

The Oregonian

Mayor Charlie Hales' staff faces second accusation of violating election law in water district campaign: Portland City Hall Roundup

By Brad Schmidt

The proponent of a new Portland utility district has filed a second elections law complaint against a member of Mayor Charlie Hales' staff.

This time Portland Public Water District leader Kent Craford is questioning activity by Josh Alpert, a policy director for Hales. Two months ago, Craford filed a complaint against Hales' spokesman, Dana Haynes.

The proposed water district would end the City Council's rate-setting and oversight responsibilities of the Portland Water Bureau and Bureau of Environmental Services. Voters will decide the issue May 20.

In a letter to the Elections Division of the Secretary of State's Office, Craford claims that Alpert made a presentation April 2 against the water district at the law offices of Tonkon Torp.

"Mr. Alpert, a salaried employee of Mayor Hales acting in his capacity as the Mayor's representative, used City resources on City time, likely including preparing for the presentation in addition to delivering it," Craford's complaint reads. "This is a clear violation" of the law prohibiting public employees from campaigning.

The mayor's office declined to comment.

On Feb. 12, Craford filed a complaint against Haynes over a press release that included an explosive quote from Hales. The Portland Mercury reported that Hales never said the quote -- which criticized the ballot effort -- and Haynes instead authored it during the weekend.

State officials are investigating the Haynes complaint but have yet to make a determination.

"We're still looking at the complaint," said Tony Green, a spokesman for the agency.

Green said officials are "looking at both internal and external factors" but declined to elaborate. Asked if he thought the office would make a decision before the election, he said: "We have no timeline for making a decision."

The Portland Tribune

Jordan honored with day of remembrance

By Jim Redden

Mayor Charlie Hales issued a mayoral proclamation Wednesday morning honoring the late Charles Jordan.

Hales proclaimed April 9, 2014, as a day of remembrance for the former City Commissioner and Portland Parks & Recreation director, who died last Friday at the age of 77.

Friends and former colleagues offered their thoughts prior to this morning's formal City Council session on Jordan's impressive and lasting legacy, and how he will be remembered.

"He loved every color in the rainbow of humanity," said retired PP&R Director Zari Santner, who succeeded Jordan as head of the bureau. "Because he knew that diversity would increase vitality for all. His most enduring gift was to inspire".

Jordan's son Dion, a Portland Parks board member, was on hand to accept the Mayor's proclamation.

"Thanks for all the love, condolences and support you all have shared with me and my family," said an emotional Dion Jordan as he addressed the Mayor and City Commissioners. "My father...was something special."

Recalling a conversation with his father from a few years ago, Dion remembered Charles Jordan reflecting on his life's work.

"He said, 'I never set out to do all this. I never set out to accomplish the things I've done'," recalled Dion. "He said he only wanted to do one thing, and that was the right thing. That he wanted to treat everybody right, love everyone unconditionally, and then he felt like his life would be meaningful. And it has been."

The proclamation, which lists many of Jordan's accomplishments, reads as follows:

Whereas, Mr. Charles Ray Jordan was appointed as Portland's first African American City Commissioner in 1974, and then publicly elected to his seat in 1976; and

Whereas, Charles Jordan served on the Portland City Council for ten years, and during his tenure led Portland Fire & Rescue, the Portland Police Bureau, and Portland Parks & Recreation; and

Whereas, in 1989, Charles Jordan was named Director of Portland Parks & Recreation, and under his leadership the bureau added 44 parks and natural areas; and

Whereas, Charles Jordan's leadership extended beyond Portland, and he became a leading national voice in the parks and recreation movement; and

Whereas, Charles Jordan understood the value of public parks and open spaces, wisely sharing that parks are "more than just fun and games"; and

Whereas, Charles Jordan was, above all else, passionate about access to parks and recreation programs for everyone, inspiring countless peers and other people to help themselves and their community; and

Whereas, Charles Jordan led Portland into a new era of parks and recreation, which earned Portland a National Gold Medal in 2011; and

Whereas, in honor of his service to the city, Commissioner Nick Fish dedicated the Charles Jordan Community Center in his name on July 22, 2012; and

Whereas, Charles Jordan passed away on April 4, 2014 at the age of 77;

Now, therefore, I, Charlie Hales, Mayor of the City of Portland, Oregon, the "City of Roses," do hereby proclaim April 9, 2014 to be a day of remembrance for Charles Jordan in Portland, and encourage all residents to observe this day.

