

The Oregonian

Portland street fee: Transportation officials quietly release alternative versions of business fee

By Andrew Theen
July 15, 2014

At the tail end of a business committee meeting for a proposed street fee on Monday, Portland transportation officials said they were open to a "cocktail" of funding options.

Portland Bureau of Transportation officials distributed a few sheets of paper outlining potential funding options that would also raise up to \$53 million for street safety and maintenance projects.

The "cocktail" option could include raising the business income tax or using a combination of funding plans (some have already been presented publicly).

Here are a few options included on the PBOT handout:

- Business License fee increase of .86 percent (businesses with less than \$50,000 in gross receipts and nonprofits wouldn't pay)
- Business Gross receipts tax: also exempts businesses under the \$50,000 threshold
- Commercial Parking Tax: a tax levied on someone paying to park in a commercial parking lot or structure; a fee per commercial parking space.

For the first time, PBOT also distributed a list of "alternative" street fee scenarios.

(A reminder, under the current proposal, public agencies, nonprofits, school districts and households would all pay a monthly fee)

Here's the breakdown of those alternative options the business work group will take a closer look at in the coming weeks:

Clusters

- Business would be clustered based on a trip range (i.e. 1-5,000 trips) and pay a flat rate per cluster
- Clusters based on business type pay same cost per trip as other businesses with similar type

Cap

- Cap the number of trips that will be charged
- Cap monthly dollar amount charged to businesses

Constant

- Everyone pays the same cost per trip

Combination

- Businesses with less than \$50,000 (or some amount) in gross receipts pay a flat fee, businesses above that pay based on ITE (trip generation) model

Parking Space Model (Tigard's model)

- Tigard's code says any development that is commercial must have a minimum of 3.7 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet
- The fee is capped at 250 spaces. So no business pays more than roughly \$325 per month

Officials also included a list of funding ideas raised by the public at recent transportation town halls that could also raise revenue.

Suggestions: Use PDC Funds, studded tire tax, bicycle license fee, quit funding street car, tolling, payroll tax for non-Portland residents who work in the city, make rental car and hotel tax dedicated to proper uses, county vehicle registration fee, local gas tax.

Portland street fee: Business group questions fee, \$53 million figure and balance between safety, maintenance projects

*By Andrew Theen
July 15, 2014*

If meeting No. 1 is any indication, 20 business leaders tapped to advise Portland's transportation officials on a proposed street fee have their hands full.

Some at Monday's meeting questioned whether the city is spending its discretionary transportation dollars wisely. Others asked why the transportation bureau is devoting 40 percent of the estimated annual revenue to safety projects instead of much-needed paving work. Many argued the methodology behind the monthly street fee for businesses is confusing, misleading and inequitable.

No one at the public meeting, held in a conference room in the Portland Building, the city's administrative office hub, disputed that the city needs to invest in its infrastructure. The business representatives said the devil is in the details.

"If you can't afford it all, people will pick road repair over safety," said Chris Kopca, a board member and asset manager with the Downtown Development Group.

Five more committee meetings are planned to discuss the street fee plan unveiled by Commissioner Steve Novick and Mayor Charlie Hales in May.

Portland's proposed monthly street fee would charge businesses based on the estimated trips generated to their doors. The data depend on traffic counts from around the nation that could be decades old and often have little correlation to Portland.

The Institute of Transportation Engineers Trip General Manual categorizes businesses according to specific land uses and documents the estimated trips generated according to a businesses' square footage. City officials have said they can tweak the data from the manual, although they say the figures are a reasonable estimation of all trips a business creates, including mass transit, pedestrian and bicycle users.

Novick and Hales said the city needs \$53 million per year as a starting point to making a dent in addressing the city's ongoing maintenance woes. According to PBOT's estimates the true annual maintenance need is closer to \$92.7 million, but the politicians have said \$91 million is the best amount. Neither of those figures includes annual maintenance for bridges, sidewalks, streetlights or traffic signals.

