

Nick's Newsletter

240
NICK
FISH
Commissioner
of Public Works

Volume 4, January 2009

“I’m asking you to make a lasting commitment to make better the lives of your fellow Americans – a commitment that must endure beyond one day or even one presidency. I’m asking you to do your part, to roll up your sleeves and join in the work of remaking this nation.”

– President Barack Obama

Dear Friends,

The end of 2008 marks the completion of my first six months in office. Serving as your City Commissioner has been a great privilege. Thank you!



We have entered a new chapter here in City Hall. I am honored to serve as Commissioner of the bureaus of Housing and Parks & Recreation.

Photo courtesy Flickr user [ekai](#)

I am increasingly impressed by Portlanders’ commitment to improving our city, and I look forward to continued partnerships with the community in the year ahead.



BUREAU NEWS

Portland Housing Bureau – Building A New Powerhouse!

Three weeks ago, Mayor Adams and I announced the creation of a new City of Portland Housing Bureau. The new bureau will be a combination of the talent and resources of the Bureau of Housing and Community Development (BHCD) and the Portland Development Commission (PDC.)

Once the policies, programs, and human and fiscal resources of the two bureaus are aligned, we will be ready to carry out an ambitious housing agenda, securing Portland's reputation as America's most livable city. We will focus on:

- Ending chronic homelessness;
- Protecting our most vulnerable residents;
- Preserving and expanding our affordable housing supply;
- Assuring housing stability; and
- Connecting our investments in housing to other strategies that support families and schools in vibrant, equitable neighborhoods.

This list illustrates, in a very concrete way, why Portland's prosperity depends on the work we will do together. I will communicate with you regularly on the progress of the transition through this newsletter, a new blog and [website](#), and meetings with staff and the community. In the meantime, staff contacts at PDC and BHCD will remain the same and pending projects will move forward as planned.

BHCD and PDC have several things in common. Both organizations have strong traditions of community involvement, out-of-the-box thinking and working to the highest professional standards. I intend to build on these strengths as together we serve the housing needs of everyone in our community. If you have any questions or concerns, I encourage you to contact me at nick@ci.portland.or.us or Kate Allen at kate.allen@ci.portland.or.us.

Portland Parks & Recreation – The Ball is in Our Court!

I am excited to be named Commissioner-in-Charge of [Portland Parks & Recreation](#). It is an honor to follow in the footsteps of Commissioner Dan Saltzman, whose leadership and commitment I have admired. In my dual role as Portland's Parks and Housing Commissioner, the first person to hold both positions, I will look for unique opportunities for collaboration and innovation.



Like housing, parks are not a luxury, but part of our basic infrastructure. Parks make an enormous contribution to the health and livability of our community.



Over the past year, I have heard from Portlanders across the city about how much they cherish their parks, trails, recreation programs and natural areas. I have also heard from people who live in underserved neighborhoods about their need for more natural spaces and recreation choices. As your new Parks

Commissioner, I will work to ensure equity of parks access for Portlanders across our community. For more information, please contact Hannah Kuhn at hannah.kuhn@ci.portland.or.us.

Topped with Two More Exciting New Assignments...



In addition to Housing and Parks, I have been named the City Council liaison to [Elders In Action](#). Elders has more than 150 volunteers who work to solve problems, explore issues, and work with the community to better serve older adults in our community. My Public Advocate and

Elders In Action liaison, George E. Hocker, can be reached at george.hocker@ci.portland.or.us.

My office will also take the lead in updating the City's minority and women owned business contracting requirements. This year, the [City of Portland](#) and [PDC](#) will be examining current methods and use the information to develop new strategies aimed at removing marketplace barriers for contractors. Awarding contracts in an equitable fashion to minority- and women-owned businesses helps our local economy while ensuring access and fairness within our contracting practices. For more information, please contact Carmen Rubio at crubio@ci.portland.or.us.



