

CHAPTER VI
RECAPTURING, RECASTING

PART I:

THE TASK FORCE ON NEIGHBORHOOD INVOLVEMENT

The Linn Years: 1993-1998

Two issues would dominate Diane Linn's tenure at ONA: dealing with East Portland neighborhood politics, and shepherding ONA through another round of soul searching, the 1995 ONA Task Force on Neighborhood Involvement (TFNI), an effort which would also include subsequent ONA Guidelines revisions.

Linn entered ONA at a time when East Portland NA politics had reached a new plateau of intensity. Thus, before even having time to take a compass reading, she was mired in mid-County politics. The Task Force would therefore serve, in part, as an exit strategy out of the East Portland morass in which Linn found herself embroiled throughout her tenure as ONA Director. Although ONA woes with East Portland would play an important part in establishing an agenda for Linn vis-à-vis the Task Force undertaking, other forces would also propel that phase of ONA introspection.

On the surface, the TFNI seems analogous to Newhall's 1985-87 Policies and Procedures Review Committee undertaking. Both efforts were triggered by crises confronting the NA institution. In Linn's case, NA skirmishing in East Portland, particularly over boundary disputes, had for the previous two years absorbed tremendous ONA time and effort. Grievances and threats of lawsuit posed by East Portland activists with ONA as target or caught in the crossfire, would sustain intense pressure on Linn. Moreover, continuing drift in the program and on-going DCB disgruntlement and intransigence stemming from the unresolved bouts with Jacky and Kafoury, along with the uneasy acceptance by long-time NA activists of the North Portland "model", continued to fray NA/DCB/ONA relations. Also, antagonisms between the Police and DCBs over who controlled the City's Community Policing program had been growing steadily since that program's inception in 1990. In addition, steady and clear signals of new alignments between downtown policy makers and development interests beginning around 1991 (and continuing throughout the decade) signaled NA and DCB activists that their role in the land use development review process was becoming less clear and certain.¹

¹ Mayor Vera Katz eventually codified these in her policy framework

Newhall had endeavored to consolidate the NA program by specifying roles and allocating necessary coercive powers. She had wanted and sought to define a regulatory framework for the NA edifice, moreover; she made this part of her agenda quite apparent. Linn's approach, under significant guidance from Commissioner Charlie Hales (then ONA's Commissioner-in-charge) would take a different tack.² Whereas Newhall kept the stakeholder interests deliberately narrow as she set out to establish a mandate for reforming Portland's NA program, Linn--following Hales' direction--sought to enlarge the ONA "tent" to incorporate new stakeholder groups. Newhall based her "gambit" upon constituting a rule-based regime built upon the logic of DCB administration. Linn would likewise stage a gambit, but with distinctively different parameters. Enlarging ONA's purview, by codifying new stakeholder interests and redefining the terms for engagement by which the program operated, enabled Linn to recapture Portland's citizen participation institution. The imperatives Newhall faced compelled her to build an institution; the

"Blueprint 2000", which was aggressively endorsed and implemented by Commissioner Charlie Hales.

² Hales had been elected, with Katz, in 1992. He had been the State lobbyist for the Portland Metropolitan Home Builders Association. He had also served as President of the Hayhurst NA in Southwest Portland. Hales requested and received from Katz ONA and the Bureau of Planning.

pressures bearing upon Linn compelled her to rein-in and re-cast that institution.

This Chapter shall first discuss the Task Force process and Recommendations, followed by a detailed discussion of East Portland's history of conflict.

SOUL SEARCHING IN THE 90S, ROUND TWO:
THE TASK FORCE ON NEIGHBORHOOD INVOLVEMENT

The 1995-96 Task Force on Neighborhood Involvement (TFNI) was initiated by City Council Resolution adopted in November 1994. The Task Force was to consist of activists from across the City, both from within NA and DCB ranks, as well as from local business associations and community-based groups representing various civic and ethnic interests. Also included were DCB staff and agency personnel representing the Police, as well as staff from County Chair Beverly Stein's office.

The TFNI was charged with a broad mandate by then ONA Commissioner-in-Charge, Charlie Hales. The mandate would state, in part, that the Task force was to undertake, "but not be limited to":

...a thorough examination of the structure, effectiveness, funding needs, and distribution of the citizen involvement system; and the identification of options for enhancing citizen

participation and citizen/government communication.³

The scope of this mandate was eventually enlarged to include the following specifications, established "with guidance by Commissioner Hales" (presented here as they appear in the Task Force's final Report and Recommendations):⁴

1. Examine the Neighborhood Association (NA)/District Coalition (DC)/Office of Neighborhood Associations (ONA) structure in relation to citizen involvement with the City of Portland and other governmental agencies;
2. Look beyond the current ONA structure to find opportunities to broaden citizen involvement and to encourage participation by the full diversity of our communities;
3. Look for opportunities to make significant improvement in citizen participation. (R&RS, p. 1)

The TFNI enlisted twenty-five members in total, selected by Commissioner Hales with recommendations from Diane Linn, drawn from a pool of applicants submitted from NA, DCB and other interest groups across the City.⁵ The effort was to span the entire year, with meetings occurring mostly on a monthly basis. In the early

³ From City Council Resolution #35318.

⁴ These were first fully articulated in March 1995, and would later appear in the Task Force's final "Report and Recommendations".

⁵ Selection of Task Force members was determined to insure the appearance of equal representation while guaranteeing key stakeholder issues would be aired.

stages of the process, the Task Force agreed to empower a Steering Committee to undertake key planning functions.⁶

A large portion of regular Task Force member efforts would be to collect and analyze data from various stakeholder groups. Data collected by the Task Force included: personal interviews, presentations and Q & A sessions with DCBs as well as a host of NAs (28 NAs in total), panel briefings and discussions held between the Task Force and key City agency personnel as well as representatives from other governmental entities, two community meetings (east side and downtown), and a limited number of door-to-door surveys. In addition, selected Task Force members observed two focus groups: one of City Bureau Managers and one with City Bureau citizen outreach staff. All Task Force members were briefed by the City Auditor's Office on performance measurement and collaborative approaches to

⁶ Struggles over delegating authority detained the Task Force for several weeks during its early stages. It was finally decided that a Steering Committee should be formed to undertake key planning efforts, with the caution that it not be delegated any "decision making authority." Besides establishing a timeline for Task Force efforts, the Steering Committee established and defined key parameters of the Task Force effort (thereby garnering significant, if limited authority). These included defining *whom* the Task Force should seek information from, *what questions* should the Task Force ask from those whom it sought information, and *how*, or by what process, these questions should be asked. The Steering Committee addressed these questions in a report submitted to the full Task Force on March 21, 1995. With slight modification, the Steering Committee's recommendations were adopted.

accountability. Finally, ONA Guidelines, ordinances, budgets and contracts were reviewed by Task Force members, along with citizen involvement models applied in several other cities nationwide. The other major function of regular TFNI members would be to deliberate over the final Report and Recommendations.

The Report & Recommendations (R&Rs): going broad, burying the lead

The TFNI assembled several recommendations, many of which essentially recapitulated what ONA had at that time been charged to do. But the use of new language and phraseology by which to describe Portland's NA institution served to re-cast the ONA undertaking, subtly establishing a revised normative framework by which new mandates could be introduced.

To accomplish this required first an effort to re-frame citizen involvement. These efforts produced a document that would serve as a template by which to gauge and measure the final "Recommendations" the Task Force would produce. (See Figure 1.) Mandates to "be responsive and inclusive" (Section B) would signal an important shift in how NA activity was to be talked about. The Task Force compiled its Recommendations

under eight separate classifications. The following discussion examines these in detail.

"The Value of Neighborhood Involvement"

This "Recommendation" was actually a broad statement establishing the inherent value of the NA program, status quo:

Citizen participation/neighborhood involvement plays a central role in improving the quality of life for all Portlanders and in promoting an effective and responsive government. Public funds invested in supporting neighborhood involvement produce substantial public benefit. Portland is a national model for neighborhood involvement, and neighborhood activists and City government both deserve credit for their substantial achievements working together to build a better community.
(R&Rs, p. 6)

The language used here is significant, for it omits explicit reference to "neighborhood associations."

Further claims made about Portland's "neighborhood involvement model" would usher forth ideas by couching them in irrefutable values. Hence: "The highest level of involvement is participation of the *full diversity*

FRAMEWORK FOR CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT⁷

The Task Force established the following overarching intentions for citizen involvement. These then served as the framework within which the Task Force's work was completed.

A. Promote Problem Solving in an Atmosphere of Mutual Respect

- Build trust
- Promote win/win, not win/lose resolutions to issues
- Reduce adversarial relationship between neighborhoods, City and others
- Provide opportunities for civil adversaries to deal effectively with differences
- Bring decision-makers face-to-face with citizens
- Encourage early participation in development planning
- Provide ways for neighborhoods to related to other communities
- Provide base for developing long term solutions
- Encourage folks working for government to feel part of the community and vice versa

B. Be Responsive and Inclusive

- Provide a framework for involvement which is visible and understandable to the general public
- Be welcoming, nurturing, and allow participants to have a good time
- Promote active involvement of diverse communities
- Contribute to a greater sense of community
- Be representative of communities
- Overcome apathy
- Proactively reflect needs/concerns of communities

C. Be Effective

- Meet citizen needs quickly and effectively
- Result in improved livability
- Build community partnerships
- Involve minimal waste
- Be able to impact laws and challenge the status quo
- Be accountable

D. Develop Leadership Skills of Participants**E. Be Respected and Utilized by the City and Other Governmental Units**

- Build and support government respect for the wishes/values of neighborhoods
- Be utilized by governments to involve neighborhoods in key decisions

Figure 1. TFNI framework for citizen involvement.

⁷ This text appears as presented (except with point size reduced) in the TFNI final Report and Recommendations, February 7, 1996.

of neighbors sitting face to face with those planning and implementing public policy/action." (p. 6) [italics added] The phrase, "full diversity of neighbors" makes its debut here. No where in previous official ONA documents is this idea so explicitly stated.

Again omitting explicit reference to NAs:

Our structures for neighborhood involvement should provide forums in which people who share common geographical areas and common interests can come together to discuss issues of concern, resolve conflicts, achieve consensus, and communicate with their government. Our structures should also provide opportunities for citizens to participate in governmental decisions which will affect their quality of life. (R&Rs, p. 6)

The above comments essentially restate the status quo ante. Then, suddenly, an explicit reference to NAs is made: "However, the purpose of Neighborhood Associations is to promote community, not just to communicate with government." Again, no where in past ONA documents is such an explicit description of NAs rendered. This language is clearly intended to establish a seamless correspondence between NAs and the other stakeholder groups the Task Force was charged to accommodate. Though subtle, this was a major shift in how NAs were being talked about. The valence given NAs here--that

they are to "promote community"--would never have been tolerated previously, for it would be taken as a burden (or prerogative) left for each NA to define for itself.

"Structure of Neighborhood Involvement"

Here the Recommendations begin to grapple with programmatic issues bearing on the DCBs. While again re-capitulating and reasserting the status quo, this Recommendation would stake a claim for accepting "alternative" structures by which to support NA activity. Here explicit reference is made to the North Portland model, thereby giving it the full blessing of the TFNI; a sanction the City had sought to confer upon it.⁸ This Recommendation also called for a re-writing of the ONA Guidelines in order to more fully clarify and codify provisions that would enable NAs to consider new administrative options (e.g., the North Portland model) should they desire to do so.

