

The Portland Tribune

Sources: Warning Sign Lawsuit In Works

By Jim Redden

October 25, 2018

Plus, Candidates question Wheeler's protest plan and Oregon voters really think the rest of the country is different.

Attorney John DiLorenzo has been retained by a group of owners of unreinforced masonry building to challenge the Portland City Council's recent requirement that all such landlords must post signs warning they could collapse during earthquakes.

DiLorenzo, who won a \$10 million settlement with the city over improper water and sewer bureau spending, says the requirement has several legal problems, including being based on an unreliable list of so-called URMs and different schedules for when different classes of building owners must post the signs. Buildings owned by private companies must post them by next March, but those owned by nonprofit organizations and school districts have years to fully comply.

The council approved the requirement on Oct. 10 as a compromise to requiring owners to bring all URMs up to earthquake standards, which is considered unaffordable. Owners argue the sign requirement will decrease the value of their buildings.

Candidates question Wheeler's plan

City Hall insiders and political observers are speculating how the City Council will change when either activist Jo Ann Hardesty or Multnomah Council Commissioner Loretta Smith replaces outgoing Commissioner Dan Saltzman in January.

One indication is something they might not actually vote on: the ordinance Mayor Ted Wheeler has said he will introduce to restrict planned protests by groups with histories of fighting in the past. Saltzman was the only council member to support it in a survey published by the Oregonian on Oct. 19. The others said something must be done to reduce violent confrontations, but wanted more public input and expressed First Amendment concerns.

In response to a question by the Portland Tribune, both Hardesty and Smith also said they wanted more legal and public input, something Saltzman did not mention. Hardesty went even further, saying it should not be considered until the council received the pending report on the ongoing investigation into accusations that Portland police overreacted to the confrontation between right wing Patriot Prayer members and counter-protesters on Aug. 14.

"Because if police are already attacking unarmed counter-protesters, it may show bias in how they would implement new powers. Plus the community is waiting to find out how the on-scene supervisors failed to control the response," Hardesty said.

Things really do look different here

Political pundits frequently refer to the West Coast as the Left Coast, and portray it as a vanguard of the resistance to the Trump Administration. But a recent Oregon Public Broadcasting poll confirms that Oregon voters really do view the state differently than the rest of the country.

According to the DHM Research poll taken in early November, Oregon voters are evenly split — 42 to 42 percent — on whether the state is moving in the right direction or is on the wrong track.

But 56 percent of voters said the United States is on the wrong track, with only 36 percent saying it was moving in the right direction.

As expected, the difference was even greater in the traditionally liberal tri-county area that includes Portland. There, 50 percent said Oregon is moving in the right direction and 65 percent said the United States is on the wrong track.

Willamette Week

Multnomah County Planning to Move Hazelnut Grove Homeless Village to St. Johns

*By Anamika Vaughn
October 24, 2018*

Amid Portland's growing housing crisis, a controversial camp could be moving west.

An empty lot in St. Johns is slated to become the newest site for an official homeless village. It could soon become a permanent site for Hazelnut Grove, which formed in 2015.

Overlook residents have repeatedly sought to push the camp out of their neighborhood and into a new location. In October 2017, Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler declared that the camp had to move after communications between the camp organizers and Overlook neighborhood association broke down. No immediate action was taken, and the camp stayed.

The Overlook Neighborhood Association has been working closely with city and Multnomah County officials to find a new location for the camp. The new site in St. Johns can easily be hooked up to an existing sewer line, and should offer a sustainable new location for the village.

“We are hopeful that this time it’s going to happen,” said Chris Trejbal, chair of the Overlook Neighborhood Association. “We’ve been promised by two mayors now that it’s going to happen and it hasn’t. I’m optimistic that this time the move will actually take place.”

Multnomah County's Joint Office of Homeless Services hopes to have the lot—located on North Roberts Avenue, next to Harvest Homes Inc retirement village—ready by April 2019. It will likely house around 20 to 25 adults.

Trejbal says that conversations still need to take place about what will happen to the current Hazelnut Grove site after the move. It is currently unclear who will be paying for and doing the cleanup, as well as how to keep the site from becoming a new camp.

Denis Theriault, communications director for the Joint Office of Homeless Services, says the decision to use the St. Johns site has been made. But the county is still in talks with an organization to work with the village: Do Good Multnomah.

Do Good Multnomah is a non-profit that currently provides emergency shelter for 25 homeless veterans. They recently worked with Clackamas County to open a Veteran's Village in September.

The unauthorized homeless village, Hazelnut Grove, currently located on North Greeley near North Interstate, would need to agree to new rules including working closely with the nonprofit.

Immediate neighbors to the St. Johns lot have already been notified of the project, and Theriault says there is a lot of community support in St. Johns for these kinds of alternative-housing projects.

