

The Oregonian

Does Portland deserve a better city council? Live chat with editorial board's Erik Lukens, noon Wednesday

By The Oregonian

The Oregonian editorial board argued on Sunday that the city of Portland suffers from unimpressive leadership, pointing to, among other things, the city's fumbling of the West Hayden Island annexation and the refusal of commissioners to support legislation in February that would allow the city to manage its unruly downtown sidewalks more effectively. These and other leadership failures, the editorial board says, make one "wonder sometimes whether the Portland City Council actively pursues mediocrity or is simply incapable of achieving anything else."

Do you think Portland deserves better, or do you believe the current council is doing a good job? Express your opinion or pose questions for the editorial board's Erik Lukens in the comments below. Then come back Wednesday at noon for a live chat with Erik.

Willamette Week

Murmurs

- Lawsuits be darned—Portland has begun distributing the money it raised from the Arts Tax. The city has collected \$7.9 million from the \$35-a-person tax voters approved in 2012 to fund elementary-school arts teachers and arts nonprofits. This month, Portland has divided \$3.3 million among the six school districts in the city. At the moment, though, arts groups are getting the fuzzy end of the lollypop. The city has given only \$200,000 to the Regional Arts & Culture Council, and officials say RACC will have to wait for delinquent taxpayers to pay up before more money comes its way. One of those refusing to pay is Lewis & Clark Law School professor Jack Bogdanski, whose lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the Arts Tax is one of two cases under appeal. City Commissioner Nick Fish says Portland decided not to wait for the legal decisions. "The fact is, 62 percent of the voters directed us to give this money to kids," Fish says. "We have an obligation to fulfill that mandate."