This Recommendation was clearly intended as a shot over the bow of DCBs. By giving sanction to alternative support structures, the R&Rs signaled decisively that ONA would now establish methods by which to thwart renegade DCB activists. Again, as would be

⁸ North Portland NA activists probably also appreciated this sanction. But of importance here is the imperative ONA faced to codify this model in order to signal a shift in ONA/DCB relations.

characteristic of the R&Rs, language usage was significant:

This recommendation of allowing NAs to choose among several acceptable structures for obtaining staff support and resources for NA activities is based on our belief that citizens are best able to determine the ways of working together which are most effective for their communities. (R&Rs, p. 8)

The phrase, "citizens are best able to determine the ways of working together" *had* been the favorite justification used by DCB activists for maintaining the exclusivity of their prerogative to administer to member NAs. Here, language DCBs had invented was being turned against them. This Recommendation would elicit a terse "minority report" from Moshe Lenske, Task Force Steering Committee member and former, two-time Guidelines Chair and staunch DCB advocate. Lenske pointed out that the North Portland structure had not been entirely defined, and that stakeholder roles and responsibilities had yet to be clarified.

Until there is fuller description of the ultimate chain of command and the responsibility of the employees, this should not be elevated to the status of 'model,' and should not now be recommended as such. (R&R Minority Opinion #2)

Lenske knew that the bid made for the North Portland model by the R&Rs was conditioned upon a new Guidelines Review process, but bestowing it legitimacy before it had been fully scrutinized smacked to him of a pre-emptive strike against the DCB model. Still, Lenske would be out-voted 11-5 at a September 5, 1995 Task Force meeting addressing the issue.

"The Role of the Current Office of Neighborhood Associations"

Although again reasserting status quo functions, this Recommendation resurrected a stake which ONA had tried to claim in the past, but which had failed to root for various reasons: to serve as the central agency for "coordinating the efforts of the Bureaus to reach out to citizen/neighbors to involve them in key planning and implementation efforts."

This Recommendation broached the issue of agency prerogatives and jurisdictional boundaries that had, with varying degrees of intensity, always been contested Downtown. Over the years, certain agencies had sought to gain control over their citizen involvement needs and obligations by establishing in-house citizen outreach functions. Whether in order to organize various Citizen Advisory Committees, or to establish and maintain their own channels of communication with NAs and DCBs, Bureaus

such as Planning, Transportation, and Environmental Services had all acquired in-house structures for dealing with citizen involvement. ONA had, for the most part, capitulated to this trend since the late 1980s.

But the Task Force effort surfaced ONA's needs to re-define its jurisdictional boundary in order to recover authority it had lost, since the Newhall regime, to DCBs and downtown agencies. This bid would justify-- and be justified by--ONA's shift towards serving a broader set of stakeholder interests. As the R&Rs would state:

The Task Force recommends that ONA's role be expanded to function as an Office of Neighborhood Involvement:

- While the NAs will continue to be the primary City-supported structures for neighborhood involvement, the Office should assist neighborhood Business District Associations and other civic organizations in their efforts to work effectively with neighbors and with the City.
- ONA should also assume a clearinghouse role to facilitate and coordinate the efforts of the City Bureaus to engage neighbors and neighborhoods in discussion and feedback of Bureau issues. (R&Rs, p. 9)

"Key Neighborhood Involvement Initiatives"

This Recommendation included eight initiatives, several of which addressed a subtext of DCB capture by

NA activists and their intransigence towards ONA. In total, these initiatives, if undertaken, would recast NA/DCB/ONA relations.

Initiative #1. Intensive and Inclusive Study of NA and DC Boundaries. This Initiative targeted the intense battles being waged in East Portland at the time, and sought to undo a provision established in the 1991 Guidelines which required the consent of all affected NAs in the event overlapping boundary decisions needed to be settled. This provision, which had been lobbied for by Moshe Lenske during the 1989-91 Guidelines review process, had triggered intense fights in East Portland. In two instances, NAs existing within Community Planning Group boundaries were unable to obtain concessions they requested from CPGs that encompassed their boundaries. ONA Director Linn was therefore extremely intent to deal with this issue.

The essential gist of this initiative was that boundary overlap disputes would have to be settled by the disputing parties within a six month period--either with or without the assistance of ONA--or both NAs could risk losing recognition by ONA. Otherwise, boundary overlaps would be acceptable, but the City could define boundaries for statistical or administrative purposes, except with regards to notification requirements, in

which case each NA's self-defined boundaries would be honored by City bureaus. Taken within the context of East Portland issues, the six-month time frame for resolving disputes marked a significant power grab by ONA, for it would empower it to thwart Community Planning Group prerogatives which pre-dated ONA's organizing efforts during the annexation process.⁹

Initiative #2. NA and DC Self-Evaluations. This provision mandated that NAs and DCBs document ongoing outreach efforts. Again, this was intended to counteract NA and DCB intransigence regarding outreach and incorporation of their memberships. There had been some variability amongst NAs and DCBs regarding this issue, but ONA had long been aware that the incentive frameworks DCBs and NAs faced, as well as the limited resources they had at their disposal, meant that they would often neglect to do the outreach required of them by contract with ONA.

⁹ Alice Blatt, then Chair of the Wilkes Community Planning Group in East Portland and also a Task Force member, issued a minority report on the boundary overlap issue to a September 19, 1995 meeting of the TFNI. Both Linn and Blatt served on the Boundary Overlap Sub-committee to the Task Force. Blatt knew that the boundary provisions being pushed through this committee were heavily freighted with Diane Linn's interests in quelling the infighting amongst East Portland factions. Blatt argued that the Community Planning Groups--which typically encompassed NA boundaries--brought valuable experience and long-term interests to planning issues in East Portland, and that they could serve as a bulwark against come-and-go NA activists interested only in short term issues.

This Initiative also stated that:

DCs shall involve their affiliated NAs in discussion about the degree to which the DC is meeting the needs of each NA. DCs will include the views of all their affiliated NAs in their DC self-evaluation. (R&Rs, p. 10)

This language would be very threatening to DCBs operating under the tight control of power cliques that were dealing with internal Board skirmishes. Again, ONA was clearly trying to cinch in terms of accountability.

Initiative #3. Increased Linkage Between NAs, DCs, ONA, and Neighborhood Business District Associations and Other Civic Groups. This Initiative had been another key feature of ONA's agenda entering the Task Force deliberations. ONA had been serving business and civic groups not formally aligned to the NA network for several years, and some NAs and District Coalitions delegated seats for such organizations on DC Boards. This provision was therefore essentially an effort to formalize these relationships. Still, it ran against the founding premise of the NA program in the minds of many long-time DCB activists: that neighborhoods need help organizing more so than do businesses because of the nature of the constraints they face in eliciting participation. Furthermore, neighborhood business

districts and NAs had often been antagonistic toward one another, and NAs had associated incursions on their livability with indifferent businesses interested only in the bottom line. Also, fighting business activity was one of the major tools NAs had for inducing collective action.

In the early days of neighborhood organizing in the 1970s, the City typically favored supporting the residential needs of neighborhoods vis-à-vis neighborhood business activity because this strategy supported the City's larger objectives of retaining middle class residents. But by the early 1990s, neighborhoods across the City had shown major signs of rehabilitation and renewal. In its ongoing battle with the suburbs, Portland needed to break new ground in defining "livability". Neighborhood association intransigence towards business district development therefore needed to be dealt with and minimized.¹⁰

Initiative #4. New Recognition and Support for Neighborhood Business District Associations in NAs and DCs. This formalized Initiative #3 by establishing funding for Neighborhood Business District Associations (NBDAs) and official recognition of these by ONA.

¹⁰ This was the major impetus driving the Bureau of Planning's "Livable City Project".

Essentially, NBDAs would become the business analogs of NAs, and would gain notification and funding privileges through DCs commensurate with NAs.

Initiative #5. Increased Outreach and Inclusiveness. This Initiative served to underscore broad value statements established under Section B of the Task Force's "Framework for Citizen Involvement." (See Figure 1.) Provisions called for by this initiative essentially recapitulated existing ONA priorities, with added stipulations calling for increased funding to meet these objectives. Explicit reference to "building multicultural organizations" was debuted here.

Taken within the context of other initiatives and the Task Force's "Framework for Citizen Involvement", this initiative served to signal and legitimate a mandate for enlarging and diversifying the NA institution. Claims made elsewhere in the document that purported to value NAs as the "cornerstone" of the ONA program were tailored to assuage dissent over efforts to force NAs to be more inclusive of ethnic groups and other minority interests (including fixed income elderly and disabled people); groups that had not, for various reasons, historically been involved in NA functions.

Some Task Force members and onlookers bemoaned such initiatives as burdens the NAs were not well suited to accommodating. Privately, they would point out that such initiatives constituted a re-working and re-packaging of the service obligations Jacky and Kafoury had endeavored to impose on NA activity. But couched in the politically correct terminology used in the "Framework," this agenda was made very difficult to refute.

Initiative #6. Increased Support for Conflict Resolution within the Neighborhood Involvement System. ONA had, since Pattie Jacobsen's administration, been providing conflict mediation services through its program. But re-packaging this provision in the R&Rs allowed the Task Force both to ask for more money, and, for the first time, to mention "personality and communication difficulties" as issues plaguing citizen participation. Many stakeholders would appreciate that, finally, distinctions were being made between "problem" people and a "problem" program.

Initiative #7. Increased Quality and Stability of Staff Resources for Neighborhood Involvement by Reducing Salary Disparities among District Coalitions and District Offices. This had been a controversial issue. Two district staff serving the Northeast Coalition of

Neighbors (NECN) had always been paid at civil service levels, a wrinkle in the DC funding pattern that had been established since the origins of the ONA program. NECN originated under Portland's Model Cities program in the late 1960s.

NECN joined the City's NA program contingent upon being allowed to retain these pay schedules. Hence, its Director and her administrative assistant were earning significantly more on average than other district coalition staff. Establishing parity would, in all likelihood, mean raising district staff pay scales, something DCB activists feared would ultimately mean fewer staff in total.

There was another angle to this issue. As noted in the opening of this Chapter, the Police had long been upset over the drift and capture of the Community Policing program by the District Coalitions. From the Police perspective, crime prevention specialists working out of District Coalition offices had too often been used by the Coalitions for work outside the purview established in crime prevention specialist contracts (contracts tailored, for the most part, by the Police). Coalition activists routinely argued that they needed to use crime prevention personnel for organizing purposes that, while not specified in their contracts, bore on

the ability of staff to meet DC demands. This dispute essentially boiled down to a fundamental division over process versus product imperatives and the perspectives conditioned by these competing agendas.

DCB activists thus suspected that the pay equity issue was being used to shield the City's agenda to recoup tighter control over its crime prevention program; and they resented what they viewed as a divide-and-conquer tactic by ONA in its efforts to feature this issue within Task Force deliberations.

More stringent specification of pay ranges would probably mean two things: less money for staff, and increased scrutiny over their functions. Land use issues were by far the primary rallying points for the most active NA and DCB participants. Most crime prevention issues were dealt with outside routine NA and DCB functioning. This had a socio-economic aspect to it, since middle and upper class neighborhoods are less threatened by crime than poor neighborhoods. Furthermore, their contracts with ONA meant, to DCB activists, that they had control over staff hiring and firing. Any incursions on this prerogative were therefore taken as an affront.¹¹

¹¹ The West-Northwest DCB had waged a long fight with Police Central Precinct over this issue. Fighting between the Police and W/NW during the Task Force year would be particularly intense.

A divided Task Force narrowly approved this Initiative. By 1997, the Police would prevail with City Council, and recover much greater control over the crime prevention program by retaining exclusive contract authority and control over District Office crime prevention staff.

Initiative #8. Increase Resources Available to Neighborhood Associations and Strengthen DC Support for NA Efforts. This initiative called for three provisions: to establish a "Neighborhood Grants Program", targeted to assist NAs in special, self-initiated projects; require DCs to formally consult with NAs regarding their progress towards meeting workplan objectives; and establish a DC funding allocation formula based on the number of NAs and citizens served.

