

The Oregonian

Portland Council Enshrines Incentive to Build Tiny Homes

By Gordon Friedman

June 27, 2018

The Portland City Council on Wednesday made permanent its waiver of city development fees for building tiny houses, the latest decision among many to try to boost local housing supply.

Under normal circumstances, homeowners pay development fees to several city bureaus for constructing new buildings. The city has since 2010 waived those fees for builders of tiny homes or “granny flats,” known officially as accessory dwelling units, and repeatedly extended the waiver as it nears expiration.

Development fees in general are designed to cover the cost of additional stress on parks, roads and utilities from new residents, and can be as much as \$15,000 per tiny home project.

City elected officials hope that by making the waiver permanent, home owners will continue adding accessory units in their backyards and rent them long-term.

Under the ordinance adopted Wednesday, the waiver remains only if the property owner agrees not to use the new unit as a short-term rental, such as an Airbnb, for 10 years. Breaking the rules would require homeowners to pay the development fees plus a 50 percent fine. The vote was 4-0, with Mayor Ted Wheeler absent on vacation.

Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, who oversees the city permitting bureau and brought the permanent waiver ordinance to Council, said homeowners are still free to build accessory units for short-term rentals. But she said the city won’t subsidize construction of those units through fee waivers.

“As far as I’m concerned that’s a fair and reasonable decision. We don’t need more short-term rental units, we need more housing units,” Eudaly said.

While city permitting officials are uncertain how many more units will be built because of the waiver extension, they say the program has already helped boost the accessory unit market.

In 2009, the year before the waiver was adopted, the city issued permits for 24 accessory dwelling units, said Matt Wickstrom, an official with the Bureau of Development Services. In 2016, the city issued permits for 615 units, about 10 percent of the housing permits issued that year, he said.

By making the waiver permanent, city bureaus that normally collect development fees will lose between \$5.6 million and \$7.2 million over a decade, according to a city estimate.

Eudaly, who was elected to the council in 2016 in large part due to her pledge to push for policies that ease Portland’s housing shortage, said the city should seek additional ways to help homeowners develop tiny homes.

“Average Portland homeowners can’t afford to develop them,” Eudaly said, noting that there is no traditional loan product for homeowners who wish to develop the small units. Developers say building a tiny home can cost between \$50,000 and \$100,000.

Portland to Pay Attorney Fees After Mayor Loses Transparency Lawsuit

By Gordon Friedman

June 27, 2018

Portland taxpayers will foot a \$26,000 bill for a Southeast Portland man's attorney fees after the man took Mayor Ted Wheeler to court over public records and won.

The Portland City Council approved the payment Wednesday by a vote of 4-0, with Wheeler absent while on vacation.

Commissioners' vote capped a months-long dispute between Wheeler, the city's top official, and Tyler Bechtel, who went to court over his belief that the mayor improperly censored public documents.

Bechtel's attorney, Jeff Merrick, wrote in a statement posted to his website that the city "got off lucky," adding, "Public bodies need to be transparent to build public trust. They need to follow the law to avoid paying attorney fees."

The legal dispute began after Bechtel filed a public records request last December for documents outlining city and county officials' deliberations on locations of possible homeless shelters. Bechtel, an East Portland resident, has vocally opposed the siting of a shelter near his home in the Foster-Powell neighborhood.

City legal staff told Bechtel it would give him documents with portions blacked out because of legal exemptions. Bechtel disagreed with the city's reasoning and sought to appeal to the Multnomah County District Attorney, who is the arbiter over public records disputes with county municipalities.

But the city blocked the appeal by invoking an Oregon law that allows elected officials to quash records appeals to district attorneys. If invoked, that law requires a public records requester to file a lawsuit to challenge an elected official's attempt to censor public information.

So Bechtel did.

The judge in the case, Ben Souede, ruled that the city's reasons for keeping the records secret largely were bunk and ordered unredacted documents released. The judge went further, writing that the public has a "very strong" interest in access to information about city and county leaders' thinking on homeless shelters.

Though he ordered records released, Souede allowed the city to withhold a real estate market analysis which he said would disadvantage the city during negotiations of property acquisitions if disclosed.