Willamette Week

Water District Backers Complain Another Hales Staffer Campaigned Against Them Using City Time

By Aaron Mesh

The backers of a May ballot initiative to wrest control of Portland utilities from City Hall are accusing a second staffer in Mayor Charlie Hales' office of undermining them on the public dime.

Kent Craford and Floy Jones, co-petitioners on Measure, filed a complaint today with the state Elections Division. They allege that Hales' policy director Josh Alpert used city time and resources to give an April 2 presentation against the water district at the offices of downtown law firm Tonkin Torp.

"Mayor Charlie Hales has repeatedly flaunted Oregon election law," Craford says in a statement. "His actions evidence a disturbing trend—using City Hall employees simply [sic] an extension of his political machine."

Hales' office declined comment on the allegation.

"No, we're not commenting," says Hales' spokesman Dana Haynes—who the water district campaign previously accused of campaigning with city resources.

The enmity between the water district backers and Hales is hardly a secret.

The mayor has called the campaign "political terrorism," and said its supporters are "clowns." In his recent State of the City address, Hales described the district itself as "a costly and sinister scheme."

The Mercury

Hall Monitor Moving the Bull's-Eye

By Denis C. Theriault

POLICE BRASS have always insisted their contract with downtown's Galleria Target for overtime security work was a special-case "exception" to a strict policy that all but bans cops from taking on retail work—lest they be seen (perhaps unfairly) as stooges serving at the behest of private business.

When asked to explain that distinction last year ["The Best Cops Money Can Buy," News, Nov 20, 2013], Commander Bob Day, boss of downtown's Central Precinct, noted a peculiar condition of the contract that gets officers out of the clean-smelling, climate-controlled store.

Cops would still get \$63 an hour—overtime pay—for relatively easy work on a day off, but now they'd also have to perform regular street patrols, at least once an hour.

Day called that a community benefit. In essence, the bureau gets more cops on the streets—albeit the streets around one particularly well-heeled business—without having to stretch its budget any further.

"They're out on the sidewalk," he told me last year. "It's not just sitting at the door arresting shoplifters. That's my expectation."

Day has since renewed Target's security contract, the Mercury has learned—after letting it lapse in January after the busy holiday shopping season. The new version, which started March 18, will last at least through August.

And if this new round of security work and sidewalk work goes well, bureau officials confirm, it might no longer be an exception. It might be the new rule—and another tool against nuisance crimes for a bureau that's been beating a steady drum against the "disorder" associated with visible homelessness.

"The policy is being reviewed to factor those things in. There are different opinions on whether [security contracts] are good or bad or beneficial or not," says Sergeant Pete Simpson, the bureau's lead spokesman.

He directly linked the sidewalk patrols at Target to the bureau's other recent downtown efforts—including new foot patrols that launched last month.

That change could entice other businesses—currently shut out of the security game—to strike up deals similar to Target's. Imagine miniature versions of the city's Clean and Safe District, in which certain downtown businesses pay extra to put cops outside their doors—something businesses in more-troubled parts of town might never be able to afford.

That change would also be cheered by the rank-and-file—for expanding the pool of overtime work available. Right now, the bureau's security work is concentrated on minding traffic at major events like gun shows, festivals, and Blazers and Timbers games.

The 2009 policy against retail work was deeply unpopular. Though billed as a way to buff the bureau's public image, sources say it also was a stealth strike by then-Chief Rosie Sizer against then-Central Precinct Commander Mike Reese. Reese, of course, is now the chief.

Portland Copwatch's Dan Handelman was glad to see the initial Target contract had lapsed after the Mercury raised questions about it. He was horrified to hear it might now become institutionalized.