The first two provisions were fairly straightforward. The Neighborhood Grants program had been an idea in circulation for some time. The second provision was in keeping with the dominant tenor of the R&Rs: open as many channels as possible to scrutinize DCs and to foster NA independence. Neighborhood Associations were already part of the DC workplan process. This provision merely served to underscore that this activity needed to be "enhanced".

The final provision pertained to a thorny equity issue that had shadowed the NA program since its inception. Funding allocation to DCs had historically been based on a number of factors, including offsetting federal resources available to low-income communities through HUD's Housing and Community Development program.

By 1995, the Southeast DC received only \$2.09 per capita from ONA General Fund allocation, whereas the West-Northwest DC received \$7.32. Southeast still received significantly more HCD money than West-Northwest, but most stakeholders agreed that the disparity in ONA funding was a problem. City Council would respond, and allocate a moderate increase in funding to the Southeast Uplift for FY 96-97.¹²

"Collaborative Approach to Accountability"

This Recommendation served to restate provisions already accounted for in ONA contract language, Guidelines and ordinance. But, as with most of the R&Rs, this Recommendation also served to re-package and re-cast old ideas. This Recommendation was, however, notable for its candor. It stressed the need for DCs and ONA to be more accountable, and advocated for a "non-adversarial" approach to sorting through different

¹² ONA estimated it would cost \$2 million to bring its program to full funding equity. Southeast Uplift is Southeast Portland's DC.

demands and terms for accountability. Also formalized here--though by no means a new idea--was a recommendation for an ONA Citizen's Advisory Committee, which could potentially serve as a vector of control and scrutiny of ONA by NA/DCB regulars.

"Operational Recommendations"

This Recommendation consisted of seven goals; each elaborated by a set of strategies. Most of these goals revolved around further articulating Section B of the "Framework for Citizen Involvement" (Figure 1), with one notable exception: Goal #7 established strategies for insuring Downtown agencies were more accountable to the NA/DC structure. Twelve strategies articulated long-standing grievances NAs and DCBs held toward Downtown agencies they accused of being indifferent or manipulative.

"Budget Recommendations"

This Recommendation presented three proposals: increase funding to the NA/DC system commensurate with the various Recommendations proffered by the Task Force; establish a core staff minimum for the DCs; insure that one of the four staff positions was devoted to crime prevention. The first proposal estimated a \$677,809 budget impact for FY 96-97, only a portion of which

would be approved by City Council.¹³ The core staffing requirement fronted for insuring that crime prevention staffing be more tightly controlled. Many recognized this as necessary in order to offset the tendencies of DCs to discount crime prevention services.

"Policies and Procedures Needed to Implement Initiatives and Recommendations"

This final Recommendation established that a new Guidelines review process was needed in order to more fully specify and codify provisions laid out in the R&Rs. This would result in a third set of ONA Guidelines, eventually adopted by City Council in January 1998.

The new Guidelines included several new provisions as called for in the R&Rs. Though none of these radically altered existing Guidelines, they did represent key shifts in the NA regime. New provisions covered the following: boundary dispute resolution, new categories of recognized associations, and policy guidelines for alternative service delivery structures (e.g., the North Portland Model).

In keeping with the R&Rs, the 1998 Guidelines gave ONA the authority to withdraw services to NAs who had

¹³ The NA program share of General Fund allocation for FY 96-97 actually decreased from the previous year by .13%.

not resolved their boundary disputes within six months. This provision had gained broad acceptance by Task Force members.

The Guidelines also established means for recognizing "Neighborhood Business Associations" and "Communities Beyond Neighborhood Boundaries". Communities Beyond Boundaries were defined as "ethnically-based community organizations whose members face unique differences, particularly in the areas of language and cultural adjustment". Formal recognition would entitle such groups to certain privileges vis-à-vis ONA, but full privileges would be contingent upon increased funding levels provided by City Council. These new groups were therefore given a seat at the DCB table, but without a place setting for the time being.

New Guidelines also detailed procedures for establishing "Alternative Service Delivery Structures," thereby finally ratifying the North Portland approach.

Besides these chief revisions, the new Guidelines would be peppered with references to "communication" and "mediation". Thus, each recognized category of membership would be:

encouraged to maintain open communication with (other recognized groups) on pertinent matters and issues of mutual interest and to seek opportunities

for discussion prior to taking action on such issues.¹⁴

Each recognized group would also be encouraged to seek mediation with other recognized groups "if disagreements arise over issues." Neither of these advisories had been so explicitly stated in previous Guidelines.

More is better

In total, the Task Force R&Rs represented a concerted effort, principally by ONA, to retrieve rule making authority it had lost through DCB capture over the previous several years. As had Sarah Newhall before her, Diane Linn would preside over a process triggered by crises as well as nettlesome, unresolved issues which had buffeted Portland's NA model since its inception.

Portland's NA program had succeeded in many ways by 1995, largely through co-optation. But this success would also threaten the institution. The assimilation of citizen involvement routines by key Downtown agencies put ONA in an ambiguous position. Also, ongoing DCB intransigence, which had evolved over a several year period, brought pressure onto ONA to justify the

¹⁴ From "Guidelines for Neighborhood Associations, District Coalitions, Neighborhood Business Associations, Communities Beyond Boundaries, Alternative Service Delivery Structures and the Office of Neighborhood Involvement." These were adopted by City Council Resolution on January 7, 1998.

program, and its role, to an increasingly skeptical City Council.¹⁵

These various factors would place a premium on ONA efforts to reach past DCBs to the institution's oldest stakeholder group, the Neighborhood Associations themselves. But overtures made to the NAs were constrained by several factors, including the enduring sanctity of Newhall's DCB model. ONA would settle upon a fragile strategy: use its contract leverage to induce DCBs to sponsor more NA outreach activity, including, in particular, leadership trainings provided by ONA.

But these efforts would, ultimately, be insufficient to stem the full manifestation of contradictions which had always characterized the program. NAs and their District Coalition Boards would never function "democratically". This weakness would make them vulnerable not only to internal squabbles, but also to reform initiatives (such as the TFNI) however well intended. No matter how many stakeholders and viewpoints the TFNI assembled, it would never have been able to conjure the spirit that had first animated the

¹⁵ Since the late 1980s, Portland's City Council had been almost exclusively of a liberal cast, and Downtown agencies had routinized much of what NAs had demanded in previous years. NA challenges in the 1990s would therefore be met by a much different mindset than previously, for they would find few champions on Council who could forge a platform with broad appeal based on City indifference to neighborhood livability concerns.

NA program in the early 1970s. The inherent ambiguity of the program--which twenty years previously had enabled participants to innovate with and define citizen involvement, and which triggered a great deal of enthusiasm and energy--would, by 1995, work against it; for this ambiguity would enable, and foster, a process of labeling that NAs had once been strong enough to defy. The Task Force would parlay liberally in labeling the program and, thereby, redefining an institution that no longer had the steam to resist this process. The formula for adaptation was therefore to enlarge the NA franchise on the gambit that a new "mix" of participants bundled with new terms of responsibility and accountability might foster program renewal.

By 1995, not even the staunchest advocate of NAs could refute serious claims made against the institution. The Task Force would, to an extent, serve as host for a discussion of these woes. But this discussion was, purportedly, fettered. Several members criticized the Task Force proceedings, alleging that hoped for opportunities to explore options had never materialized; that the process had become more of a "summit" than a task force, where key stakeholder groups had foregone opportunities to rethink the program and instead focused on not losing turf. Pressure to abide a

timeline and edicts established by Commissioner Hales were also cited as factors that hampered this process. Longtime observers monitoring the Task Force would lament what they viewed as the "slow death" of the institution.^{16,17}

With the passing of the Task Force, ONA would acquire a new name--"Office of Neighborhood Involvement"--if not a new identity. Enlarging its tent meant ONA had to drop "Neighborhood Association" from its title. Did this enlarging of the franchise signal portentous shifts beyond those identified above? One poignant critique of Task Force Recommendations to incorporate Business Associations and "Communities Beyond Neighborhood Boundaries" would note that such a move signaled the subordination of the "place-based" aspect which had rooted ONA's program throughout its history. Making non-place-based entities commensurate with NAs implied, according to this critique, that ONA had forsaken a devotion to livability that augured

¹⁶ One interview participant rendered a vivid metaphor to describe this view. Like a frog put in water slowly raised to boiling, NA activists never realized that they had become inured over the years to subtle encroachments on their independence from Downtown control. This observer marked the DCB rule-making period as the origin of overall program decline. This observation seems in sync with Professor Dondero's observations of a "conspiracy of silence" between Downtown and NA activists. (See Chapter II.)

¹⁷ Still, one has to harbor aspirations in order to be disappointed. It is a credit to Portland, and its NA institution, that people continue to feel strongly enough about the NA program to be disappointed by its perceived shortcomings.

poorly for the future vitality of the City. We shall take up this discussion, and its implications, more fully in the final Chapter of this dissertation.

Linn's Lament

Like Rachel Jacky, Diane Linn faced a thicket of DC intrigue that would embroil her throughout her tenure at ONA. Triggered by Portland's fervor to annex mid-Multnomah County in the early 1980s, NA and DC politics in East Portland would prove to be even more intense than North Portland's experience. Though annexation politics did not bring down the East Portland District Coalition, these experiences established low trust between mid-County activists and downtown Portland that haunted ONA initiatives throughout the 1990s. As such, Linn was forced to catch up to a shadow cast in East Portland before she had even arrived. We turn next to this story.

PART II:

EAST PORTLAND & EPDC

Background: annexation and sewers

The story of East Portland neighborhood politics has its origins in the annexation and sewer development

battle that was waged throughout the 1980s in mid-Multnomah County. Like many annexations, this one was bitterly fought. Partisan sentiments resulting from these fights would linger to haunt Portland's efforts to assimilate the area into ONA's program.

Until the early 1980s, mid-County residents had no passion for independent incorporation. Over the years of its settlement this area had attracted a mostly middle class yeomanry who was drawn by the area's suburban appeal and relative independence from Portland. For the most part politically conservative, this population was keen to keep Portland's urban planning politics and zeitgeist at arm's length. Except for a handful of activists who took fervent interest in land use planning issues, politics in mid-County centered for the most part on school district administration, where a "family values" oeuvre, mid-County style, played out.

This live-and-let-live posture shifted fundamentally in 1982, when the mid-County region came under intense pressure, nominally through a series of decisions by the state Environmental Quality Commission

(EQC), to formulate plans for dealing with alleged ground water contamination. Essentially, the mandate required that the Cities of Portland and Gresham, in partnership with Multnomah County, institute plans to install a comprehensive sanitary sewage system for the unincorporated portion of Multnomah County, which then lay between 82nd Avenue and Gresham.

Until this time, nearly all of mid-County sewage was disposed of through septic tanks and seepage ponds. The price tag attached to the EQC mandate sounded the alarm for mid-County residents. The estimated total cost for sewer installation would be \$362 million, only a small percentage of which would be offset by federal grants for major facilities (e.g., pump stations). The bulk of the price tag would be footed by private property owners, at an average cost of \$4,100 per household (Morgan and Vizzini, 1999).

Two activist organizations then fully entered the mid-County political stage: the Portland Organizing Project (POP) and the Multnomah County Future Alternatives Committee (MCFAC). POP was a church-based activist organization schooled in Alinsky-style

organizing techniques. This group found an eager base of support among mid-County residents whose latent animus for Portland City politics would fully manifest over the sewer issue. Deploying confrontational tactics, POP played an important role in pressuring Portland's City Council--under the political brokerage of then City Commissioner Earl Blumenauer--to eventually underwrite an \$88 million subsidy package to help offset the private hookup fees for mid-County residents.