Tracy Reeve, the city attorney, did not respond to a request for information about the cost incurred by the city to refute Bechtel's lawsuit. The mayor's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

By state law, the city is liable for paying Bechtel's attorney fees because he prevailed, at least in part. City officials contend in a document describing the settlement's financial impact that by settling for \$25,965, the city avoids the likelihood of paying a larger sum if the payment is decided by a judge.

Portland Homeless Accounted for Majority of Police Arrests in 2017, Analysis Finds

By Rebecca Woolington and Melissa Lewis

June 27, 2018

One in every two arrests made by the Portland Police Bureau last year was of a homeless person, an analysis by The Oregonian/OregonLive has found.

The number of arrests is dramatically disproportionate to Portland's homeless population. People experiencing homelessness represent a tiny fraction of the city's overall population -- well below 3 percent even using the biggest estimates.

Yet in 2017, they accounted for 52 percent of arrests.

The arrests affect a staggering percentage of the city's homeless population. A federal survey last year found 4,177 people living outside, in shelters or transitional housing in all of Multnomah County. That survey likely undercounts the true number of people who are homeless, which could be as much as three times higher.

The newsroom found that 4,437 homeless people -- 260 more than the survey counted -- were arrested by Portland police last year.

Most often, police arrested homeless people on property, drug or low-level crimes. The vast majority of the arrests, 84 percent, were for non-violent crimes, the analysis found. And more than 1,200 arrests were solely for offenses that are typically procedural -- missing court or violating probation or parole.

In the first three months of 2018, the disparity continued to grow. The percentage of arrests of homeless people outpaced last year's.

Police Chief Danielle Outlaw and Mayor Ted Wheeler, who serves as police commissioner, have both said that being homeless is not a crime.

But the disparity in arrests has grown amid calls from Portland business and neighborhood leaders for police to stop street-level crime, such as disorderly conduct and drug use, outside their front doors. Police also increased searches for wanted people at homeless encampments last year.

The arrests are a symptom of Portland and the federal government's failure to end homelessness.

They aren't stopping people from falling into a cycle -- 440 homeless people arrested last year were arrested more than 20 times since 1996. Together, they represent an astonishing 20,000 arrests over time.

And they aren't helping to keep people from reoffending. Eighty percent of the homeless people arrested last year had been arrested at least once before in the past two decades.

Advocates say arresting so many homeless people only adds to the city's homeless crisis, making it harder for people with long criminal histories to find housing. They can be targeted by police and unhappy residents, advocates say, simply because they are living in public view. Police can easily criminalize behaviors, like trespassing, that are byproducts of being mentally ill or addicted while living on the streets.

Often, advocates say, Portland's complaint-fueled arrests only push homeless people from one spot in the city to another.

"It's not a response that achieves anything," said Tristia Bauman, a senior attorney for the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, a Washington, D.C. nonprofit that works to end and prevent homelessness. "It's wholly ineffective."

Handcuffs haven't helped Brian Lankford. The 49-year-old has been arrested so many times that he said officers often greet him by name. Last year, police arrested Lankford seven times. In the past decade, they've arrested him 219 times.

Lankford said sometimes he cares about getting arrested and sometimes he doesn't.

"You're so tired of being on the streets," Lankford said, "you don't really care about going to jail."

Dozens of his arrests were for missing court, trespassing, stealing and disorderly conduct. Dozens more were for public drinking until he stopped drinking in 2013. But he said he has since started shooting meth.

Lankford said it's easy to feel hopeless. He said he hasn't been able to find stability, housing or steady work. He said his arrests haven't helped.

After The Oregonian/OregonLive shared its findings with Wheeler's office, the mayor announced a June 27 forum to examine how police interact with vulnerable populations including people who are homeless.

Wheeler declined repeated interview requests for this story. His chief of staff, Michael Cox, would not say whether the newsroom's findings were concerning or surprising.

"From the mayor's perspective, the question really is how can we help folks who are vulnerable before they -- before it comes down to criminal activity," Cox said.

He said the arrests of homeless people are "a sign that we, as a society, have already dropped the ball, perhaps a couple times, before that police interaction."

Portland police say they are responding to a spike in calls to 911 and their non-emergency line.

Presented with the newsroom's analysis, Portland Police Deputy Chief Bob Day said he could not think of a police or city policy that would contribute to the arrest disparity.

"I don't see a criminalizing of that population," Day said. "But there is an increased amount of exposure and interaction with the police."