Portland Fire & Rescue Responds!

One of my most rewarding experiences as a City Commissioner has been my work with Portland Fire & Rescue (PF&R.) For the brave men and women who wear the uniform, the adage “We Respond” is more than a motto - it is a calling. My family and I attended many Sunday night dinners at stations around the city, where we met many of the remarkable men and women in the bureau.



Pictured: Deputy Chief Schmidt, Chief Klum, and Commissioner Fish

Last month Mayor Adams assigned PF&R to Commissioner Randy Leonard. In my parting words about the bureau, I want to acknowledge the steady leadership of my friend Chief John Klum.

Together, we have made a lot of progress:

- Planning for the centennial of the Campbell Memorial;
- Expanding opportunities for women and minorities;
- Developing Presumptive Cancer legislation;
- Planning for new stations and equipment; and
- Developing a new fire safety inspection program.

OTHER NEWS

Thank you, Portland!

This winter we experienced an unprecedented severe cold weather spell that presented a direct threat to the health and safety of some of our community’s most vulnerable residents.

Fortunately, in 2008 City Council funded \$200,000 for winter warming centers. The arrival of the worst snow storm since



the 1960s prompted a coordinated emergency severe weather response by the City of Portland, Multnomah County, TriMet, churches, and nonprofits. The Portland Office of Emergency Management took the lead in developing our first ever emergency response plan.

I want to acknowledge the tremendous work that all our community partners, including:

POEM

BHCD

Portland Fire & Rescue

Water Bureau

BDS

Red Cross

Portland Police Bureau

Multnomah County

211info

TriMet

JOIN

Human Solutions

Transition Projects

“Can We Help?”

Portland Rescue Mission

Union Gospel Mission

Janus Youth Programs

Salvation Army

Hundreds of volunteers

Many, many others!

Because of their good work, many lives were saved. I have never been prouder of our community.

Congratulations to Kay Toran, Outstanding Public Servant

Last month Volunteers of America (VOA) Oregon President and CEO Kay D. Toran was named Non-Profit CEO of the Year by the Portland Business Journal. Kay had led VOA since 1999, launching innovative domestic violence intervention and prisoner re-entry programs while serving vulnerable populations through child abuse prevention, substance abuse rehabilitation, and care for seniors and disabled adults. Congratulations, Kay.



...and just for fun, a Fish Haiku

(As read on Livewire on December 18, 2008)

Give your bucks to arts
Our state will reimburse you!
Yes, there's Santa Claus!

Who to Call in City Hall?

With all of the new bureau assignments, you may have questions in the coming year. Remember, you can always log on to www.portlandonline.com or speak with the knowledgeable staff at 503-823-4000.



Our City Referral line is also the hub for the new [Portland is Better Together](#) campaign, making it easier to access helpful information, opportunities and services.



Short Takes: Where we've been and where we're going

- 12/18 Red Cross Severe Weather Shelter at Foursquare Church
- 12/31 New Year's Eve Pow Wow with [NARA](#) (Native American Rehabilitation Association)
- 1/5 Mayor Adams' Swearing-in Ceremony
- 1/13 Judge '[We the People](#)' competition
- 1/15 Launch of the [Portland is Better Together](#) campaign
- 1/19 Skanner's 23rd Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. breakfast
- 1/19 24th Annual 'Keep the Dream Alive MLK Tribute' at the Highland Center
- 1/20 Citizen Review Commission meeting
- 1/22 [Friends of Trees](#) 20th Anniversary Celebration
- 1/27 Parks Environmental Community Input Session
- 1/27 Rose City Park Neighborhood Association meeting
- 2/13 [Portland Jazz Festival](#) begins



Photo Courtesy of Portland Jazz Festival

Staff list:

We look forward to hearing from you!

George Hocker, Public Advocate
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As always, please feel free to contact my office with any ideas, questions, or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nick Fish". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "N" and a stylized "F".

Nick Fish