MCFAC had organized prior to the 1982 EQC hearings to begin exploring the feasibility of incorporating mid-County as an independent city. The impetus for this originated with movement on the Multnomah County Commission to begin transfer of municipal service obligations to Portland. The motives and other dynamics driving this push were complex, and perspectives on this shift vary widely depending on who tells the story. Taken in total, the affair involved competing outlooks and philosophies, contested

political, administrative, and fiscal perspectives and agendas, tax revenue and federal subsidy.¹⁸

Speaking broadly, a political juggernaut would emerge over the next several years, involving an array of governmental players, to incorporate mid-County into the City of Portland. This push would be resisted by MCFAC, eventually leading to a series of legal skirmishes over whether or not the matter could be put to the ballot for mid-County voters to decide. Many battles, with many lawsuits, would be waged over a ten-year period, several of which were pivotal in shaping relations between mid-County activists and downtown Portland.

The first was the EQC hearings mentioned above. From MCFAC's perspective, these hearings were clearly meant to head off MCFAC's petition drive, then underway, to enter the question of mid-County municipal incorporation on the next ballot cycle. The MCFAC cause had attracted a capable, informed, and determined

¹⁸ Besides property taxes--which offered a much brighter revenue picture prior to 1990--Portland stood to gain a windfall in state gasoline and cigarette tax revenue with annexation. Federal funding attached to census counts was also at stake. At the time, ideological divisions in national politics were intense, and that drama would distort and fuel the annexation and sewer battle.

activist contingent. As tactical and issue lines became drawn, the question of sewage disposal took center stage. If ground water contamination stemming from cesspools and seepage ponds was found to be prevalent in mid-County, Portland would consolidate its position in the fight, since the County Commission showed no interest in and little capacity for expanding sewage services to mid-County residents.

Ultimately, lab tests for ground water contamination in mid-County yielded negative results. Subsequent political maneuvering was fierce, with Portland ultimately succeeding in changing the legislative mandate under which the EQC was operating. The EQC hearings had followed State law requiring analysis of four criteria in determining grounds for mandating sanitary sewer system development: soil composition, prevalence of cesspools and septic tanks in the area, potential for ground water to serve drinking water demands, and prevalence of soil and ground water contamination. Under the revised rules, the fourth criterion was eliminated as a necessary determinant. MCFAC cried foul: the first three

criteria could hardly be considered determinative, MCFAC claimed, since they provided no more than a description of hydrology and development in the area. But the EQC would, as part of its ruling, order that beginning January 1, 1985, all new development in the affected area was to connect to a sanitary sewer (Morgan and Vizzini, 1999).

In its continuing efforts to petition for incorporation, MCFAC argued before the State Metropolitan Boundary Commission that the sewer issue amounted to no more than a red-herring. Under its planned charter for a new city, MCFAC had detailed alternative means for sewage disposal its leadership claimed would address any prospective danger of ground water contamination without requiring the huge capital outlay for sewer pipe and pump station installation.¹⁹ Ultimately, the Boundary Commission would not be convinced.

¹⁹ The approach included an on-site solids separation procedure used successfully in smaller jurisdictions around the country. The procedure consisted of outfitting private residences with a "solids separation" device which, though requiring periodic removal of accumulated sewage sludge, would be significantly less costly than Portland's sewer development proposal. The main question posed by this technique was its salability to the public. Many mid-County residents were skeptical of this method for sewage disposal, and

MCFAC then continued to pursue its petition drive to establish a ballot box resolution of the incorporation question, resulting in another round of bitter fighting and maneuvering. Portland contested the legality of the petition on technical grounds, alleging the MCFAC had failed to obtain sufficient sponsorship for its petition request. A lower court ruled in favor of Portland. MCFAC appealed, arguing that it had abided the letter of the law; but the Oregon Supreme Court would ultimately uphold the lower court ruling.²⁰

With MCFAC's efforts finally vanquished, annexation would proceed piecemeal, but at a much slower pace than promised by Portland in its testimony before the Metropolitan Boundary Commission.²¹ MCFAC

feared how such a method would affect private property values and the salability of their homes.

²⁰ MCFAC filed several suits pertaining to the incorporation question. In a definitive case--MCFAC vs. Portland Metropolitan Area Local Government Boundary Commission--lawyers representing Portland and Gresham (as intervenors) argued that the statutes pertaining to incorporation required analysis of legislative history, and that such history indicated a level of sponsorship MCFAC had not effectively met. MCFAC countered there was no reason why statutes pertaining in this case--in particular ORS 199.476(3)--should be interpreted any way but literally. Counsel for MCFAC described this intervenor's claims as an "ornate argument" not substantiated by statute.

²¹ The annexation of mid-County was not declared complete until 1997. In the end, 25 square miles would be incorporated into Portland, with property values estimated at \$3.1 billion. The City

would counter punch throughout this process, in one case successfully challenging the legality of Portland's method for acquiring property owner consent to be annexed.²²

In total, MCFAC's experiences dealing with Portland over the annexation and sewer issue would lead to a lingering division which would haunt Portland's efforts to develop a neighborhood association system in what would become East Portland.

When the East Portland District Coalition (EPDC) formed in 1990, its Board consisted of pro- and anti-annexation members. Pro-annexation members arrived at EPDC by way of the new NAs formed from the partitioning of the Parkrose and Hazelwood Community Planning Groups.²³ Anti-annexation members arrived by way of the

would also acquire prized industrial land, the Columbia South Shore area.

²² This was the "Triple Majority Rule". Under this rule, annexation could proceed given a majority of voters owning a majority of the land totaling a majority of all assessed property value in the area consented to be annexed. Allegations of fraud followed Portland's petition drive to gather the consent of mid-County residents. Many residents claimed they were led to believe the petition drive was preliminary to a vote, when in fact it legally constituted consent to be annexed.

²³ This distinction should not be made or taken too literally. For instance, two EPDC members, Howard and Mavis Holt of the newly formed Mill Park NA, were initially very anti-annexation, and had worked to collect signatures for the MCFAC petition to incorporate mid-County into a jurisdiction separate from both Portland and Gresham.

County Community Planning Groups, intent on maintaining their vigil vis-à-vis downtown Portland and its land use interests in mid-County.²⁴ The fight with Portland had divided the mid-County community. The means for acquiring the area piecemeal were believed by many to be dirty-dealing by Portland (a resentment harbored to this day by MCFAC activists). Though there would be face-offs on the EPDC Board during the early years of its inception stemming from annexation sentiments and resentments, EPDC would not become a last battlefield on the issue.

More significant than its affect on EPDC Board relations was the way in which the annexation fight conditioned the old-guard activists not to trust Downtown, particularly ONA.²⁵ Prior to annexation,

²⁴ The Community Planning Groups had been in existence since Multnomah County had undertaken its comprehensive planning update process in the mid-1970s.

²⁵ Besides ONA, the Planning Bureau was highly suspect in the eyes of East Portland activists. In 1991, under the leadership of then Director Bob Stacey and Commissioner of Public Works, Earl Blumenauer, the Bureau implemented zoning code changes which removed the so called "site review" process. Site review had been a major feature of participatory planning in mid-County, and the primary means by which planning activists had historically garnered expertise and political clout in the land use planning process. Portland's interest in promoting development density in the area required curbing the threat posed by the old-guard contingent. Enabling activists to pot-shot planning efforts through land use appeals would, the Bureau felt, hobble plans for development around the MAX line and Gateway District, and would likely trigger

funding for what would become East Portland neighborhood associations came from annexation monies, and was channeled through Portland's Office of Finance and Administration (OF&A). NA organizing staff answered at the time to the Urban Services Committee, an inter-bureau consortium convened to manage the annexation process. Trust was very low and tensions were very high between this Committee and old-guard activists, many of whom had been active or otherwise affiliated with MCFAC. For these activists, Portland had a clear agenda: use neighborhood organizing to fragment the old Community Planning Groups (CPGs), thereby undermining the authority and prerogative of the old-guard contingent.

The neighborhood staff organizers at the time would be caught in the middle of this issue. Initially hired by the City, these organizers had to struggle to gain the trust of the infant EPDC Board. From Portland's perspective, the City faced a conundrum that

lawsuits from developers. The City argued with mid-County activists that their site review privileges were inequitable, since the provision existed only for mid-County, and that since the City could not accommodate site review across all districts, it would need to curb East Portland's privileges. East Portland activists

had only partially to do with its antagonism towards MCFAC. The old CPG boundaries were physically much larger than typical NA boundaries--in some cases nearly four to five times as large. This factor would impede acculturation of mid-County residents into the city's NA program: the Community Planning Group boundaries were too large to foster a sense of neighborhood identity. Without that identity, the neighborhood livability focus of the kind the City sought to foster could not be engendered. Moreover, overlapping boundaries would complicate the City's ability to negotiate livability and land use planning concerns in the area.

Bitter arguments on this matter were waged between Portland officials and the old-guard regiment. Given the ongoing acrimony--as well as lawsuits--surrounding annexation, the Urban Services Committee was loathe to work with this group. It took the ardent diplomacy of EPDC staffer, Caroline Bax, to convince then ONA director, Sarah Newhall, that service planning needed to incorporate the CPG leadership. Newhall then

bartered for greater notification timelines in exchange for their

lobbied the Urban Services Committee to heed Bax's pleas.²⁶ Still, Newhall argued with mid-County leaders that the CPGs would have to yield to partitioning and accept new NA organizations within their boundaries. For the old-guard, this was a clear signal; a de-facto vote of no-confidence for the political clout they had garnered over the years of dealing with County agencies.

Pete Smith, active with the Parkrose Community Group, argued successfully that the CPGs met the minimum requirements to be recognized as full NAs. Nowhere in ONA Guidelines or existing ordinance was there any stipulation pertaining to maximum size of NA boundary. Newhall would be compelled eventually, but grudgingly, to acquiesce. Smith then actively urged the other Community Planning Groups to apply for NA membership as soon as possible in order to secure a foothold of representation and influence within the City's NA program.

acquiescence regarding site review.

²⁶ Bax had worked as a planning staffer for Multnomah County prior to working for the City. She had developed rapport and trust with the CPG's in the process of County planning.

Boundaries were not all that overlapped in East Portland. On both the Hazelwood NA and PCG, Board memberships would interlock over time. Thus the Chair of Parkrose Heights Association of Neighbors would at one time also serve as a Board member on PCG. Likewise in Hazelwood, provisions were made to ensure open membership for Mill Park residents. A pattern of interdependence emerged early on; because the CPGs had garnered significant land use planning and zoning expertise, they would routinely serve liaison and advisory functions for the NAs within their boundaries.²⁷

This marked a victory for the old guard and a looming headache for ONA. With the CPGs accepted, overlapping boundaries would be the rule rather than the exception in what was to become East Portland. Parkrose Community Group would consist of four NAs, one of which, the PCG proper, would subsume all other NA boundaries. Because notification from the City to NAs is a major feature of the NA program, this situation

²⁷ It may be that these relations were somewhat coerced. Letters of agreement granted by the Parkrose and Hazelwood CPGs to NAs newly forming within their boundaries stipulated that the CPGs would retain land use prerogative within overlapping (new NA) territory.

would, from Downtown's perspective, pose a logistical nuisance.²⁸ Also, the overlapping boundaries were likely viewed by the City as a disincentive to involvement. This may have played a factor in limiting the City's success in mobilizing new NA participation.²⁹ By the time EPDC's contract would be suspended in 1997, only PCG, Hazelwood, and Wilkes NA boundaries would subsume more than one neighborhood association.³⁰

EPDC staffing & administrative issues: 1990-93

Staffing and administrative issues would daunt the East Portland District Coalition Board over the entire course of its tenure as NA contractor with Portland. Several factors contributed to this, and these factors would be interactive. Central among these was the Board's reticence to administer EPDC in accordance with ONA preferences. Disinterest in tending to staffing

²⁸ City agencies would consistently face rebuke for working with one group and not another, especially in the Parkrose area.