Day said homelessness will not be solved through arrests and that he'd rather see officers spend their time on serious crimes, not quality-of-life offenses involving homeless people.

Police provided the newsroom an analysis of calls to which officers were dispatched between January 1, 2017 and May 15, 2018.

The numbers show that calls involving homeless people have increased since last year. In a year-over-year comparison from January to May, the bureau found calls had risen by 12 percent in 2018.

Still, calls involving homeless people remained a fraction of the bureau's total workload, accounting for 8 percent of the 351,220 calls to which police were dispatched.

Police say their numbers likely undercounted calls about homeless people. Data analysts searched for calls that included variations of the terms "tent," "camping," "living in vehicle," "transient," "squatting," and "homeless."

The increase in calls is noticeable, four officers said. They say neighborhoods and businesses are relying on them to act when crimes are being committed. They say a lack of housing, mental health and addiction treatment also drive the arrests up.

Officers could arrest more people experiencing homelessness than they do, said Central Precinct Commander Kelli Sheffer. The precinct covers downtown and inner Southeast Portland, places where businesses and people living on the street have clashed.

"Arrest is one way to interrupt the cycle of whatever it is they have going on in their life," Sheffer said.

People who are arrested, Sheffer said, have an opportunity to seek treatment or to choose another path. Even so, she said, connecting people to resources is often better than arresting them.

"Arrest is not our go to," she said. "It is our last resort."

Police have targeted areas with homeless encampments using ATV patrols to look for people with outstanding warrants. The checks started along the Springwater Corridor in Southeast Portland in 2016 and became weekly last August.

Police leaders at East Precinct, which covers the Springwater, decided to increase the patrols after the Joint Office of Homeless Services reported increasing assaults among campers and neighbors complained of crime, Capt. Dave Golliday said.

Golliday said police started tracking the number of arrests made during the enforcement missions in August, but he didn't say how many have happened. The bureau told The Oregonian/OregonLive to file a records request for the information, requiring the newsroom to first pay \$30 to find the answer.

Police also would not say how much the missions cost, requiring the newsroom to file another records request. Both requests are pending.

Sadler, who has robbery, drug and theft convictions, was wanted. He said he absconded from his probation supervision, so he made himself scarce when police rolled through the camps. The officers, Sadler said, would ask campers for identification and fingerprint people with a mobile device when they didn't have any.

"The cops are coming," Sadler recalled thinking whenever he heard the officers. "It's time to go."

Sadler said he eventually turned himself in and served prison time. He remains homeless, living at an organized camp in North Portland.

Kimberly McCullough, legislative director for the American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon, said her organization questions whether such practices are permitted under the state's anti-profiling law.

"That is really targeting people," she said.

The results of the warrant sweeps appear to be piling up. Out of all the arrests police made of homeless people last year, 39 percent were solely for offenses that on their own are unlikely to elicit a 911 call -- missing court, violating probation or parole or having a warrant.

Second-degree criminal trespass was the next leading charge for homeless people. The crime is defined as someone unlawfully being on premises or in a vehicle. People identified as homeless accounted for 72 percent of all trespass arrests in Portland last year.

Portland is not the only city where police are arresting disproportionate numbers of homeless people.

In February, the Los Angeles Times analyzed jail booking data and found that arrests of homeless people were increasing, mostly for low-level offenses. In 2016, the Times' analysis found, one in six arrests involved someone listed as transient.

Wednesday's forum will be held from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at a Portland city office building, 1900 S.W. Fourth Ave. Room 2500B.

HOW WE DID IT

For this story, The Oregonian/OregonLive analyzed all of the 19,730 arrests police made in 2017. The newsroom found that police made 10,236 arrests of homeless people.

The newsroom counted people as homeless if they were listed in police records as either homeless or transient or listed a shelter or transitional housing as an address.

People can move in and out of homelessness, and not everyone in the police data lives outside. Police also say that when someone refuses to provide an address, some officers list the person as "transient," but they could not quantify how often that happens.

Not everyone who was arrested went on to be convicted of a crime.

The police bureau ran a similar analysis after receiving our findings and identified the same disparity.

Man Punches Security Guard after Council Meeting at Portland City Hall

*By Lizzie Acker
June 27, 2018*

A man punched a security guard who was attempting to escort him out of Portland City Hall on Wednesday afternoon, according to witnesses and police.

