

The Oregonian

No City Council meetings this week, 3 politicians out of the office: Portland City Hall Roundup

*By Andrew Theen
July 07, 2014*

The Portland City Council will not convene this week because three members of the elected body are out of the office.

Mayor Charlie Hales and Commissioners Nick Fish and Amanda Fritz will not be able to make their weekly meeting. There are no meetings scheduled for either Wednesday or Thursday.

In order to meet on official business, the City Council needs a quorum, or three members of the council.

This week marks the first cancelled meeting since December 26, according to the city clerk's office.

Fritz is traveling to England to visit family and will be back for the July 23 council meeting and Fish is out of the office.

Hales will be attending a "White Men as Diversity Partners" retreat.

What should Commissioner Dan Saltzman and Steve Novick do this week? Share your policy suggestions in the comment section.

Portland Parks & Recreation doesn't have a single tennis court east of Interstate 205

*By Brad Schmidt
July 06, 2014*

If this weekend's Wimbledon finals get you excited about playing tennis, don't go to east Portland looking for a match.

East of Interstate 205, the city's parks system doesn't offer a single tennis court.

Portland Parks & Recreation does have three courts at two parks between 82nd Avenue and the freeway. But the sole court at Montavilla Park is being replaced this summer with a new small-scale soccer court, called a futsal field. The two other courts are at Lents Park, just off 92nd Avenue.

Portland's eastern border extends in some places beyond 181st Avenue.

"We are aware of this," said Commissioner Amanda Fritz, who oversees the city's parks system.

Parks officials in 2008 noted low demand for the tennis court at Montavilla and suggested it could be decommissioned, provided the city talk with community members.

Fritz has now authorized a deal with the Portland Timbers to build a futsal field in place of the tennis court. Parks officials expect the new facility – used for small-scale soccer – will receive significantly more use. And the Montavilla neighborhood association supports the city's plan.

With more money, Fritz said, she'd like to have the Parks Bureau re-open four courts at Argay Park in east Portland that are now unplayable. Fritz plans to ask voters in November to approve a bond measure for up to \$68 million to fund parks repairs citywide.

Ken Gausman, 45, moved to east Portland two years ago and recently started playing tennis with his wife.

Although he didn't play at Montavilla – because it's more than 80 blocks from his home – he is troubled by the non-existent options for a part of town home to more than a quarter of the city's population.

"It's just kind of obvious when you look at a map and you see all the tennis courts everywhere but east Portland," he said.

Gausman wrote an email to Fritz noting that the city should add facilities in east Portland. Fritz agreed, but couldn't promise when the city might deliver.

Fritz recommended using school facilities -- and Gausman said he's now going to check out options at Parkrose High School.

"There's a lot of people out here," Gausman said. "We just don't have the facilities that the rest of the city does."

The Portland Tribune

City issues warnings on first day of new disabled parking rules

*By Peter Korn
July 7, 2014*

Portland parking code enforcement officers issued 24 warnings to drivers who had parked cars displaying disabled driver placards in the downtown area July 1, the first day for the city's new rules governing the disabled permits.

The new rules require drivers with disabled permits to pay for their metered spaces just like other drivers. It even gives them a bonus — a driver who has parked at and paid for a one-hour meter will actually get three hours of parking before a ticket can be issued. The 24 cars with warnings had no stubs indicating their drivers had paid.

A 2009 city task force report found that 20 percent of the parked cars in the downtown retail core had disabled placards. Until the new rules went into effect last week, drivers with the permits could park in any legal street parking space for as long as they wanted and without having to pay. Many of the cars with disabled permits parked downtown and in the Lloyd Center area all day.

According to parking experts, metered parking is intended to attract short-term drivers who come downtown to shop or take care of other errands. But the glut of all-day disabled parkers indicated those cars belonged to people who have driven downtown for work, the experts say. By parking on the street those drivers have been able to avoid having to pay for the parking they would otherwise purchase in a downtown garage — until now. They have also elicited complaints from shop owners who said their customers could not find nearby parking.

A Tribune story last July revealed that a few cities had experimented with one fundamental change — requiring people with disabled permits to pay for their metered parking. Those cities found that once they required drivers with disabled permits to pay meters, cars displaying placards and staying in spaces all day virtually disappeared.

The new Portland policy, with a number of exceptions, appears to be working, judging by the low number of warnings issued last Tuesday. In fact, the absence of cars parked with disabled permits was striking, according to one enforcement officer. Equally notable was the unusual number for free curbside parking spaces.

City Bureau of Transportation work to ease the transition might be the reason, says bureau spokeswoman Diane Dulken. Five weeks ago the bureau began printing brochures explaining the changes. The brochures were placed on parked cars displaying disabled placards downtown.

“People have been amply notified,” Dulken says.

Tickets with fines — the same fines that all drivers will pay if they don't plug the meter — have not yet been issued. According to Dulken, each car that displays a disabled placard and is parked without payment will get one warning. The next time that same car is found illegally parked at a meter a ticket will be the result.

The Portland Business Journal

Portland voters could get say in \$68M parks measure

*By Andy Giegerich
July 7, 2014*

That long-anticipated parks bond looks like it'll get plenty of play this month at Portland's City Council meetings.

Commissioner Amanda Fritz plans to ask the Council to refer the bond to voters at the group's July 24 meeting. In advance, she released a draft project list of efforts the bond could fund.

The bond would raise up to \$68 million. Both the Portland Parks Board and a citizen budget advisory committee recommended that the measure go to voters.

Backers said the bond would “address the most critical needs of our parks system,” which overall has some \$365 million in replacement and maintenance projects on the docket over the next decade.