²⁹ According to old guard interview participants, the City was much less successful in mobilizing new NA organizations than it had hoped to be.

³⁰ The Wilkes partition consisted of a very small breakaway section in the southern most portion of its boundary. Glenfair, as it was named, formed in response to the proposed upzoning of the area near the MAX line, as called for in the Outer SE Community Plan. Even with the NA partitions, the Wilkes and Hazelwood territories

and administrative matters had been common to DCBs throughout the City. In this sense, the EPDC experience was not exceptional. But there were unique parameters to this disinterest which set East Portland apart from other District Coalitions, including North Portland's Citizen Committee.

As mentioned, EPDC drew its early leadership from the County Community Planning Groups. By the mid-1980s, these organizations had coalesced into a formidable confederation, the East County Coordinating Committee (ECCCO). This group drew its membership from the CPGs in much the way DCBs draw their membership from member NA Boards. But ECCCO was a very different creature from Portland's DCBs. ECCCO prided itself on its self-sufficiency. Formed in response to concerns by CPG leaders that Multnomah County planning praxis tended to divide and conquer them, ECCCO was fiercely independent. It took no money from public agencies, and would often depend upon its members to cover incidental costs, such as printing and postage.

remained quite large. The Centennial and Powellhurst-Gilbert areas retain their CPG boundaries without NA partitioning to this day.

Although eager to acquire the money available through contracting with ONA, the mid-County old guard contingent allied itself with a legacy of watch-dogging local government.³¹ Lack of interest in administrative issues created slack between the Board and staff. This likely had in part to do with the animosities felt toward ONA by the incoming CPG leadership who had either served on or been allied with both ECCCO and MCFAC, and may have signaled power struggles on the Board over defining policy direction. Old guard leaders may have felt their stature would have been weakened had they depended upon a staff too closely associated with Portland and the annexation process, and that such dependence would tip the scales in favor of a Downtown agenda.³²

³¹ The esteem with which interviewees spoke of ECCCO supports that supposition. There was a definitive sense of esprit de corps within this group. Differences of opinion on the ECCCO were purportedly common, but participants spoke of shared values that bound them together. Key to this was a shared presumption on the part of ECCCO participants that County planning initiatives would "divide and conquer" them unless they aligned as a unified group.

³² The City had aggressively courted newcomer NA leadership, especially in Parkrose and Hazelwood. This likely fostered a perception that new NA participants, lacking sophistication in the land use planning process (and perhaps reflexively opposed to the old-guard), would drift towards dependence on a staff suspect in the eyes of the CPG veterans.

Charlsie Sprague served as first Director of EPDC office. She had begun this work during the period of annexation, then working with Caroline Bax, and would continue until leaving EPDC in 1993.³³ Sprague's tenure with EPDC would be rocky. As mentioned, she incurred credibility problems because she had been hired by the City in the mid-1980s to organize and assist in the annexation process of mid-County neighborhoods. Though significant, this point should not be over emphasized; for once EPDC was duly formed and contracted with by ONA in 1990, it had been granted the prerogative to keep Sprague or not, depending on the Board's preferences. Ultimately, EPDC opted to keep her. Purportedly, Sprague worked hard to garner the Board's support.

But personal style and ideological differences, always present and apparent, would spark routinely between Sprague and the early Board leadership, especially within the old-guard contingent. Sprague made her support for affordable housing and transit development well known to the EPDC Board, and on

³³ Bax would move on to work for the Portland Bureau of Planning,

occasion spoke publicly on the issue. In one instance, the Board's Executive Committee rebuked Sprague for publicly voicing her advocacy position in a fashion the Committee felt obscured her role as formally subordinate to the Board. In effect, they felt she had crossed the line. The tensions related to this eventually led to Sprague's departure from EPDC.³⁴

Staffing and administrative issues: The Waltz years, May 1993 to October, 1996

After Sprague's departure, EPDC commenced a national search for a new director. Catherine Smith, who had extensive state lobbying experience in California working for special district governments, was selected from among 170 applicants. But Smith stayed with EPDC only six months before returning to California.³⁵ Four finalists were then reviewed, including two EPDC crime prevention staff people, Kyle

and then as staff to County Commissioner Sharon Kelly.

³⁴ Affordable housing and transit planning would be hotly contested in East Portland during the Outer-Southeast Community planning process. Driving the debate were perceptions that mid-County was being used as the City's "density dumping ground".

³⁵ Smith stated in the *Oregonian* that her reasons for leaving pertained to an opportunity to continue lobbying work in California, and had nothing to do with the EPDC Board (Brenner,

Ziegler and Richard Bixby. Ziegler would serve as Interim Director until May. EPDC would eventually hire Tom Waltz to fill the post.³⁶

Waltz entered EPDC with a flourish. In an *Oregonian* feature article he announced what could be considered an agenda, "a grab bag of programs ready to go"³⁷ depicting himself as a go-getter who gets things done. Whether his personal panache garnered him support on the EPDC Board prior to being hired is not clear. But according to interview accounts, his skills in grant writing were very instrumental in landing him the job.

Not long after starting, Waltz embarked on a joint after-school "latch-key" project--titled "Neighbors, Schools, Families"--that would include partnerships with the Parkrose Business Association and Parkrose School District. Three months into the preliminary planning stages, Waltz received a blistering

March 23, 1993). A Board member close to the hiring process corroborated this account.

³⁶ Waltz came to the post with previous governmental experience. Starting in 1981 he had worked as an air quality planner in Clark County for the Regional Planning Council. Beginning in January 1991, Waltz worked as head of Clark County Neighbors, a consortium of fifty community organizations (Brenner, June 22, 1993).

³⁷ From Brenner, June 22, 1993.

denunciation by one of the program partners, Bob Durham, at the time Executive Director of the Parkrose Business Association. Durham alleged that Waltz had commandeered the program, and in so doing had led it off course without delivering on any commitments.³⁸

During this time, Waltz became embroiled in a very contentious and divisive legal dispute between EPDC and its crime prevention specialist, Kyle Ziegler. Relations between Ziegler and EPDC had been tense, in part because she had twice been passed over for the Executive Director position.³⁹ Waltz's presence and management style purportedly magnified this division. Ten months after Waltz's arrival, Ziegler--facing probable dismissal--quit her post, threatening to sue EPDC for over-time pay. This battle took its toll on Board relations, since some EPDC Board members had been in support of Ziegler's contentions.⁴⁰ Following

³⁸ Durham stated in his resignation letter, read before the EPDC Board: "Due to actions by the coalition without collaboration with its other partners in this project, I only see Neighborhoods, Schools and Families as a loose canon waiting to destroy itself and cause harm to the community due to its lack of performance." (Brenner, September 28, 1993)

³⁹ Ziegler had also sought the ED post when Charlsie Sprague resigned.

⁴⁰ There were rumblings that Ziegler might have sued EPDC for harassment by Waltz as well, claiming his management style was chauvinistic. Waltz countered that actions taken towards Ziegler

Ziegler's exit as EPDC staff member she would re-enter as an at-large representative of the Parkrose Business Association (PBA) to the EPDC Board of Directors, and would eventually join a faction intent on bringing down the Board.

By May 1996, Waltz faced a rebuke from ONA Director Diane Linn for a budget shortfall he attributed to staff time having to be dedicated to fighting the Ziegler suit. Linn had several concerns about contract compliance with EPDC, including, especially, fiscal management--notably, Waltz's actions to furlough two staff members for two weeks each to make up the budget shortfall.⁴¹ Waltz garnered support

had strictly to do with a lack of professionalism, and in one case, improper usage of office resources (allegedly she had made several phone calls pertaining to her real estate business while on duty at EPDC). The fact Waltz was chosen over Ziegler to fill the Director post added to the contentiousness between the two.

⁴¹ This rift had another angle. Waltz received support and encouragement from some EPDC Board members who wanted to minimize the organization's dependence upon Downtown operational subsidy. Waltz had thus sought outside funding through various service contracts, in one instance successfully winning a contract for an outreach program ONA had also bid upon. Waltz's supporters alleged that his troubles with ONA stemmed from resentment over this incident. Three separate accounts of Waltz's fiscal practices noted that he would on occasion float funds from neighborhood accounts to the EPDC account near the end of monthly funding cycles in order to maintain a positive overall balance. The funds would,

at this time from a few key Board members, but would eventually be forced to leave his position.⁴²

Accounts of this period by Board members vary, but clear divisions seem to have formed on the Board, and vis-à-vis ONA, with Waltz at the epicenter. The Ziegler incident appears to have solidified a rift which had been forming since before Waltz's arrival at EPDC. Ego clashes, political, gender and class divisions on the Board, spiraled around Waltz. As such, he became both catalyst and scapegoat for a latent distrust which seems to have been simmering on the EPDC Board for some time. Also, EPDC Board efforts to gain autonomy from Downtown through independent service contracts--an effort driven by key old-guard activists--were directly related to ONA's interventions, with Waltz at the center of dispute.

purportedly, be replaced within days after grant checks were received. But, according to one interviewee, Waltz was "caught" by an EPDC Board member, who then insisted on repayment of funds upon deposit. Linn used this incident to rebuke Waltz. Another interview account noted that Waltz was very careful to detail all grant expenditures. The problem he faced was that very few Board members could understand his detailed book-keeping.

⁴² On October 17, Waltz was reinstated by an edict issued by Jim Worthington, then Board representative from Centennial, claiming that the suspension was not viable due to a lack of quorum at the October 2 vote. On October 30, the remaining staff met with Diane Linn to discuss employment contracts. Two days later, Jim Worthington gathered up all EPDC files from the District office.

Whereas ECCCO had managed to galvanize participants in a fashion which subordinated any latent personal differences, EPDC would, despite some ardent efforts, eventually collapse, buried in petty animosities. An early, and one of the most factious of these centered around the Mill Park Neighborhood Association and Hazelwood Community Planning Group, and two individuals in particular: Mark Cvetko and Dennis Richey.

Hazelwood and Mill Park

As mentioned above, the Mill Park NA was formed following organizing efforts by City staff, prior to the existence of EPDC. Staff at the time, around 1987, worked with a handful of residents in the area who were favorable to annexation. But the Mill Park NA languished after its first leader left the area. Three years later, Mill Park resident Dennis Richey mobilized neighbors living near NE 122nd Avenue to fight hooliganism and cruising in the area. Mill Park activists attacked this issue vigorously, forming a very active and high profile citizens foot patrol that zealously monitored the area for illicit activity.

Mill Park resident Mark Cvetko eventually joined this effort.

It would be a year before Richey's group-- eventually named the 122nd Avenue Citizen's Foot Patrol--garnered any attention from the Portland Police Bureau. Since 122nd Avenue was at the time the City's eastern limit, jurisdictional authority was at issue; as such, the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office and Portland Police clashed over agency responsibility. Through persistence, Richey eventually convinced the City of Portland to establish a task force to address the issue. Two years later Portland adopted noise and cruising ordinances to curb the problem.

Due to a chronic physical disability, Richey eventually had to stop attending the nightly foot patrols; but he continued to monitor and publicize the problem, eventually being featured in the local paper, the *Mid-County Memo*, for his efforts. This feature article would be fateful, for the final report had omitted Richey's commendation of those who took part in the nightly patrols. One of those participants was Mark Cvetko, whom Richey had encouraged to become

involved after Cvetko had complained to him about sleepless nights stemming from noise occurring along 122nd Avenue. Richey would be denounced for this, and the Patrol eventually dismissed him from his position as publicist. Richey dates Cvetko's animus towards him to that incident. Also, it appears likely that old members of the Mill Park NA, Howard and Mavis Holt, resented the fact their organization had been taken over by the Cruising Task Force which Richey had initiated.