J. Benjamin Chessar, vice president of PacTrust and the president of Oregon Chapter NAIOP – Commercial Real Estate Development Association, said he still doesn't know if a monthly street fee is the appropriate funding plan. "Are there other ways to finance this?" Chessar asked, floating the idea of a 10-year bond.

Chessar questioned the city's selection of \$50 million as an approximation of its revenue needs. He likened the move to "sticking a finger in the air."

He asked whether the city actually was asking for enough. "Go after the number that makes sense," he advised, cautioning that maintenance needs will only grow if the city doesn't act appropriately.

The most vocal members of the 20-person group said they still don't have a firm grasp of how PBOT spends its money.

Greg Goodman, co-president of Downtown Development Group, likened the funding discussion to a college student asking his parents for a \$500 monthly allowance, blowing it all, then asking for more money. "The first think I say is show me how you're spending my \$500," Goodman said.

Several members of the board asked for specific details of the budget, and Portland Bureau of Transportation director Leah Treat referred the group to recent media coverage. She cited The Oregonian's analysis of the bureau's spending priorities. A top Hales adviser later cited a Portland Mercury story detailing budget tradeoffs and cut scenarios as a good resource.

PBOT pledged to get more information to the board prior to its next meeting, the same information presented to members of the media and to lobbyists for the petroleum and grocery industries in recent weeks.

The next PBOT business group meeting is Monday July 28th at the Portland Building in Room C. The group will talk about the alternative options and have a more in depth look at the bureau's discretionary spending.

Hales, Novick have eroded faith in government: Guest opinion

*By Guest Columnist Nishant Bhajaria
July 16, 2014*

A majority of Portlanders have historically supported bonds and government expenditures as an investment in our community. The Hales-Novick street fee, however, has produced strong opposition from many. There are several reasons why this has occurred:

- Mayor Charlie Hales' rationale for not letting us vote on this has shifted since day one. First, this was an emergency and there was no time. Then, he needed to show leadership since the city voted for him in 2012, so no vote was needed. Then, it was about finding money for a ballot initiative. Finally, his spokesman admitted to me via email that the real reason was inevitable rejection at the ballot box. On this issue, the mayor has more positions than the kama sutra.
- Commissioner Amanda Fritz has been similarly disingenuous on the ballot issue. She has tried to convince us that a ballot is the wrong way to go due to issues with the art tax. As a result, my support for her \$68 million Portland parks bond has been shaken over the last two months.
- Hales promised in 2012 that he'd pave our streets without a levy. Sure, he discovered things were worse when he took office, but his promise was unqualified and he should have known better than to make that promise. If he is asking for more money based on changed circumstances, aren't taxpayers entitled a vote based on this new financial burden?
- Hales and Novick have alienated a lot of supporters like me with their condescending attitude when someone disagrees with them. The recent disclosure of the \$56,000 bill for diversity training is a classic example. Hales treats those who question these costs as opposed to diversity training. Our concern is the cost. Was it necessary to go to a luxury resort out of town at such expense during tough economic times? Surely the mayor could have taken his business to one of several fine Portland hotels, ordered food from Portland vendors and helped the local economy. Such mismanagement at a time when Portlanders are putting off vacations to save money shows that Hales is out of touch. Similarly, street-fee opponents are not opposed to fixing our streets, but are mistrustful of Hales' and Novick's judgment and credibility in fiscal matters.
- In the working groups Novick announced recently, there is no group for middle-class homeowners. Similarly, there is no group to study what cuts can be made to city government to help find savings. None of his proposals include any sacrifice by the city council. Households and companies have had to cut back. Why is the city council immune? Is it any wonder that trust in government is at an all-time low?
- Finally, the Hales-Novick argument for the street fee can be summed up thus: Unless you show us other sources of revenue, we'll impose the fee on you. Portland taxpayers have responded with: Prove that you are worthy of our taxes and trust before asking for more.

Nishant Bhajaria lives in Southwest Portland.