No arrests have been made, and the investigation into the incident is ongoing, Portland Police Bureau spokesman Sgt. Chris Burley said in an email.

Commissioner Nick Fish said over the phone Wednesday that a man in a red shirt grabbed the mic during Wednesday's City Council meeting and insulted Commissioner Dan Saltzman.

"It was completely unprovoked," Fish said.

The man was then escorted out. As he was leaving, Fish said, he yelled, "F— you, Nick Fish." Fish said he did not recognize the man.

"It was a sad incident," he said.

An email sent to City Hall employees said a man was "being disruptive and security had to escort him from the building."

"He became violent and punched one of the guards," the email said.

According to the email, the security guard required medical attention.

"Heard a loud crash in city hall," Portland Mercury's news editor, Alex Zielinski, tweeted after the incident. "Downstairs, a city security guard is bleeding from his face. A security guard tells me 'there's blood everywhere' One of the elevators has blood on the floor. Apparently a guy in a red shirt was involved."

Paramedics arrived about 20 minutes later. A Portland police officer soon left the building with a bag containing a red shirt.

Portland Police described the suspect as a 20- to 30-year-old black-haired man, 6 feet tall and approximately 160 pounds.

The Portland Tribune

Fee Waiver For New Accessory Dwelling Units Fixed Into Law, But There's a Fee to Get It

*By Steve Law
June 27, 2018*

Portland City Council adopts a \$400 fee for homeowners wanting to avoid paying system development charges on new ADUS, to enforce new restrictions on using them for nightly rentals.

Portlanders whose development fees are waived when they build new accessory dwelling units won't get off scot-free.

The City Council on Wednesday, June 27, approved a \$400 fee for homeowners who want to waive other fees, known as system development charges, when building accessory dwelling units. To get the waiver, which can slice up to \$16,000 off the cost of developing a new accessory dwelling unit or ADU, homeowners also must enter into a restrictive covenant, written into their property deed, that specifies they won't rent out their unit for Airbnb-style short term rentals for the next 10 years.

"ADUs are integral to the achievement of the city's housing goals, and make up a significant portion of new dwelling units currently being constructed in Portland," the ordinance adopted Wednesday states. "These goals are not advanced when ADUs are rented as (short-term rentals), as they are not directly adding to housing capacity at that time."

If anyone violates that restriction, such as by listing their ADU on Airbnb or HomeAway's websites over the next decade, they can be fined 150 percent of the value of the initial fee waiver.

The city will hire a new staffer at its Revenue Division to implement the new enforcement. That person's salary will be covered by the new \$400 fee.

Systems development charges are levied on new development to pay for the cost of adding water and sewer lines, roads, and parks associated with the growth that flows from the development. The city has used a series of temporary fee waivers since 2010 to encourage more ADUs, but a backlash arose because many owners began turning the units into profitable short-term rentals.

A new survey by Portland State University found that 26 percent of Portland's ADUs have been used as short-term rentals.

In May, at the urging of city Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, the City Council spelled out its wishes by adopting a resolution to make the ADU fee waiver permanent, with the new stipulation that recipients can't then use such units for nightly rentals.

Homeowners can continue using their ADUs as short-term rentals, but they won't qualify for the fee waiver.

City staff returned to the council Wednesday with a plan to carry out the resolution, including the new enforcement mechanism. Putting it into an ordinance has the effect of writing it into law.

Portland has been a national leader in promoting ADUs, also known as granny flats and mother-in-law units, because they can provide smaller and more affordable housing in closer-in areas nearer to where people work or study. The units can be in basements, attics, converted garages or freestanding backyard cottages of no more than 800 square feet.

By all accounts, the fee waivers have worked.

In 2009, the year before the first temporary fee waiver, the city issued 24 permits for ADUs.

In 2010, with the waiver in effect, that zoomed up to 86 permits.

In 2016, the city issued 615 ADU permits. That year, the city issued 957 permits for other single-family dwellings.

Most of the new residential development was for apartments, with the city issuing permits in 2016 to build 4,194 multifamily units.

PSU's survey found that 44 percent of the city's ADUs are being rented out below the market rate. Most are rented for less than the average one-bedroom apartment.

"ADUs are a promising component of addressing our housing shortage and housing crisis," Eudaly said as she voted for the ordinance. "This is a very targeted waiver meant to encourage people to develop the housing that we actually need."