Theriault says the county intends the village to look a lot like the Kenton Women's village, with portable sleeping pods set up in an open space combined with other common area structures, such as a kitchen or showers.

In a letter sent to neighbors outlining the project, Marc Jolin, Joint Office of Homeless Services director, said the residents of the alternative shelter will have to abide by the same safety rules as a traditional shelter and are expected to be good neighbors.

"Our safe and successful experiences with Dignity Village, Right 2 Dream Too and the Kenton Women's Village (where the women built a float that won first place in the 2018 St. Johns Parade!) demonstrate how well an alternative shelter can be integrated into a community while helping their residents stabilize and transition into permanent housing," Jolin wrote in the letter.

The Guardian published an article earlier this year, which reported that crime rates actually go down after these alternative-housing villages are built:

"When Right 2 Dream Too moved in mid-2017 to its current home in Portland's commercial Lloyd Center neighborhood, crime went down 10%, versus a 7% citywide rise. Crime went up 28% in the neighborhood it vacated."

Portland Parks & Recreation Bureau Asks Workers to Take Time Off If They Want to Join “Get Out the Vote” Drive

*By Rachel Monahan
October 24, 2018*

GOTV effort won't include workers from parks, water and BES unless they take time off.

In an email to staff today, Portland Parks & Recreation director Kia Selley told bureau staff that they won't be given time during their work day to participate in the novel "Get Out the Vote" canvassing effort being launched in Portland City Hall.

As WW reported yesterday, City Commissioner Chloe Eudaly has invited city workers to join her in a nonpartisan GOTV effort on city time. On Nov. 2, the Friday before election day, she'll rally city workers at City Hall and send them out to knock on doors in the late afternoon.

It's illegal for public employees to advocate for or against measures or for a political candidate. But there's nothing preventing them from giving out information on how to vote and where to get nonpartisan information on whom to vote for, as Eudaly's effort aims to do.

Nonetheless, her initiative has raised questions, especially in a heated Oregon election where turnout could decide the governor's race, among others.

Commissioner Nick Fish, who oversees parks, decided that out of "an abundance of caution" to require workers to take time off.

Portland Parks & Recreation is the third bureau where workers will need to ask for time off to participate.

Eudaly's invitation specifically excluded workers from the Water Bureau and the Bureau of Environmental Services, who will also be required to take time off to participate.

That's because the utility bureaus are funded by ratepayers and may run afoul of rules that require those funds to be strictly used for relevant work.

Greg Chaimov, a lawyer with Davis Wright Tremaine, says employees who participate during work hours would not necessarily run afoul of elections law but could present other problems.

"There are laws that require public funds to be used for specific public purposes," says Chaimov. "For someone who is funded by water bills, it might not be appropriate to have that person go out."

Full email from the bureau director is below:

From: Selley, Kia

Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2018 8:57 AM

To: Parks – Parks and Rec All <ParksandRecAll@portlandoregon.gov>

Subject: Message from the Director – FW: Join Me to Get Out the Vote!

Good afternoon Parks colleagues,

I want to thank Commissioner Eudaly for her leadership in providing this opportunity for City of Portland staff to increase voter participation.

As Commissioner Eudaly's email notes, bureau permission is required to attend the event during City work time. For PP&R staff, if you are interested in participating, please work with your managers/supervisors to receive the necessary approval: while your manager/supervisor may be able to release you from work, it will not be City paid time and this time off will need to go through the typical time off approval process and be deducted from your accrued vacation time.

Please understand that, in some cases, necessary coverage issues may prohibit managers/supervisors from approving vacation time for some staff.

Warm regards,

Kia

The Portland Mercury

Mayor Wheeler Hires KOIN's Eileen Park as Communications Director

*By Alex Zielinski
October 24, 2018*

Mayor Ted Wheeler has appointed longtime TV journalist Eileen Park as his newest communications director.

In a press release sent this morning, Wheeler said Park's media background will help shape the city's messaging during "a time of rapid change in Portland... when slogans outpace the facts."

Park joined KOIN as a weekend news anchor in 2015 after years working as a TV reporter in North Carolina, Wisconsin, Washington, and New York. Her last day at KOIN was Friday, October 19. She will replace Michael Cox—who is now Wheeler's chief of staff—as the mayor's communications director.

Wheeler's office announced a new communications strategy over the summer—one that promised monthly press conferences and a new press room at city hall—after growing media requests for better access and transparency on the third floor. Park's hire appears to be the latest step toward creating a more journalist-friendly office.

“News and information now move at the speed of light, and government has to catch up,” Park said in the press release. “As Communications Director, you will be hearing about the issues that affect Portlanders daily lives and see the incredible work they continue to do daily, packaged in a way you haven’t seen coming out of a political office before.”