"It's a strange blurring of lines," he says. "That shouldn't be how our public entities are run."

Sweeping Up Effort to Clean Up Campsites Raises Questions for Advocates

By Dirk VanderHart

IT'S BEEN a steady refrain since last year. Advocates complain the city's homeless are having their valuables confiscated in campsite cleanups, with no recourse to get them back.

"We got—every single week—anecdotal evidence it was happening every night," Dana Haynes, spokesman for Mayor Charlie Hales, said in a recent interview.

But where did those sweeps occur, and who was carrying them out? Those are questions Haynes says complainants could never answer. "Nobody ever came and said, 'That's my stuff.'"

The outrage is perhaps inevitable fallout from what has been one of Hales' most visible focuses since last summer: curbing illegal campsites that pop up throughout town.

But it's also a good indicator of the potential promise, and fraught challenges around accountability, that come with Hales' latest move—contracting with a private security firm to streamline those sweeps.

"Is there a way for people on the streets to give feedback?" asks Israel Bayer, director of Street Roots. "And if there's anything out of bounds, will people have a place to complain?"

As first reported by the Mercury, the city began a new partnership with Pacific Patrol Services (PPS) on April 1. The company has long patrolled certain city parks, and keeps tabs on Portland's high-end condo buildings. Now, for at least the next three months, its staffers will be breaking up homeless campsites on city land, giving occupants a state-mandated minimum 24 hours' notice before taking possessions and tossing detritus.

The potential benefits are unquestionable. City staffers say data on campsite cleanups, for the first time, will be meticulously kept. And campsite occupants will have a central repository—on a bus line—where they can retrieve valuables. The new arrangement also will formalize how all city bureaus treat campsites, Haynes says.

But there are worries, too. Hales' office touted the fact that, in crafting the PPS deal, they brought in homeless advocates from Street Roots and JOIN to offer thoughts. But those advocates were invited only after a deal was inked—more to react than help form it. They tell the Mercury they've still got big questions.

Foremost: training and accountability. Many of the city's homeless already may have had negative experiences with PPS employees or similar security services, says Bayer.

"There are times that I do think it's unclear, when you're performing duties on behalf of a city," Bayer says, "what people's rights are."

Under state law, officials need to notify a social services organization when they flag a campsite. In Portland, that organization has long been JOIN.

Until now, it's fallen on cops to notify JOIN of impending campsite cleanups, says Executive Director Marc Jolin. In most cases, the organization is already familiar with sites and their occupants, so outreach workers don't visit every doomed site to offer services.

It's possible, Jolin concedes, that the new agreement will result in more work for his seven outreach workers. A more streamlined process could see smaller, more-remote campsites getting the boot. Everyone involved with the deal says it's too early to say.

Like Bayer, though, Jolin's primary concern is training.

"It's going to be critical," he says. "Whoever is going to be doing the work, it's going to be important that they have training broadly on homelessness in our community and what it means to be engaging with homeless folks who are sleeping out."

The city says it's on top of this. Though the three-month, \$35,000 contract began April 1, PPS won't begin dismantling sites until staff is fully briefed, Haynes says.

But anyone looking for a sensitive approach to these delicate matters on the part of PPS might be dismayed. A recent call from the Mercury, asking the company how it plans to go forward, was fielded by a guy who refused to give his name or talk about the situation.

"We don't make comments to the press about anything," he said before hanging up. "At any time."

The Daily Journal of Commerce

Audit: Room for improvement in how city handles some building permits

By Jeff McDonald

An audit released last week details a lack of consistency and documentation for how the city of Portland's Bureau of Development Services handles expired building permits.

City auditors found that BDS, which works with developers, builders and homeowners to guide them through the development process, needs to reassess its policies and practices for extending and canceling permits.

The audit found that the bureau's policies and practices were not always in line with city code, which gives customers 180 days to pass an inspection and another 180 days to pass final inspection. BDS also is often out of step with city code by extending permits that have been inactive for more than six months, according to the audit.

In addition, customer requests often are not well documented, and some notices of expiring permits are not sent out consistently.