Richey remained active as President of the Mill Park NA, during which time Cvetko's hostility towards him increased. Over the next two years, Cvetko took several opportunities to attack Richey, accusing him of deliberately grandstanding for the press. In letters to City Council, during a cable access program he then hosted, before the EPDC Board, and even in correspondence with the 1995-96 Task Force on Neighborhood Involvement, Cvetko would maintain a steady barrage of accusations towards Richey with a virulence that dismayed onlookers. Ostensibly writing or speaking about some issue germane to Mill Park,

Cvetko would invariably launch into a tirade tailored to impugn Richey's character and cast doubt upon his motives. At an EPDC Board meeting in August, 1995, Cvetko would allege Richey had embezzled funds from a neighborhood cleanup drive. Finally Richey, at that time living in West Linn, would counter attack.⁴³ In November, 1995, Richey filed a \$350,000 libel and slander suit against Cvetko, the Holts, and two other Mill Park NA Board members.⁴⁴

Cvetko's animus towards Richey had evolved along with a rift over boundary issues that Cvetko would promulgate between Hazelwood and Mill Park. Beginning in April 1993, an agreement was forged between the two groups, in cooperation with ONA, to participate in a year-long merger. Richey, then Mill Park President and Chair of EPDC, had argued that the merger was needed in order to fill out the thin ranks of Mill Park participation. Working with the long-standing

⁴³ Many observers stated for the *Oregonian* that the Hazelwood/Mill Park fracas ultimately boiled down to an ego match between Cvetko and Richey. But in interviews for this research, observers noted that Richey rarely if ever picked a fight openly.

⁴⁴ Richey was seeking \$100,000 in general damages from the five defendants, and \$250,000 in damages from Cvetko for seeing the accusations were published in a local newspaper. The case would be

Hazelwood group, he argued, would enable Mill Park to tap greater volunteer resources. Cvetko and the Holts opposed the idea, and circulated a petition to garner opposition after-the-fact. They would argue that the process for notifying Mill Park residents about the merger issue was inadequate and irregular, and that the vote should therefore be nullified.

The planned merger had called for establishing several sub-associations that would better enable a neighborhood-based organizing focus, especially for Mill Park and Cherry Park.⁴⁵ The impetus for merger stemmed directly from the annexation process. Mill Park had been the first part of Hazelwood annexed by Portland, and City efforts to organize the Mill Park NA resulted in a drift in missions between the two neighborhood associations. Richey, along with Hazelwood activists, was very concerned about the ongoing lack of NA involvement by Mill Park residents. Since Hazelwood had a stronger profile in the community, the hope was that association with Hazelwood

settled out of court. Liability insurance paid for by the EPDC would cover awards against Cvetko. (Chen, November 21, 1995)

would shore up the stature of the Mill Park NA, thereby attracting more support and involvement. Moreover, since Hazelwood had been mostly annexed by 1990, the two organizations would both be focused on working through City agencies on shared issues.

In October, Cvetko filed a grievance with ONA against the Mill Park NA, alleging it was out of compliance with its bylaws for failing to have appointed a standing grievance committee. This sniping stemmed from Cvetko's contempt for the merger process and enmity towards Richey.⁴⁶ The Mill Park NA responded, at the initiative of Richey, by appointing a standing grievance committee.⁴⁷ But Cvetko would not desist. On October 21, 1993, the same night the Mill Park NA and Hazelwood Community Planning Group had held

⁴⁵Cherry Park was not a formally recognized NA at the time, but it did consist of a cadre of activists organized around opposition to the Outer SE Community Plan.

⁴⁶ Cvetko alleged--though not formally in a grievance--that the motion to merge the two groups in April at a Mill Park NA meeting had been improperly recorded because it did not stipulate a "sunset clause" he had proposed, and that outreach announcing the meeting had been inadequate. In response, Linn agreed with Cvetko that there had been inadequate outreach. But she argued that the participants at the April 19 merger vote meeting had in fact "acted in good faith" (Brenner, November 23, 1993).

⁴⁷ Richey had responded to Cvetko's complaint, stating that Mill Park had not had a standing grievance committee because of insufficient board membership--a situation the merger effort was intended to mitigate. Said Richey: "Probably 50 percent of the

a joint election to fill out Board member ranks for the trial joint organization, a Cvetko faction held its own election. This was a protest move posed to show up the merger effort. At about the same time, Cvetko dispatched another grievance, alleging the October 21 meeting of the merger group had not been preceded by adequate notice.⁴⁸

This marked the apex of Mill Park/Hazelwood squabbles and intense lobbying by Cvetko of Diane Linn. In November, 1993, Linn intervened in the dispute. In a letter sent to the Mill Park splinter group and the joint (trial) Mill Park/Hazelwood NA, Linn decreed that the vote for final resolution on the merger would be advanced by four months, to January 20, 1994. Until that time, Linn stipulated, only the merged group would be recognized as the duly constituted NA in the area. Cvetko and the splinter Mill Park contingent cried foul; without formal status, they would not be able to access funds for mailings that would enable them to

neighborhoods in the city don't have a standing grievance committee for that reason" (Brenner, October 19, 1993).

⁴⁸ At about the same time, the Cvetko group incorporated with the State as "Mill Park Neighborhood Association", though the existing Mill Park NA had registered as such in 1987.

lobby the community on the final merger vote, they would argue (Brenner, 1993a, 1993b).

Days of intensive phone lobbying and leafleting by both sides in the dispute, as well as a notice distributed to all households in the affected area by the City, preceded the final merger vote. Presided over by a City-appointed mediator, the vote was 65 against merger, 20 in favor. Cvetko hailed the outcome, and with good reason; his splinter group would now effectively replace the pre-existing Mill Park NA argue.

In the end, very few substantive changes were at stake. Residents in Mill Park would still be granted the privilege to vote on the Hazelwood NA should they wish to. Many observers close to the fracas commented that the essential animus driving the dispute simply boiled down to a grudge match between Cvetko and Richey. Although clearly a factor in the dynamic, egos were not all that was at stake. Cvetko's otherwise cryptic demands for "sovereignty" ignited an issue that had been dogging EPDC and its relations with ONA since its inception.

At the center of this was a tug-of-war between long-time Hazelwood activists and the Mill Park contingent over how authority for land use review would be allocated. The Hazelwood group had garnered significant land use review expertise over many years, and several Board members at the time still viewed Mill Park as existing within Hazelwood boundaries; they were therefore loathe to relinquish what they viewed as their rightful prerogative to comment upon and retain standing in land use review cases in Mill Park. As such, they had resisted granting Mill Park NA a letter of agreement recognizing its land use decision-making "sovereignty" vis-à-vis Hazelwood.

Besides this, ONA's handling of the affair was as momentous as the dispute itself. ONA's interventions were viewed by many East Portland activists as suspect, especially Linn's move to truncate the trial merger process. From the Hazelwood perspective, this move was calculated to circumvent Pete Smith's earlier efforts to retain Community Planning Group authority in East Portland. Cvetko's diatribes therefore provided ONA

necessary and convenient political cover to diminish the old guard's authority.

The Mill Park/Hazelwood fracas was closely watched by the old-guard contingent. In February, 1994, Pete Smith fired off a grievance to ONA.⁴⁹ Smith's grievance painstakingly detailed the sequence of events leading to Linn's intervention. At the core of this complaint was his claim that, by acting unilaterally in its intercession into the trial merger process, ONA had violated its own Guidelines and State law. The portrait emerging from his grievance depicted Linn's actions as stemming from her decision to capitulate to Cvetko's demands without just cause, and without allowing the standard grievance process to play out. Smith argued that the January 18 meeting at which the merger proposal was voted down had been undertaken in violation of ONA Guidelines. In effect, ONA's decree was not only illegitimate, but in gross violation of rules it was bound by law to operate under.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ In a letter later sent to Commissioner Charlie Hales, Smith claimed that his grievance was filed at the urging of some of his colleagues at EPDC.

⁵⁰ Procedures for calling and running NA meetings are required by ONA Guidelines, and detailed in the bylaws of member NAs. In most cases, NA bylaws depend upon Robert's Rules of Order for guidance

In a letter later sent to Commissioner Charlie Hales, then Commissioner-in-charge of ONA, Smith alleged that the whole process had been tainted by political decisions. According to Smith, Linn's action had been guided more by expediency and a desire to placate vocal dissenters than by an interest in administering according to rules by which ONA was bound.⁵¹ In essence, Smith accused Linn of playing fast and loose with "the rules", thereby jeopardizing the entire Guidelines framework.

Cvetko also harbored tremendous animosity toward Tom Waltz. These echoed accusations made against Waltz by Ziegler: that he was arrogant and prone to displaying contempt for Board members and staff he was not personally friends with. EPDC Board representative

in how meetings are carried out. Questions as to who Chairs meetings are clearly specified by chain of command. In this case, ONA's actions--convening a meeting outside of the regular channels and usurping the governing authority for the meeting by appointing a mediator--were tantamount to declaring martial law over the process, only; there are no provisions, either statutorily or in ONA Guidelines, outlining the justification for such action. Smith eventually met with Linn to discuss his grievance. There are no provisions by City ordinance or otherwise for appealing a grievance beyond the ONA Director.

⁵¹ In his letter, Smith clearly framed the matter as political: "My colleagues believe that because of the political nature of the matter, that is, the political involvement of the Mayor's office through Urban Services and of your office, you should have the opportunity to be aware of the matter, if you are not already,

Al Clark, from the Powellhurst-Gilbert NA, shared Cvetko's contempt for Waltz. Though the depth of his support for Waltz is not clear, Richey had publicly supported Waltz on several occasions. Waltz also had some support from Pete Smith (Parkrose Community Group) and Jim Worthington (Centennial NA), as well as Grace Fitzgerald (one-time EPDC Board member and long-time activist in the Parkrose Heights Association of Neighbors).

Was Cvetko's lament indicative of ONA's concerns vis-à-vis the boundary overlap issue? Did Hazelwood's land use purview within Mill Park territory subvert and subordinate organizing around a Mill Park identity in a manner ONA had suspected it would? There is some evidence that the approach to organizing and activism characteristic of the old guard may well have fostered resentment on the part of in-coming NA participants in East Portland. Within the historic context of mid-County politics, this would be inevitable. Jockeying for control and power is a function of all new-forming groups; but the factors at play in East Portland were

before I proceed." Hales did not respond to Smith's request to

significant. The old-guard entered EPDC with years of shared experience through ECCCCO and MCFAC. They were highly suspicious of downtown Portland, and regarded by City agency personnel as trouble makers who would hinder planning and service efforts in the area; moreover, beyond newsletter announcements, they were not inclined to make concerted efforts at outreach within their communities.⁵²

Yet, as noted above, EPDC did not become a last battle ground on annexation, rather; it languished for lack of setting a clear and unified agenda. From the old guard perspective--formulated in particular by Pete Smith--ONA used the auspices of dispute resolution to interfere with and control mid-County autonomy. For Smith (as for others, though less vocal), the Mill Park/Hazelwood debacle was clear evidence of this, and he would endeavor to point this out to EPDC Board members.⁵³ It seems clear that the old guard had little

meet with him to discuss the matter.

⁵² Accusations made by EPDC Board newcomers that the old guard was cliquish and elitist were, purportedly, common. Newspaper accounts of the ongoing fractiousness in East Portland would repeatedly bring up the issue of alleged cliquishness.