Shortly after this morning's announcement, Park posted this promise on Twitter: Portland, I'm all in. Here we go. #TeamTed.

The Daily Journal of Commerce

Reservoir Improvement Project Progressing

By Chuck Slothower

October 24, 2018

Portland's first chief water engineer, Isaac Smith, identified a pair of ravines flowing down the West Hills and determined in the early 1890s that the location would serve as a suitable spot for a reservoir for West Portland.

The Portland Water Bureau is now in the midst of a \$190 million project to shore up Smith's site. As it turned out, the Washington Park site has a large landslide that pushes against the reservoir. Plus the structure was determined to be at risk of failure in a massive earthquake. Also, the reservoir's open-air design was deemed unwise.

Construction to address those issues began in 2016. A two-year pause is scheduled in 2020-21 to allow the reservoir to settle. Then a reflecting pool for visitors will be built atop the reservoir, along with other features. Completion is scheduled for 2024.

The reservoir walls will be surrounded with blocks of a product called Geofam, which looks like Styrofoam and is used to cushion the reservoir from the crush of land gradually pressing down the hill. Instruments will be placed with the Geofam to monitor its compression. Eventually, the foam will have to be replaced.

“We can't stop the slide,” said Stan VandeBergh, a West Yost Associates principal engineer who has stayed with the project since retiring from the Water Bureau. “We just have to manage it crushing against the reservoir, and that's how we're proposing to do it.”

Hoffman Construction is serving as general contractor. Participation of women- and minority-owned businesses is at 32 percent – above the city's goal of 22 percent, said Cary Bubenik, operations manager for Hoffman Construction.

Sub-bids for about \$15 million of work on the reflecting pools and other amenities will be available in 2021 or 2022, Bubenik said.

Approximately 50 workers are on site each day. Much of the work now involves driving shafts up to 100 feet underground. The network of 176 shafts – reinforced with no. 18 rebar weighing 13.6 pounds per foot – will support the reservoir's weight. Pacific Foundation crews are installing the shafts at a rate of about two a day, Bubenik said.

A “toe block” concrete wall that’s 15 feet high, 15 feet deep and 900 feet long will help to hold back the landslide.

It’s all meant to shore up the reservoir site. The Washington Park reservoirs dated to 1894. Millions of gallons of water sitting in seismically vulnerable reservoirs uphill from downtown Portland came to be seen as an unacceptable risk.

“The driver of this project is seismic,” VandeBergh said.

The reservoir will be served by pipes made to twist instead of break during an earthquake. They’re being installed inside protective concrete so they won’t be pressed in by fill dirt.

Rebar cages, each measuring 80 to 100 feet in length and three to five feet in diameter, are staged at the new reservoir site before being lifted into drilled shafts. (Sam Tenney/DJC)

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The project repurposes two 1890s gatehouses that were made from poured concrete, then chiseled to look like masonry. The structures will house the systems used to filter the reflecting pools. The gatehouses received new floors and reinforced walls.

The new reservoir will actually have less storage capacity than the old ones – 12.4 million gallons, down from about 17 million. That’s because of the decision to retire the lower reservoir and concentrate storage in the upper vessel.

Construction managers have had to use creative staging for the project, which is hemmed in by roads. Traffic on Southwest Sherwood Boulevard is readily visible from the site. In the beginning of the project, Uber drivers were coming through the construction site on Southwest Murray Street, Bubenik said. A gate fixed that issue.

Hoffman Construction and the Water Bureau have engaged in extensive outreach to neighborhood groups and Washington Park institutions including the Oregon Zoo, Bubenik said.

The Portland Observer

E-Scooters Popular Survey Says

October 24, 2018

The results of a survey conducted to evaluate the riding habits, perceptions and safety of Portland’s e-scooters pilot program show that they’re a popular new transit option for residents and visitors alike and may be helping to reduce the number of cars on the road.

Portland Bureau of Transportation got over 4,500 respondents to a survey of 75,000 customers of Bird, Lime, and Skip, the three companies granted permission to operate e-scooters in the city. The motorized electronic scooters are reserved for rental use via smart phones.

The key survey findings were that the e-scooters are being used for both needed transportation and recreation, are popular among locals, and have replaced car trips, especially for visitors.

In addition, more residents and visitors preferred using e-scooters in the bike lane where they are allowed rather than on the side walk where they are prohibited. Many of them recorded their e-scooter experience as their first use of the city’s bike lanes.

The majority of users said they were familiar with most of the e-scooter regulations, including the requirement to wear a helmet. The e-scooter pilot is still ongoing and will conclude on Nov. 20. E-scooters won't be available after that until the city evaluates whether or not to adopt them long-term, officials said.