The ordinance requires the city to survey landlords on what the ADUs are renting for, to assure that the city's housing goals are met. An annual report will be prepared for the council to monitor the success of the fee waiver.

Willamette Week

Portland City Commissioners Join Socialists' Call to Abolish Federal Immigration Agency: "ICE Is Stupid"

By Frankie Benitez

June 27, 2018

It's the second time this week that threats of leftist disruption emerged as polite dissent.

A group of around 50 socialists gathered at Portland City Hall today to demand that City Council not to cooperate with ICE and not to use police force to break down the occupation at the Portland ICE building.

The Portland chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America had threatened to disrupt the City Council meeting if they didn't get a hearing. But commissioners proved conciliatory—not only giving the socialists a time to speak, but agreeing that ICE should be abolished.

On June 20, Portland DSA wrote an open letter to the City Council, which demanded that the city stop all cooperation with ICE, the Joint Terrorism Task Force and Homeland Security, and called on Mayor Ted Wheeler not to send officers to the Occupy ICE camp. (That same day, Wheeler had already pledged not to send police to break up the encampment.)

Wheeler was not at today's meeting, an absence that was planned weeks beforehand, according to City Commissioner Chloe Eudaly.

Eudaly and City Commissioner Amanda Fritz joined the protesters in calls to abolish ICE.

"I visited the [camp] site on Monday. I joined the growing chorus of voices calling for the abolition of ICE," Eudaly said. She said that as far as she knew Wheeler still maintains that Portland police will not be sent to the occupation to break it up.

"As an immigrant I know that we don't have compassionate, reasonable and enforceable immigration laws," said City Commissioner Amanda Fritz. "And until we do, ICE is stupid."

"I don't support spending Portland taxpayers money in investing police time doing whatever they are doing, which we don't know. Even as a council member I don't know [what's being done] with the Joint Terrorism Task Force," Fritz said. (Task force operations require a security clearance, which several Portland mayors haven't received.)

One representative from the Democratic Socialists spoke on their demands for the City Council, saying that the council needs to take the steps outlined in the letter in order to maintain the value of a sanctuary city.

"ICE didn't even exist when my father came to this country. But since its creation they have destroyed millions of lives across the country," said DSA co-chair Olivia Katbi Smith. "Ripping babies from from their parents' arms, sending people who are just seeking asylum to their deaths, this is how ICE functions by design. They are a terrorist organization."

Today's protest marked the second time this week that threats of disruption from the left dissipated, in the event, into polite dissent.

An anonymous group of protesters had warned they would interfere with Canadian professor Jordan Peterson's June 25 speaking engagement at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall. (Peterson has been a vocal skeptic of gender fluidity and an opponent of gender-neutral language.)

In fact, the protest against Peterson was civil—with about 20 members of the DSA holding up signs outside the concert hall, then leaving before Peterson spoke.

Portland Police Saw Right-Wing Protesters as “Much More Mainstream” Than Leftist Ones

*By Katie Shepherd
June 27, 2018*

Deleted scenes from a protest review may bolster activist suspicions.

Newly released [draft reports](#) from a city review of how Portland police handled dueling demonstrations last summer reveal cops admitting what activists have long suspected: They saw right-wing protesters as less of a threat than leftist ones.

"One lieutenant felt the right-wing protesters were 'much more mainstream' than the left-wing protesters," the draft report reads, "with a group that was diverse in their viewpoints and tactics."

The Portland Independent Police Review received numerous complaints from members of the public after a far-right group called Patriot Prayer held a rally across from City Hall last June.

Thousands of Portlanders protested the rally, which took place a week after the fatal stabbings on a MAX train by a man who had attended a previous Patriot Prayer march. Riot cops quickly clashed with antifascist protesters, leading to a nearly yearlong review of police actions.

IPR released a report May 31. It found that police had more robust communication with Patriot Prayer organizers by exchanging frequent text messages, and officers viewed the protesters on the left as "volatile."

Now WW has obtained the longer, draft versions of that report via a public records request. In those drafts, a Portland police officer told investigators that Patriot Prayer was "much more mainstream" than their leftist counterparts.

The final review also left out criticisms of the Portland Police Bureau's record-keeping on June 4 and cut details describing how police stored digital photos of hundreds of protesters' IDs. IPR also cut a section of the draft that explored how the bureau would respond to a protester of any political stripe who assisted in an arrest.