⁵³ The NA leadership at the time would often carp about ONA behavior privately, but Smith would garner little public support in his open challenges against Downtown.

faith in the ONA system. They had bitterly resisted being partitioned to meet ONA's agenda for NA organizing in the area--consenting only once ONA backed down on the over-lapping boundary fight--and would snipe ONA all through this process. Moreover, the fact that ONA had been instrumental in setting up new NAs hindered the ability of EPDC to develop a common identity around a shared adversary, as ECCCO had vis-à-vis the County. This left room in the breach for petty animosities to manifest and breed. This breach would, eventually, be fully exploited, when EPDC would become the target of a hostile takeover by a splinter organization, the Parkrose Coalition of Neighbors (PCON).

Was there a concordance between Cvetko and Linn regarding the boundary overlap issue? Or was Linn acting mostly out of concern for the strife brewing around the merger issue? In a political analysis, Cvetko's animus appears to parrot a Downtown position vis-à-vis East Portland; and what power he garnered was, to a certain degree, directly proportional to ONA's involvement in East Portland power struggles. As

events unfolded, Cvetko would fulfill a role similar to that filled by Rush Kolmaine in North Portland.⁵⁴

Subsequent events revolving around yet another splinter group faction help to more fully answer these questions, and put the Mill Park/Hazelwood fight into greater perspective.

The Parkrose Community Group and Russell

Pat Rice and Karen Rutledge first encountered EPDC in mid-1994. Earlier in the year, they had been robbed at gunpoint in their East Portland home.⁵⁵ Both soon became very active mobilizing their neighbors to organize around crime prevention in the neighborhood.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Cvetko persisted with demands of Diane Linn and ONA, even after the Hazelwood/Mill Park affair. Boundary issues notwithstanding, it is doubtful that ONA would have sorely missed Cvetko's machinations. Accounts of Linn's disposition towards Cvetko vary. Several interviewees mentioned that the Hazelwood/Mill Park conflicts were tremendously stressful for her personally, and that she was very eager to see them end. Others mentioned that Cvetko had been a convenient foil for a Downtown agenda. The pressure on Linn probably originated from various sources; in this regard, the emergence of Cvetko is ironic. On the one hand he perfectly represented the problems overlapping boundaries presented. On the other hand, he was, like Rush Kolmaine, a caustic addition to East Portland woes and relations with ONA.

⁵⁵ This incident had led to a legal fight with the Portland Police Bureau. Rice eventually won a lawsuit with cash award. Essentially, Rice argued that the Police had resisted responding to his 911 call about the robbery, and alleged he had been prejudiced against because of persistent complaints he had made to the Police on previous occasions.

⁵⁶ Rice and Rutledge, both nurses, were experienced activists in labor organizing. They had organized a nurse's strike at OHSU in the late 1980s.

These efforts soon led them to EPDC and Tom Waltz. Within months of the robbery, Rice had organized backing to initiate a crime prevention program--the Parkrose Safety Resource Center, to be located at the Russell Elementary School--outside the auspices of EPDC. By July, Rice was featured in the local newspaper, the *Mid-County Memo*, denouncing Waltz and the EPDC crime prevention program. Reportedly stating that he was discouraged by the "in-fighting, backstabbing and name calling" rampant at EPDC, Rice argued that the Public Safety Resource Center would enable local residents access to crime prevention services without being hindered by the old political feuding at EPDC (Riegel, July, 1994).

By January 1995, Rice and Rutledge were leading an effort to organize a new neighborhood association, Russell (named for the elementary school district in the area), within the Parkrose Community Group boundaries (located in the southeast corner of the Parkrose boundary). But, as per Parkrose Community Group (PCG) bylaws and ONA Guidelines in effect at the time, the Russell group would require the consent of

PCG to operate as a duly formed NA within PCG boundaries.⁵⁷ PCG refused to recognize the Russell group, allegedly stating to one Russell organizer that the Russell group did not need to form since they could be equally well represented by PCG, and, furthermore, that Russell lacked the necessary experience to function as a neighborhood association.

Incensed, the Russell group fired off an angry challenge, alleging that PCG had been derelict in representing Russell's interests. In a letter to PCG dated January 23, 1995, the Russell group cited, in particular, an instance involving truck traffic to and from a local recycling center. Rice and Rutledge, then representing the San Rafael Neighbors (not aligned with the ONA program), had approached PCG in 1994 for assistance in getting the City to post "No Trucks" traffic signs along NE San Rafael near 122nd Avenue. PCG, by a vote of the Board, had originally agreed to support the request, but, according to the Russell

⁵⁷ The 1989-91 ONA Guidelines were in effect at the time. Key in the case of the Russell/PCG dispute were Guidelines stipulations requiring that all affected parties in boundary dispute issues had to agree to resolution in writing. Diane Linn would lobby the Task Force Sub-committee on boundary overlaps to see that this rule was amended.

group, backed down after speaking with a Portland traffic engineer. The City's policy was to not restrict truck traffic on Neighborhood Collector streets, by which San Rafael was so designated. Through persistence, the Russell group would, in six months, prevail in getting the signs posted.

In its letter to PCG, the Russell group plaintively argued that political issues were at play in the PCG decision:

One of the reasons cited by you for your board's decision to not accept our boundaries was because we had 'no idea what a neighborhood association is all about.' You also cited the recent Parkrose bond measure as illustrating that some of our leaders had unacceptable political ideologies. Yes, some leaders of our new N.A. did support the recent Parkrose bond measure. Many of us are parents, and because we love our children very much, we want them to have the best education possible. **The fact that some of your board members actively mounted a campaign against the recent Parkrose Bond measure, should have no relevance whatsoever in the decision to approve or disapprove our overlapping boundary request.**⁵⁸

The letter went on to demand that PCG hand over financial and legal documents, including previous bank

⁵⁸ From January 23, 1995 letter from Sallie LaValley (Interim Chair, Russell NA) to Frank Johnston (PCG President) [boldface in original]. From Commissioner Charlie Hales, Subject Files, Box 7, File: EPDC.

statements and meeting minutes. It also requested copies of attendance sheets for every PCG meeting over the previous three years. The letter cited the Oregon Public Records Act as justification for these requests.⁵⁹ PCG balked at the demands. Not to be thwarted, the Russell group made another attempt to harrass PCG later in the year, but, again, unsuccessfully.

PCG had already granted overlapping boundary status to three NAs, so the contempt shown the Russell group was a clear slap in the face. Again, Pete Smith would articulate the basis for concern with Russell, insisting that the ONA Guidelines required NA consent for overlapping boundaries as a means to prevent factionalism within NA activity. This would provide a stopgap against a tendency for splinter groups to emerge around hotly contested battles; groups who would then show little interest in tending long-term to community issues. In Smith's mind, the Russell faction was fly-by-night, and he garnered support for this from other PCG Board members, as well as from EPDC Board Directors.

⁵⁹ Invoking Oregon's Public Meetings and Public Records Law (Oregon Revised Statutes Chapter 192) would become the Russell group's calling card as it mobilized over the next two years to take over the EPDC.

But the Russell group was persistent. Convinced they had been prejudiced against regarding the truck traffic issue--and vindicated by their success in finally winning that battle with the City--the Russell contingent mobilized again early in 1996 to gain independent NA stature. Targeting a March 20 PCG meeting they hoped to pack with supporters, Russell purportedly distributed 700 flyers throughout the territory they sought to incorporate through an independent NA (Brenner, 1996). More than 100 Russell supporters would attend the meeting, but PCG would invoke a bylaw stipulating that only residents who had attended two previous Board meetings were eligible to vote. Russell, again thwarted, would vow to return for the next meeting (Chen, 1996).

Again invoking bylaws privileges, PCG cancelled its next three monthly meetings. Finally Linn again intervened. In a terse letter sent to PCG President Frank Johnston, Linn urged PCG to meet by the end of July or face the loss of official recognition with ONA. Linn cited PCG bylaws calling for monthly meetings. PCG countered that it had acted within its prerogative in canceling the meetings.

In a letter to the Russell contingent, dated May 16, 1996, Linn offered her support and encouragement.

As I have discussed with you, I'd like very much, in this case, for ONA to immediately recognize the Russell Neighborhood Association. Clearly, you have organized the citizens of the area well, a critical mass of people have come forward to participate in the association, and you have made your plea to the Parkrose Community Group in good faith. However, it would be indefensible for us to arbitrarily disregard the Guidelines and ignore the position of the existing group.

Linn continued:

I must share with you (and I'll copy this letter to the current board members of the Parkrose Community Group) that we are disillusioned at the reckless disregard of the wishes of the citizens who reside in the Russell area by the board of the PCG. In my time here at ONA I have not seen a citizen board be so unresponsive and derelict in their duty to be inclusive and to promote citizen involvement. Nonetheless, I am bound to accept their course of action in respect of the independence of the neighborhood associations as grassroots organizations.⁶⁰

By July 19, PCG publicly announced its intentions, unanimously agreed upon by its Board of Directors, to dissolve its association with ONA. After 17 years in continuous existence, PCG would cease to function as a formal player in community politics.

⁶⁰ From Commissioner Charlie Hales, Subject Files, Box 7, File: EPDC.

Denouement: Fall, 1996 to Summer, 1997

PCG's exit marked the beginning of the end for EPDC as the official DCB for East Portland. In March, a splinter group, the Glenfair Neighborhood Association, had formed and mobilized to break away from the Wilkes NA, roughly concurrent with Russell's campaign to gain recognition from PCG. The Glenfair/Wilkes split would, ultimately, be relatively amicable, still; it was part of an emerging pattern in East Portland community politics.⁶¹

By September, contention surrounding Tom Waltz compelled EPDC to evaluate his performance. The staff furlough issue from the previous spring, pressure by ONA for stricter contract reporting measures, and long simmering disputes between Board members about his management style were all at issue. In late September, EPDC would vote to suspend Waltz with pay pending an outcome to the Board's evaluation.

⁶¹ The Glenfair group was reacting against provisions then being considered as part of the Outer SE Community Plan that would have called for major upzoning in the area surrounding a MAX station. Delay at the EPDC over this issue increased tensions between Wilkes and Glenfair. Resorting to Bylaws stipulations, EPDC took several months before officially recognizing the Glenfair group. Again, it appears that Glenfair was assumed by the old guard, in particular Pete Smith, to be "fly-by-night". Glenfair's leader, Susan Booker, went on to mobilize a City-wide meeting of NA chairs, purportedly as a means around DCB and ONA politics.

But this evaluation would never be completed. A week later, on October 2, the EPDC Board's contract relations with ONA were dissolved following a highly contentious Board meeting. The meeting had been scheduled for the Board to consider alternative contract relations with ONA. At issue was whether EPDC should retain its structure as an independent contractor for citizen participation services--the prevailing model across the City--or adopt an alternative mode of service delivery whereby the Board would cease to serve administrative functions. The latter model would be derivative of what North Portland had adopted two years previously. This alternative would mean Coalition staff would be hired by the City. The Coalition would carry on its policy-making functions, but without direct supervisory control over staff.

The October 2, 1996 meeting was highly controversial. First, Linn commandeered the meeting after three of the Board's executive officers resigned on the spot, who faced intense and raucous squabbles amongst Board members.⁶² Linn then proceeded to poll

⁶² By this time, it appears that distrust on the Board had reached a high point. The en masse resignation of Board officers followed by Linn's assumption of control was glanced with suspicion by the old-guard contingent.

the Board members present on the matter at hand: whether it wished to retain the status quo contract arrangement, or proceed to adopt an alternative approach. The Board eventually voted at that meeting to dissolve its contract status, but the propriety of the vote would be contested by Board member and Centennial NA delegate, Jim Worthington. Worthington had not been in attendance at the meeting, but had heard about it from an alternate representative. An old-guard activist highly suspicious of ONA's intentions, Worthington alleged the vote fell short of a majority count. Portland's City Attorney eventually agreed, but the matter would be dropped in the shuffle of subsequent events.

