

The Oregonian

Right 2 Dream Too: Hoyt Street warehouse site, pushed by Mayor Charlie Hales, is dead

By Andrew Theen

Portland Mayor Charlie Hales is pulling the plug on the Old Town warehouse he pitched last month as a temporary home for Right 2 Dream Too.

The cost of making the warehouse at 320 N.W. Hoyt Street suitable for the homeless community proved too high, according to Hales' staffers. Required improvements would have run \$335,000, Hales' policy director Josh Alpert said Thursday.

Alpert said Hales and Commissioner Amanda Fritz were in constant communication during the past month, and Fritz was part of the decision making.

"We continue to look for a solution," Alpert said. Hales, Fritz and camp leaders are working to find other properties.

A month ago, Hales took select members of the media on a tour of the Old Town warehouse. At the time, he said the city was prepared to sign a 15-month lease for R2D2, at a cost of \$150,000.

The homeless community has called a prominent street corner of West Burnside and Northwest Fourth Avenue home for more than two years. Last fall, Fritz brokered a deal to move the camp to a city-owned parking lot under a Broadway Bridge onramp.

But at an October City Council hearing on the zoning decision authorizing the move, prominent Pearl District developers and neighborhood groups objected. Hales delayed a City Council decision so long as Homer Williams and Dike Dame, the developers, worked "in good faith" to find an alternative location.

Officials with the Pearl group said they had worked day and night to find a suitable location. Hales policy director Josh Alpert was the primary point person from the mayor's office.

The mayor's office billed the Hoyt Street location as a way to get the homeless out of the cold and rain.

"Here's an opportunity to get 80 people inside," Hales said when he announced the alternative. "To me, that's compelling.

Fritz, however, called the mayor's proposed deal financially irresponsible.

Alpert said the high renovation costs for "a building that we wouldn't own" was only one of several stumbling blocks. The city also faced an unexpected zoning issue. The Hoyt property was within 1,300 feet of 100 shelter beds, Alpert said.

"I don't think we're back to square one," Alpert said. "I think we are, everyday, gaining a deeper understanding of what Right 2 Dream is about."

Tracy Reeve named city of Portland's top attorney

By Brad Schmidt

Longtime city attorney Tracy Reeve has been named Portland's top attorney.

Mayor Charlie Hales made the announcement Thursday in an email to city staff, although the entire City Council needs to confirm her selection later this month.

Reeve will replace James Van Dyke, who retired in December. The city launched a national recruitment to fill the position.

Reeve, 53, joined the city attorney's office in 1991 but left for about five years for a private practice. For the past two years she's been one of five chief deputy attorneys.

Her areas of expertise are constitution law and complex litigation. Looking ahead, Reeve said she hopes to push proactive work to avoid legal issues down the road.

"I have always enjoyed working on a wide variety of legal issues," she said. "I also feel like, having been here for a lot of years, I'm looking forward to the opportunity to have a strategic focus."

Reeve, while acknowledging that she'll serve at the pleasure of the City Council, said she has enjoyed her city career and hopes to stay in the position for at least five years.

Hales' email is below:

I am happy to announce that the nationwide search for a new City Attorney is completed, and the cream of the crop ended up being right here in Portland.

Tracy Reeve, Chief Deputy City Attorney, has agreed to take the position as permanent City Attorney for the City of Portland.

Tracy replaces Jim Van Dyke, who retired after more than a year as acting City Attorney, and Harry Auerbach, who served as Interim City Attorney for the past several weeks. I thank both of them for their service.

Tracy is a native Portlander and a fifth-generation Oregonian. She has been a member of the Oregon State Bar since 1989. She has served in the City Attorney's office since 1991. Her areas of expertise have included everything from equity to public art, and neighborhood involvement to the Title VI anti-discrimination section of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

Finding the right City Attorney for a great American city required a national search. So it was gratifying when one of our own beat out candidates from around the country.

Please join me in thanking Harry for his service this winter, and congratulating Tracy on her selection as City Attorney.

Willamette Week

Charlie Hales Learns Price Tag of Warehouse for Right 2 Dream Too, Abandons Idea

By Aaron Mesh

Mayor Charlie Hales doesn't have a home for homeless camp Right 2 Dream Too after all.