Here are some of the deleted passages included in the draft reports:

Portland police viewed right-wing protesters more favorably.

"One lieutenant felt the right-wing protesters were "much more mainstream" than the left-wing protesters, with a group that was diverse in their viewpoints and tactics."

Independent Police Review left out a section related to a right-wing protester assisting in an arrest. That's perhaps because the protester was assisting a federal officer, not a Portland cop.

"Multiple community members contacted IPR with their concern about perceived bias by the Police Bureau after video circulated on social media of an individual affiliated with Patriot Prayer assisting a federal officer arresting a counter-protester.

"Chief Marshman responded that it was 'not uncommon if an officer is struggling with somebody or trying to arrest somebody for a member of the public to either render assistance or just ask,' during instances which occur 'out of the protest arena.' Chief Marshman indicated he has had citizens assist with an arrest or had civilians 'stand by and watch to make sure other people don't enter into the scuffle that's going on in the moment' a 'number of times.'"

After protests, Portland police sometimes reference police reports that don't exist.

"Officers working large protests sometimes operate under the impression that events have been documented when they haven't. In a previous investigation regarding police actions during a protest in February 2017, IPR discovered that multiple officers cited reports written by other officers that were never written."

A law professor advised IPR that protesters photographed by police might have a legal claim.

"Professor Appleman indicated she had not heard of any protesters previously being photographed by police for disorderly conduct... She indicated a protester could claim damage had police entered their information into a photo database."

IPR left out details about where and how the photographs of protesters' IDs were stored.

"In a June 21 memo, Chief Marshman wrote to Mayor Wheeler that the photographs taken during the mass detention were uploaded to the Police Bureau's Digital Image Management System (DIMS)... The Police Bureau told IPR all photos taken by police personnel on June 4

were still in DIMS and would be retained permanently by the Police Bureau unless they were explicitly ordered to be removed."

The Portland Mercury

Hall Monitor: Out of Focus

By Alex Zielinski

June 27, 2018

Portland's Equity Lens Has Some Blind Spots

Portland is very proud of its equity lens. Flip through any new city policy or report and you'll see the phrase jump out at you—a subtle reminder to any reader that the city is incredibly woke. In theory, it's great to know Portland's looking at big issues through a filter that considers race, gender, poverty, disability, and any other factors that disadvantage communities and individuals. In practice, though? That lens comes with a few blind spots.

For example, Portland has yet to use that equality lens to examine the city's 108 advisory boards and committees, the volunteer-led groups that hash out city issues—involving anything from police reform to budget cuts—before the ideas reach city council.

Anyone with an extra hour or two a month can volunteer to join a committee. Anyone, that is, who subscribes to a newsletter that may mention it in passing; or stumbles upon a cluttered city website; or hears about it from a friend of a friend of a city staffer. Anyone who knows that city committees are things that exist. (Did you? Probably not!)

Unsurprisingly, the majority of people who apply to join a committee in Portland are those who apply for everything: white men. By now, you've hopefully seen the data that cis white men systematically overestimate their qualifications for any role, while women, people of color, members of the queer community, and other minority groups severely underestimate their ability to succeed in the same role.

"Just like in the rest of our society, men tend to volunteer for everything and anything," says City Commissioner Amanda Fritz, who says she's watched this cycle repeat itself for decades. As someone who's occasionally been the only woman on a committee, she also knows how "unpleasant" it can be to be the minority in the room.

At last week's city council session, Fritz stopped a vote that would have appointed five more men to the city's all-male Alternative Technology Committee. "There doesn't appear to be anyone who appears to be a woman on this committee," Fritz noted. "Why is that?"

"It could be no women applied?" a city staffer replied. "I'm not really sure." Fritz asked her to go back and bring back a few female nominees.

Unlike in other areas of the city, the process of appointing individuals to advisory committees doesn't come with an equity lens. There's no standard for guaranteeing the members of, say, the Golf Advisory Committee or the Floating Structures Board of Appeals represent the diverse communities impacted by their work.

Departments can request help from the Office of Equity and Human Rights (OEHR) to make more equitable committee choices, but it's an optional step.

“We’re kind of like vampires,” says OEHR spokesperson Jeff Selby. “We have to be invited into your house before we can enter.” That means, he says, there’s little consistency in member diversity across these committees.

