

WWUAS Local Lobby Day 2019

Agenda Items ***COB Draft***

Housing Affordability and Livability

ASWWU recognizes the troubling barriers students and community members face in obtaining affordable, safe, and quality housing in Bellingham. The housing crisis in Bellingham is complex, but as population in Bellingham continues to grow we must explore sustainable and comprehensive solutions. We face shared challenges that threatens this basic human right. Rising home and rent costs are outpacing wages. The lack of affordable and quality housing options disproportionately affects marginalized communities: people of color, low-income families, first generation students, and more. These groups bear the worst effects of our housing policy; segregation and lack of access to resources like quality education and transportation. We need to improve our housing policy to create a livable, affordable city that benefits all citizens.

ASWWU Urges Policymakers to:

- ~~Require information on tenant rights, responsibilities, support organizations, and other how-to resources be posted in rental units, Model: Tacoma Housing Code.~~
- Repeal Bellingham Municipal Code 20.08.020 language concerning the definitions of “Family”: “or not more than three unrelated persons,” *Yoder et al., v. City of Bowling Green, OH et al.*, U.S District Court, Case No. 3:17 CV 2321
- Pass an ordinance to require payment plans for move-in fees and last month’s rent if requested by applicant and if total move-in fees are in excess of 25% of first month’s rent. (Incentivizes landlord to reduce fees). Model: Seattle Ordinance No. 125222, Tacoma Rental Housing Code.
- Pass an ordinance to limit security deposits and non-refundable move-in fees to not exceed the amount of the first full month’s rent for the tenant dwelling unit, acceptable fees including security deposits, pet deposits, last month’s rent, all other non-refundable move-in fees Prohibited. Model: Seattle Ordinance No. 125222, upheld in *Rental Housing Association v. City of Seattle, Superior Court of the State of Washington in and for the County of King*, No. 17-2-13662-0
- Allow infill toolkit homes in all single-detached (single-family) zoned areas and pursue inclusionary zoning practices in the cities “Urban Villages”, example Redmond, WA PZC 21.20 “Affordable Housing”, Minneapolis 2040 Comp. Plan.
 1. Return to traditional forms of affordable & unsubsidized housing that typically use less square footage, cost less to build, use less energy, and are more affordable, on average, than single detached homes. Allow these Missing Middle housing choices, provided by the Infill Toolkit, in all single-detached (single-family) zoned areas. Forms include: Cottages; Carriage houses over

existing garages; Townhouses; Duplexes; Triplexes; Small or smaller lot detached, single-family houses; Detached accessory dwelling units; Courtyard housing: shared or garden.// All of these options should be carried out in a manner that enhances rather than detracts from the neighborhood aesthetic (“Smart Infill”). That includes proper scale, complete streets incorporating trees and safe walking and bicycling options, transit access, parks, services (e.g. daycare, libraries, senior centers) that will make neighborhoods both more attractive and functional.

Equity and Inclusiveness

ASWWU recognizes the injustices many people of marginalized identities face in Bellingham. Bellingham has a long history of white supremacy, from the colonial violence against Coast Salish peoples, to the white mobs and leaders that drove out Chinese families in 1885, Sikhs in 1907, and Japanese in 1942. The present-day racism directed against people of color and city’s denial of racial profiling shows that this is not an issue of the past. We also have a serious issue with too many people in our community experiencing poverty. We support the city’s strategic commitments to ‘Equity and Social Justice’ and encourage the city to innovate robust policy and programs to back them up.

ASWWU Urges Policymakers to:

- **Support an Ordinance outlawing Restrictive Covenants that “run with the land” declaring such negative-use restrictions as against public policy, void and unenforceable with financial penalties and injunctive relief. Model: Madison, Wisconsin: MCO 28.147, “NEGATIVE USE RESTRICTIONS PROHIBITED AS AGAINST PUBLIC POLICY”**
- **Explore forming a Bellingham Office of Civil Rights to advance civil rights and improve equity in Bellingham. A dedicated office to assist dismantling deeply**

embedded systems of oppression within our society would be a great asset. Further, this office could act as a resource for anonymous complaints for issues within Bellingham City limits. Work with marginalized groups when creating this office, including Bellingham's Community to Community.

- Model: [City of Seattle, WA, Office of Civil Rights](#)
- **Implement a Homeless Bill of Rights**, guaranteeing the rights of each Homeless person to access basic requirements necessary for sustaining life, including shelter, sanitation, medical care, clothing and food; Move freely in public places, in the same manner as other persons, without harassment or intimidation, including revising the charge of Neighborhood Code Compliance Officers to focus on aid, and pursuing secular alternatives to the Light House Mission and other faith-based organizations. **Model, Traverse City, Michigan.**
- ~~Pursue Tiny Home Villages~~

Public Safety and Criminal Justice Reform

ASWWU recognizes two interconnected issues: our criminal justice system is broken and we have a homelessness crisis in Bellingham. Mass incarceration disproportionately affects people of color, the mentally ill, and low-income people in Whatcom County. We encourage the city to take actions to reform our broken criminal justice system and protect the most vulnerable in our community.

ASWWU Urges Policymakers to:

- Support the asks of the **Undocumented Community, ASWWU Ethnic Student and Disability Outreach Center** in calling for independent, civilian Police Accountability by means of a Civilian Investigative Panel, extraneous of the Police Department with subpoena powers and independent Council, Model. Chapter 11.5 of the Code of the City of Miami and Ordinance No. 12188 ("Ordinance").

Voting Accessibility

ASWWU believes that voting is a right and recognizes that many communities do not have the access they need in order for this to be true. We believe the following recommendations will increase the amount of underrepresented communities and young people participating in elections and local governance.

ASWWU Urges Policymakers to:

- **Pass a resolution in support of Statewide endeavors to implement Ranked-Choice Voting for all Municipal elections within the City of Bellingham, and implement upon passage, Model. Washington HB 1722 “Local Options Bill”**

Environmental Stewardship & Green Jobs

~~ASWWU recognizes the people of Whatcom County and our environment are interconnected; each depends on each other for long-term success. As Whatcom County becomes more populated and our economy grows, we recommend innovative solutions for an economy that is compatible with our planet’s climate and health. We must transition off of fossil fuels to clean energy, creating new green living wage jobs, especially for new graduates. In addition, we must support policies that protect our prosperity depends on protecting safe and clean drinking water, farmland, salmon and the people who depend on them, and honoring the highest law of the land, treaties with tribal nations.~~

ASWWU Urges Policymakers to:

- **Pressure State officials to fully fund the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) Fund, to advance the Middle Fork Nooksack Fish Passage Project for the removal of the Middle Fork Nooksack Dam, prioritizing the treaty rights of the Lummi Tribe and environmental impacts to Salmon and Southern Resident Killer Whales.**
- **Adopt a Net Zero Building Code, mandating “carbon neutrality” in all future developments and redevelopments, with incentivizing bonuses for weatherization, lowering energy and utility draws, and other sustainable building practices, as per the recommendations of the Climate Action Plan Taskforce and the 2018 Climate Action Plan to achieve 100% renewable energy targets and Carbon Neutrality before 2050.**
- ~~Repurpose City-Owned property at 1801 James St. Bellingham and enforce the relocation of Bellingham Public School’s School Bus Storage Facility to comply with the 2016 Bellingham Critical Areas Ordinance, BMC 16.55.260 of a 100’ buffer for Riparian and Wetland Environments.~~