A month after debuting a warehouse at 320 NW Hoyt St. and urging camp leaders to move indoors, Hales has abandoned the idea after learning the cost of tenant improvements on the building: \$335,000.

"That was simply a hurdle too high," Hales spokesman Dana Haynes tells *WW*. "That site's just not going to work."

The Portland Mercury and *The Oregonian* initially reported Hales pulling the plug this afternoon.

The mayor revealed the vacant 29,100-square-foot warehouse to media in December as an alternative—chosen by Pearl District developers Homer Williams and Dike Dame—to a parking lot under the Broadway Bridge known as "Lot 7."

City Commissioner Amanda Fritz cut a deal with the camp in September to move under the bridge, but Hales undercut her plan, saying irate Pearl District developers should have time to offer other locations.

Camp leaders told Hales they were willing to negotiate the offer—which included the city paying \$150,000 to rent the warehouse for 15 months, in order to move the self-policed homeless camp indoors and out of sight.

"Go outside today and tell me that living in a tent in Portland, Oregon, in the winter is a good solution," Hales said on Dec. 4. "Here's an opportunity to get 80 people inside."

But Hales' office didn't yet have the preliminary estimates for upgrading the building for habitation.

The mayor's office this evening said it will continue the search for an indoor location.

The Mercury

Hall Monitor Police Reforms Still a Tough Sell

By Denis C. Theriault

CONSTANTIN SEVERE, director of Portland's Independent Police Review Division (IPR), can't seem to make everyone happy—neither advocates nor the city's police unions—with an important package of police oversight reforms that even he admits are modest and incremental.

Not that he hasn't been trying.

After a near-disastrous October hearing on the proposals—where Police Chief Mike Reese very notably joined the chorus of opposition—Severe and his boss, City Auditor LaVonne Griffin-Valade, spent weeks

retooling the reforms and briefing city commissioners in hopes of sanding down what had been some fairly rough rhetorical edges.

Those efforts were mostly successful. Severe won over Reese while preserving the core of what he'd been proposing—enshrining IPR's right to directly interview cops in misconduct cases, while also shining fresh light on the chief's discipline decisions. And Mayor Charlie Hales, the city's police commissioner, seemed markedly more engaged when Severe brought the reforms back to city council for a second hearing in December.

But one thing became clear as that December hearing dragged on: For the proposals' biggest critics, nothing had changed.

Accountability advocates from Portland Copwatch and the Albina Ministerial Alliance Coalition for Justice and Police Reform actually thought the revisions were worse, calling them "watered down." Daryl Turner, president of the Portland Police Association (PPA), also remained as steadfastly opposed as he was in October—even admitting he might file an unfair labor practice complaint.

"That could happen," Turner said when Commissioner Nick Fish asked if he might.

Hales and the council decided to hold off on a final vote until this Wednesday, January 8, with a suggestion that Severe huddle once more with advocates and Turner (not all together; the sun would explode if that happened) and find some middle ground with each. Severe tells me he's done that. He even called his talk with Turner and his lawyer, Anil Karia, "good."

And maybe it was. But neither Turner nor Portland Copwatch, in interviews and statements before this week's vote, were willing to change their respective tunes.

"I talked about us being disappointed that there wasn't more collaboration," Turner told me this week. "That's all that came from it." (Turner, sources note, had been briefed on the proposals last year.)

Dan Handelman of Copwatch, in a long email to city commissioners, continued his insistence that the council wait until a federal judge takes up the city's proposed settlement with the feds next month on accusations our cops use too much force against people with mental illness.

Severe and Griffin-Valade are ready to push ahead all the same. Severe says he gets that advocates want something even stronger than the reforms the feds are requiring—changes like a stronger civilian oversight process and civilian oversight of police shootings.

But he also says those are legislative questions for the mayor and council—and not for his shop. Not that he wouldn't welcome them.

"Some are afraid that, okay, on [January] 8, that's the end of the conversation," Severe says. "I don't think that's what it is. It's not the end of what reforms will be in this city."