"Permits should not have unlimited lives," auditors noted. "BDS should follow city code and close out permits that have been abandoned past a certain time threshold, and require the project to comply with newer, safer building codes."

Justin Wood, associate director of government affairs and communications at the Home Builders Association of Metro Portland, would like to see a process in place to ensure all holders of expiring permits get notified.

"They have good processes in place to notify a builder," Wood said. "But they've lacked the staff to fully follow up on those processes."

The city is in the process of hiring 18 additional employees at BDS, a step that will alleviate some of the issues, said City Commissioner Amanda Fritz, who oversees the bureau in her role as public utilities commissioner.

The city approved adding the additional staff, including one person who will be part of a team responsible for processing permit extension reminder letters, according to the city.

"It's getting more robust, but it's not where it was," Fritz said. "Permits are streaming in faster than we would like to take care of them."

Fritz and BDS Director Paul Scarlett co-wrote a letter to the city auditor that generally agrees with the audit recommendations. The bureau is developing a form that will be required to request an extension, which could remove some of the communications issues reported in the audit, according to the letter.

The bureau also is implementing a new permit management system called Information Technology Advancement Project (ITAP), which Fritz said should roll out by Dec. 2015.

"It will allow applicants to apply remotely online rather than going into permit center," she said. "The (system) will let us know if permits are outdated. It will improve coordination."

The Observer

Fighting Displacement

Skeptics say housing investment will not cure gentrification

By Donovan M. Smith

A plan to increase public monies for the construction of more affordable housing units in the gentrified neighborhoods of north and northeast Portland is drawing a mixed review.

“It doesn’t undo what was promised when the Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Area was established [in the year 2,000],” says Maxine Fitzpatrick, director of the Portland Community Reinvestment Initiative (PCRI) and co-chair of the Portland African American Leadership Forum (PAALF).

Fitzpatrick, says Mayor Charlie Hales’ recent proposal of adding \$20 million to affordable housing stock in the heavily gentrified neighborhoods in north and northeast Portland, would help black families and other disadvantaged populations both stay and return to the area, but says the eventual construction of new housing units would not by any means act as a cure to gentrification.

Hales’ proposal came last month after he converged with “50 leaders of the African-American community and neighborhood and business representatives,” to try to rescue a planned development of a Trader Joe’s grocery on northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Alberta Street that would get support from the Portland Development Commission.

Hales called for the additional housing support after PAALF made local and national headlines for their protests of the Trader Joe’s proposal in which they suggested the site should include construction of affordable housing in some capacity.

The specialty grocer was almost certainly going to build on the lot when the PDC deal was announced in November, but by January a Trader Joe’s spokesperson announced they were pulling out of the deal citing the community’s protest.

The city had already assured \$34.4 million to subsidize housing construction through 2021 that is reserved for low and moderate income people and families.

According to the report *Portland’s African American Community in Multnomah County: An Unsettling Profile*, by the Coalition of Communities of Color and School of Social Work at Portland State University, black people make up 18 percent of the local homeless population, compared to just 7 percent of the general population. African Americans are also overrepresented in emergency shelters and transitional housing.

Other key points from the 2013 report: Black residents of Portland have the lowest homeownership rate of all groups, including other minority groups; the black community has experienced the greatest number of housing foreclosures; black residents pay the highest percent of household income on housing; the experience of African-Americans in Portland has been marked by several cycles of displacement; and the median net worth for black households in 2011 was \$6,446, which was lower than it was in 1984 at \$7,150.

PCRI and Sabin Community Development Corporation are two nonprofit organizations that address housing in a culturally specific method for black people in the city. Sabin holds 120 units of affordable housing

The heightened publicity around gentrification also drew attention to Oregon’s 1999 ban on mandatory inclusionary zoning, which prevents local jurisdictions from ensuring construction of affordable housing in “neighborhoods of opportunity”.

Attorney Jenny Logan and the Housing Land Advocate board members worked to overturn the ban in 2013; the efforts resulted in a bill by Sen. Chip Shields and Rep. Reardon that year to repeal it.