Right 2 Dream Too: Trespassing trial begins for Portland homeless camp co-founder Ibrahim Mubarak

*By Sara DiNatale
July 15, 2014*

Ibrahim Mubarak, a co-founder of Portland's Right 2 Dream Too and Dignity Village homeless communities, began his trial Tuesday in Multnomah County Circuit Court on charges of trespassing and interfering with an officer.

Mubarak requested the jury trial on charges stemming from an incident under the Burnside Bridge in downtown Portland Feb. 27. The trial is expected to last at least through Wednesday. Mubarak pleaded not guilty in February.

At least 15 of Mubarak's supporters gathered outside the courthouse Tuesday morning and filed into the courtroom with Mubarak to show their support.

The six-person jury was selected Tuesday with Judge Edward Jones presiding.

Mubarak's lawyer, Kenneth Kreuzscher, declined to give an opening statement and declined a reporter's request for comment outside of court until the trial is over.

Mubarak's arrest occurred while he and others were checking on people sleeping on the sidewalks in a parking lot near the University of Oregon's White Stag Building and Mercy Corps headquarters.

When news of his Mubarak's arrest surfaced in February, so did a video taken by a spectator. The video shows Mubarak's interactions with officers and his arrest. The video was posted to Right 2 Dream Too's Facebook page.

At least of a portion of the video will be shown to the jury as evidence.

Portland Commissioner Steve Novick 'leaning' in support of plan to subsidize apartments in Old Town Chinatown

*By Brad Schmidt
July 15, 2014*

A plan to subsidize apartment construction in Old Town Chinatown for middle-income Portlanders has tentative support from Commissioner Steve Novick, the swing vote on the City Council.

Novick said he will listen to testimony during Wednesday's hearing but finds himself favoring a proposal to waive an estimated \$7 million in development fees to promote construction of up to 500 apartments.

Mayor Charlie Hales has prioritized redevelopment in Old Town Chinatown, the historic neighborhood tucked between the city's business core and the thriving Pearl District.

"I'm leaning in the mayor's direction," Novick said this week, making his first public comments about the long-stalled proposal.

Already home to scores of low-income subsidized housing units, Hales wants to add middle-income Portlanders to the area by waiving development fees for five years. A qualifying one-bedroom apartment could rent for \$1,301 including utilities, \$1,157 without.

The city would waive fees that are paid by developers to support parks, sewers, roads and water improvements. By waiving the fees, which typically exceed \$10,000 per unit, the city would decrease construction costs in a part of town where developers have been reluctant to build.

Commissioners Nick Fish and Amanda Fritz, who oversee three of the four bureaus that collect system development charges, have said they oppose the plan. Commissioner Dan Saltzman, who manages the Portland Housing Bureau, supports Hales' proposal.

Portland already waives development fees citywide for projects that serve individuals who earn no more than 60 percent of the region's median income, or \$29,160 for an individual. To receive the fee break, developers must maintain income restrictions for 60 years.

Hales' plan would extend those fee breaks for individuals earning up to 100 percent of the median, or \$48,580, with higher incomes allowed only for projects in Old Town Chinatown.

Opponents of the plan have questioned the priority, noting that Portland has plenty of non-subsidized units serving middle-income residents.

In Old Town Chinatown, restrictions would last just 10 years -- allowing developers to increase rents in a decade, provided the neighborhood becomes desirable enough to support more expensive leases.

A City Council vote is scheduled for July 23.

The Portland Tribune

City hopes 2015 Oregon Legislature will increase gas tax

*By Jim Redden
July 15, 2014*

Portland could rebuild 92 lane miles of poorly maintained city streets if the 2015 Oregon Legislature increases the state gas tax 5 cents per gallon.

Such an increase would allow the city to issue \$93.5 million in bonds for road projects that would be repaid over 20 years. That would only release the existing reconstruction backlog by one-third, however.

City officials disclosed that figure during the first meeting of a newly-appointed workgroup considering how businesses should pay the local street fee proposed by Mayor Charlie Hales and Commissioner Steve Novick. Hales and Novick have previously said passage of the fee could help persuade the Legislature to increase the gas tax — which is split with cities and counties — next session.

