnings to those who will implement the program going forward.
- Chair Balducci invited McCaela to brief the AHC on staff evaluation of the Housing-focused Draft Comprehensive Plan Review Program Evaluation.
- Thatcher arrived late to the meeting.
- McCaela shared that the AHC adopted a work plan item for 2025 to identify programmatic challenges, successes, and lessons learned. She shared the staff evaluation drew from King County staff and Housing Interjurisdictional Team insights and then briefed the AHC on key findings from the evaluation. Following her briefing, she noted that the AHC discussion would be documented in the meeting minutes.
- Chair Balducci shared that the vast majority of jurisdictions tried really hard to create plans and programs that would meet the spirit and letter of the Countywide Planning Policies and House Bill 1220. She recalled some jurisdictions lost their only planner, but still did their best. She noted that the AHC made similar recommendations repeatedly and that jurisdictions within King County needed to do a better job of undoing the history of racism in land use codes. She shared that if jurisdictions made changes to their land use codes as a result of AHC recommendations, that could be considered a meaningful difference. She strove to soften the tone of the draft letters by including a praise section; it was important the AHC acknowledge the efforts of jurisdictions. She shared her advice for the next review cycle would be that the responses are not going to be perfect. She expressed dissatisfaction that jurisdictions which were close to fully aligned were not considered passing. She noted that it felt as if the AHC nitpicked jurisdictions that came close to 100 percent alignment. She emphasized that when the AHC does performs the mid-cycle check in, the County needs to hire enough staff. She recalled that the AHC tried to acquire a grant to help with technical assistance for smaller cities at the beginning of the process but were denied. She shared the smaller cities in King County didn't have the resources to do a big, complicated planning exercise such as the plan review program. She reiterated that smaller jurisdictions would've benefited significantly from some technical assistance as they had less resources. She shared that as a representative of both Bellevue and the second smallest city in the County, that small jurisdictions struggled with the plan review program. Chair Balducci noted that while some people pointed out the lack of a stick, there was in fact a stick. She pointed out the AHC letter could be used as evidence in a lawsuit or a growth management board hearing. Chair Balducci cautioned that while the efforts of local jurisdictions will create capacity to create affordable housing, land zoned for affordable housing may not necessarily see affordable housing built in it. She shared that if the AHC wanted to see affordability at

every level, it would need more resources. She suggested that the AHC turn its efforts to look at policies and joint ways to remove barriers to affordable housing creation.

- Councilmember Falcone shared that Sound Cities Association members individually reached out to city staff to ask what their experiences were like. She reported back that city staff unanimously praised the plan review process and its value. She shared Kirkland staff felt County staff did exemplary work giving early feedback on their plan. She shared participating in the program created a sense of vulnerability and also accountability through the public nature of it. She acknowledged the process provided soft power, political cover, and political will.
- Vice Chair Brennan emphasized the unprecedented moment. He noted the scale of need around housing compared to the scale of underproduction of all housing. He emphasized that the scale of homelessness has resulted in people with housing insecurity never before seen. He noted that House Bill 1220's requirements, as well as the AHC's plan review process, both tried to create accountability while also retaining local control. He also noted that many state laws regarding planning were passed over the last couple of years. He noticed that the laws invited one to ask, "Do we need more state legislation, do we need to wait for what we've already don't to take effect, and what are the challenges cities and counties are experiencing trying to implement these things?" He noted the plan review process allowed the AHC to identify what is going well and areas that are still challenges. He thought the AHC learned a lot which would inform how the state legislature and affordable housing advocates react.
- Chair Balducci queried if the AHC needed to propose more regulation or allow the pieces in motion to play out. She recalled McCaela's slide on regulatory fatigue and noted that if further regulations are introduced, jurisdiction staff may not be able to keep up and as such, not participate. She shared she was favorable toward accountability measures. Chair Balducci asked McCaela when the mid-cycle check in process began.
  - McCaela shared it occurred five years after plan adoption in 2029 and the AHC could start developing the procedures and protocols in 2026. She elaborated such procedures would need Countywide Planning Policy amendments to ensure they worked effectively, noting such amendments would likely occur in 2027. She detailed that the AHC would likely start collecting information and preparing analysis in 2028 for a formal decision making exercise in 2029.
- Chair Balducci suggested an AHC team happy hour to celebrate accomplishing the AHC plan review program.
- Rick Malley Crawford uplifted the collaborative outlook AHC staff took when approaching each jurisdiction instead of a punitive approach. He echoed Chair Balducci's request for additional staff capacity and noted the plan review program required more capacity than originally anticipated. He noted that King County was discussing 2027 budgets at the moment and 2029 budget conversations were not far off.

## **Announcements and Adjourn**

- The Chair reminded the AHC that the next meeting will be on September 4, 2025 from 2-3:30 P.M. She noted the AHC will review and possibly approve any comprehensive plan review comment letters for plans submitted in June, discuss housing data trends to inform future AHC work, and provide initial input on draft 2026 state legislative priorities.
- The Chair adjourned the June 5, 2025 AHC meeting.