But wait! There’s hope. In November, the city council approved a resolution that would create stricter standards for advisory boards and committees. According to Suk Rhee, director of the Office of Neighborhood Involvement (soon to be renamed “Office of Community and Civic Life”), she’ll be hiring someone in the next few months whose sole job is to create those standards.

“We’re not interested in tokenism,” Rhee says. “But we do need different perspectives to benefit from our city’s diversity.”

Will new policies help bring more voices to our currently scattered and unbalanced committee system? It’s likely. But, as Fritz notes, new rules can only go so far.

“We can create new policies until we’re blue in the face,” she says. “But we can’t do much until we change hearts and minds.”

Portlanders Ask City Council to "Do Better" at Protecting Vulnerable Citizens from Trump Agenda

*By Alex Zielinski
June 27, 2018*

An undocumented immigrant. A Muslim refugee. The daughter of an immigrant. Those who testified before Portland City Council this morning came with serious, life-changing concerns about how recent White House and US Supreme Court decisions will impact their future.

"I am undocumented. I am directly being affected by this," said Christian Calzada, addressing city commissioners. "So please, take action. Be brave. Use your privilege. Use your power."

Calzada and dozens of others concerned about Donald Trump's attitude about anyone who isn't white or Christian (or, let's be real, male) filled council chambers this morning, asking commissioners to protect Portlanders from a federal firestorm of bigotry and intolerance.

"I was so strong until yesterday, but I now feel so weak," said Jamal Dhar, a Somali Muslim refugee who immigrated to the US 20 years ago. He said the Supreme Court's decision to uphold Trump's travel ban on majority-Muslim countries has left him feeling hopeless.

For most who spoke, that starts with the city dropping out of the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF), the program that turns at least two Portland police officers into informants for the federal government, namely the FBI. That relationship also means officers can easily collaborate with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents.

"As someone from a Muslim family, I am begging you to withdraw from the JTTF," said Olivia Katbi Smith. "President Trump has made it clear he plans to target people based on their religion, national origin, and political beliefs. Portland cannot continue to participate in this task force without recognizing that you are complicit in whatever actions ICE and FBI are taking to harm these communities."

Commissioner Chloe Eudaly said she's met with the FBI to learn more about the JTTF. Both she and Commissioner Amanda Fritz hinted their support at voting to withdraw from the task force

and thanked those testifying for having the courage to speak up. Mayor Ted Wheeler was absent from today's council session.

While the mayor's office has said Portland is a sanctuary for refugees and undocumented citizens, and said "all are welcome here," and said it will fight back against the Trump administration—it seems Portlanders are ready to see those words in action.

"I'm watching the country that I immigrated to fall apart in front of me. The only thing we can do is act locally—and we need you to act locally," said Jacob Bureros, who immigrated to the US from the Philippines when he was 15. "We need you to take extraordinary measures. Not just walk the line, not just do the bare minimum. You have so much more power than all of us because you voice the collective power of Portland. Please voice our outrage, please step up."

Bureros is one of the hundreds of Portlanders who've spent the past week at the Occupy ICE protest that's positioned itself outside a regional ICE office building. For the past two days, federal police have been handing out flyers to people camped out at the protest, warning them of breaking federal laws.

In his testimony, Bureros acknowledged the protesters are breaking the law. But: "What about the crimes against humanity that the federal government is committing?"

"So many people are down there putting their life on the line," he continued. "They're getting threatened with federal charges, but what can we do? What other recourse do we have?"

Eudaly said she plans to meet with city attorneys to see if council can revoke ICE's permit to use the SW Macadam building—a local attempt to abolish ICE.

"ICE is not reasonable, compassionate, or enforceable," said Fritz, who immigrated from the United Kingdom decades ago.

Both Commissioner Dan Saltzman and Commissioner Nick Fish sat quietly throughout the testimony. Neither responded to the groups' concerns. Fritz politely reminded the room that "we will have a new commissioner in November."

June Schuman, a member of the city's New Portlander Commission, reminded commissioners that they have a change to right the wrongs made by commissioners before them.

"When people of Japanese descent were actively taken away from Portland 70 years ago, Portland City Council actively participated in the process, and good people remained silent," she said. "Let's not repeat the mistakes of the past. Let's get beyond the superficial pronouncements."