At roughly the same time, another NA takeover bid was gaining momentum. Deploying tactics identical to the Russell group--issuing demands for meeting minutes, Board attendance sheets and financial records dating 30 months--Pat Sandoval, a local restaurant owner, would threaten the Parkrose Neighborhood Association (PNA), alleging it had conspired to thwart her efforts to run for Chair of the organization. Sandoval claimed that, like PCG, PNA had been planning to dissolve itself rather than cede control to Sandoval and her

supporters. Again, Linn would be enjoined in the ensuing battle.

PNA met on October 28th. Sandoval had solicited neighbors with a letter dated October 24, alleging PNA planned, similar to PCG, to dissolve and disperse its funds rather than face community demands for greater accountability regarding dealing with prostitution issues in the area. After the meeting, Sandoval solicited affidavits claiming PNA had passed a vote to dissolve itself. PNA president, Betty Richey (no relation to Dennis Richey), provided tape-recorded evidence to Linn that she claimed clearly indicated no such vote had taken place. Linn eventually sided in favor of Sandoval.

As a result of these events, PNA's status with ONA was dissolved, and a new NA, the Parkrose Association of Neighbors (PAN), with Sandoval at its helm, assumed jurisdiction in what had been PNA territory. In the end, Richey and Board Vice President Doris Nichols argued they had been the object of yet another hostile East Portland NA takeover. Sandoval scoffed at this allegation, citing PNA non-action as the cause of its demise. Linn was again pilloried for butting into East Portland affairs, garnering more suspicion that she had

an agenda to dismantle the old guard influence. (PNA had been on good terms with PCG.)⁶³

Sandoval had aligned her cause with the Russell contingent and had received their ardent tactical support. She had also attracted two other Parkrose residents, Jennifer Young and Peg Billings, as well as Kyle Ziegler.⁶⁴ As it happened, the takeover of PNA was a move calculated to garner critical NA support in East Portland for a challenger group--dubbed "Parkrose Coalition of Neighbors" (PCON)--seeking what had been EPDC's prerogative. With EPDC fallen, PCON hoped to ascend in power and take control over East Portland community politics.

In the coming months, PCON endeavored to consolidate its position as rightful heir to the EPDC's legacy. On January 4, 1997, PCON issued a press release in an effort to politicize Diane Linn's decision to appoint an interim director who would

⁶³ Several interview participants commented that the tape recording of the October 28 PNA meeting clearly indicated pandemonium. They noted that Betty Richey had tried to end the proceeding after a raucous and belligerent crowd attempted to take it over. Dorothy Smith (wife to Pete Smith and also long-time PCG activist) reviewed the attendance roster for the meeting and found several in attendance were not residents within PNA boundaries, suggesting the meeting had been stacked with Russell supporters. Linn would defend her actions in the press, noting that affidavits were key to her decision.

⁶⁴ Ziegler, as noted, was formerly crime prevention specialist for EPDC. After quitting EPDC, Ziegler was hired as Executive Director of the Parkrose Business Association.

preside over (formerly) EPDC staff operations (now called East Portland Neighborhood Office). The press release highlighted PCON's successful efforts to elicit community support and donated office space as testimonials to its ability to take over where EPDC faltered, and depicted Linn's actions as misguided and wasteful at taxpayer expense. The press release had cited a letter to Linn dated January 3, 1997. The tone of the letter was characteristically strident:

The citizens of east county have already created a coalition to replace the ineffective and inefficient EPDC. We have already decided our fate. Yes, some neighborhoods are still in the decision making mode. We are, as you also know, working hard with them on their internal decision making processes. We agree with your rhetoric that this process is up to us, the residents of east county, not your office. Therefore, in light of measure [sic] 47, we ask that you not waste another dime on salaries for your temporary East Portland Neighborhood Office.

Additionally, we also have our own 'Interim Director.' Our director, at this point, doesn't cost the taxpayers a dime. His organizing record, solution rate on neighborhood problems, etc., already far surpasses the work of your previous and currently paid staff at the East Portland Neighborhood Office. If there ever was a time for you to leave well enough alone, the time is now.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ From Commissioner Charlie Hales, Subject Files, Box 7, File: EPDC.

Later that month, the PCON group set out to topple the Parkrose Heights Association of Neighbors (PHAN). This NA, located just south of what had been PNA territory, had been targeted by PCON after the successful PNA takeover. Last minute organizing by PHAN thwarted the effort; a large turnout of PHAN supporters--and personal friends of long-time residents and PHAN activists, Grace Fitzgerald and Carol Williams--pushed back the PCON offensive at a January 25 general meeting.⁶⁶

Following these events, an Interim Director, Portland mediator Barbara Hart-Hallmark, was installed in East Portland, and would work for six months in an effort to cobble new NA relations and administrative arrangements with downtown. At this time, Linn issued two stipulations for East Portland. First, any compromise would have to fit within the City's limited budget for East Portland neighborhoods. Second, at least a two-thirds majority of East Portland NAs would have to agree to any arrangements about how they would function as a group and vis-à-vis ONA. During Hart-Hallmark's tenure, several NAs worked together to

⁶⁶ According to a PHAN Board member present at that meeting, key erstwhile PCON supporters publicly renounced their affiliation with Rice and Rutledge that night. In addition, PHAN had done its homework on the public meetings and records law, successfully facing down Rice's demands for their records.

decide on what model of relations they preferred to adopt. By February, the participating NAs narrowed their choices to three: the status quo ante, the North Portland model, or virtual independence from ONA (Perlman, 1997).⁶⁷

Initially, PAN and Russell NA boycotted the meetings, alleging they were a "waste of time". Meanwhile, they tried to consolidate their influence with other NAs. But by April, the PCON group had alienated two NAs they had hoped to persuade, Argay and the Parkrose Heights Association of Neighbors.⁶⁸

In a defiant gesture, PCON then proposed that a fourth model for East Portland NAs be considered: a "mixed" model, whereby some groups would align with the city and others with the PCON. In a May meeting, after separate NA votes had been taken, NA delegates would report their tallies as follows: Mill Park, Parkrose, Powellhurst-Gilbert and Russell NAs in favor of the mixed model; Glenfair, Hazelwood, Parkrose Heights in favor of the North Portland approach; Centennial and Wilkes not yet decided (but later choosing the North

⁶⁷ Accounts of Hart-Hallmark's tenure were consistently negative. Board members were in general agreement that the mediation process hindered their efforts to consolidate an agenda. There were also consistent reports of contradictory actions emanating from ONA at this time.

⁶⁸ Argay had been formed by pro-annexation and sewer advocates.

Portland model); and Argay unable to decide, due to bylaws stipulations requiring high quorums for conducting business at general meetings.

A feature article written by Lee Perlman for the *Mid-County Memo*, highlighted the continuing rifts in the process:⁶⁹

The May Day meeting, after the vote tally, was a microcosm of the atmosphere that had led to the situation in the first place: jockeying for power and a total breakdown in trust. Kay Collier of Hazelwood complained that Parkrose and Russell had not submitted the alternative model to a vote of their membership, while Rutledge noted that neither had Hazelwood considered their mixed proposal. Sallie LaValley (PCON activist who allied closely with Pat Sandoval) complained that Collier had once threatened to sue her, and Collier replied that this was after LaValley had called her a liar in public. (Perlman, 1997, p. 1)

By this time, many people who had formerly been in opposition in one way or another found they had acquired a common foe: the PCON forces. The PNA takeover, the attempted coup of PHAN, and many other instances of often threatening confrontation had

⁶⁹ Perlman had written several articles covering EPDC politics between 1994 and 1997. Having worked for ONA under Patti Jacobsen in the early 1980s and covered NA activity extensively for the *Oregonian* and various neighborhood newspapers, Perlman is considered by many to be one of Portland's pre-eminent experts of NA history.

alienated most NA activists from PCON, and Rice and Rutledge in particular.⁷⁰

Still, the group would struggle to find consensus. By July 1997, Linn called a halt to the mediation process. In a letter to the NAs, she stated:

It is clear that many fundamental issues continue to divide you. The feedback I received from many of you is that enough time has been spent trying to reach agreement. For these reasons, we will now suspend the facilitation process.⁷¹

The lingering divisions among the participating members had been affected by the PCON contingent. Squabbles

⁷⁰ By May of 1997, Rice's antics, in particular, were legendary. The day following the EPDC vote in October 1996, to dissolve its contract with ONA, Rice made several harassing phone calls to the EPDC office, threatening Tom Waltz. A written transcript of his messages indicated he had called the office every hour, on the hour, to issue threats and ultimatums. This transcript would be used as evidence by the Portland Police to warn Rice to cease and desist or face possible arrest. Acting on Rice's behalf, Rutledge immediately responded with a petition declaring the undersigners' intentions to donate \$50.00 each towards Rice's bail should he be arrested. Characteristic of the PCON style, the petition would close petulantly:

Also, we understand that it is rumored that Mr. Rice offered to assist the East Portland District Coalition (EPDC) staff in cleaning out their desks and departing their building upon the expiration of the City contract on October 31, 1996. We duly note that Mr. Rice, along with Patricia Sandoval and many others, made a similar offer over two years ago. Had a housecleaning of EPDC occurred (sic) at that time, two years ago, the taxpayers would be approximately \$500,000 ahead today.

The petition was sent to Mayor Vera Katz with a letter attached detailing further allegations against the police and EPDC. (From Commissioner Charlie Hales, Subject Files, Box 7, File: EPDC.)

⁷¹ As quoted by Perlman (June 1997).

about square foot rental costs and printing subsidies relative to staffing allocations reflected some long-standing differences still present, but also reverberated with PCON claims that it could operate a fiscally lean operation.⁷² Ultimately, PCON's putsch failed, and Rice and Rutledge disappeared from neighborhood association politics nearly as suddenly as they had arrived.⁷³

Present tense

The structure serving East Portland neighborhood associations today is the same as in North Portland. Staff are hired by the City, and delegates from the individual NAs meet regularly, but without administrative prerogative. EPDC's corporate license has been maintained over the last few years by Jim

⁷² For East Portland, fiscal austerity was an important virtue. The Parkrose School District bond measure fight and ongoing squabbles over school financing reflected the fiscal conservatism of the area. Also key to this paradigm was the East Portland Community Center planning process, which had been peppered with criticisms citing waste of taxpayer money. The move of EPDC staff offices to the new East Precinct Police office (built concurrently and across the street from the Community Center), at a substantial increase in rent, added fuel and contention to EPDC board strife, and probably helped to foster incidental support for PCON.

⁷³ As members of the Parkrose District School Board, Rutledge and LaValley each twice survived recall votes. And before Rutledge consolidated her authority on the Board, she turned her tactics against a one-time ardent ally, Jackie Cottingim, formerly Parkrose School District Superintendent. Cottingim later filed separate lawsuits against Rutledge and the School District. Rutledge was sued personally.

Worthington, who is nominally the organization's Chair. Beginning in Fall 1999, there was movement by a few NAs to restore EPDC to active service in order to enable the East Portland NAs to acquire grant funding and bulk mailing privilege. Discussions on the matter are currently under way. Besides a few members present prior to 1996, EPDC makeup has largely turned over.

Recently, the Parkrose Association of Neighbors was "de-recognized" by ONI, allegedly for persistent refusal to furnish records of meeting minutes and attendance. This was the group that had badgered the former Parkrose Neighborhood Association for records of its operation.

Karen Rutledge remains in place as Chair of the Parkrose School District.

ENDNOTE

On the surface, EPDC politics shared several traits in common with North Portland, including Board skirmishes revolving around ego-clashes that were fueled by DC incentive frameworks. In both instances, DC staff became battle zones over which DCB delegates skirmished. But there were also key differences between these two Districts. North Portland politics had a very

distinctive class component. Although palpable, the class dimension of East Portland NA politics was less clear cut. The role of class as it manifests in Portland's citizen participation routines will be more fully discussed in Chapter VII.