Although the Legislature is widely thought to be considering approving a new transportation funding package next session, this is the first time Portland officials have estimated its benefit. The figures were included in a handout to those who attended the Monday afternoon meeting.

Hales and Novick hope the City Council will adopt the fee in November.

The handout included a number of options for raising \$25 million a year from business properties, the amount targeted by Hales and Novick. They included:

- A city Business License fee increase of .86 percent.
- A city Business Gross receipts tax.
- A city Commercial Parking Tax on commercial parking lots and structures.

Smaller businesses could be exemptions from some or all of the charges.

The workgroup is scheduled to meet several times in coming months to recommend a preferred fee to Hales and Novick.

Willamette Week

Them's The Brakes

Why City Hall loves home-sharing company Airbnb but not car-sharing startup Uber.

*By Aaron Mesh
July 16, 2014*

Mayor Charlie Hales says he wants Portland to stand as a leader in making room for the “sharing economy.”

That’s one reason he has championed rewriting city rules to legalize the operations of Airbnb. The online company, which brokers the rental of apartments and homes to travelers, has operated as a rogue for years, violating city rules against unlicensed hotels.

Portland’s shift follows Airbnb’s March announcement of its plans to locate a 160-employee call center here.

“The Web is way ahead of old-fashioned institutions,” Hales tells WW. “It behooves us as a city to try to keep up with this furious pace of change.”

But this new-economy mentality only goes so far—and depends a great deal on who actually holds power in the city.

Hotels oppose Airbnb because it cuts into their business, and some neighbors call the service a nuisance. But Airbnb apparently has the votes to get city rules redrawn in its favor.

While holding the door open for Airbnb, Hales and the City Council late last year slammed it shut on another popular and cutting-edge operation, Uber.

Uber enlists drivers to use their own cars as de facto taxis, with customers summoning rides with the tap of a phone app.

Hales and other city commissioners have not wanted to challenge the clout of Portland’s cab companies—largely Broadway Cab and Radio Cab—and labor unions.

Portland remains the only large West Coast city where Uber isn’t running cars. “We’ve been told essentially that we’re not welcome there,” says Brooke Steger, who manages Uber’s operations in Washington. (Uber launched in Vancouver last week.)

Uber this week is preparing another run at breaking the cab companies’ virtual monopoly. Here are four questions that define the debate:

What’s the difference between Airbnb and Uber?

They have a lot in common. They’re both San Francisco tech startups valued at billions of dollars. Both rely on the “sharing economy” philosophy that people renting out their property—without government regulation—creates new business markets.

But Uber didn’t realize how little appetite Portland officials had for challenging the taxi industry, carefully guarded by the city’s Private for-Hire Transportation Board of Review.

“There may well be a way to have Uber come to Portland,” says regulatory division manager Frank Dufay, “but not just by throwing out several of our important regulations.”

Airbnb, meanwhile, had an economic advantage: 1,600 Portland clients already renting in an underground market, many of whom claimed hardship if forced to stop (“Suite Surrender,” WW, March 19, 2014).

City inspectors could have shut down these rentals, but they mostly looked the other way. If neighbors didn’t want DIY motels on their street, they had to complain to city officials, who usually issued tepid warnings and rarely issued fines.

Who controls city rules?

Ultimately, the City Council. But any business that wants to enter the Portland ride-sharing market has to get past the city's taxi board—which includes representatives from existing cab and town-car companies. And Radio and Broadway—controlling 285 of the city's 460 taxi permits—hold sway.

But the biggest force is the Oregon AFL-CIO, which last year obtained 50 taxi permits for driver-owned Union Cab and doesn't want Uber's competition. "There are entrenched interests in the Portland taxi industry, including the AFL-CIO, that Uber will have to compromise with," says Greg Peden, a lobbyist with Gallatin Public Affairs who represented Uber last year.

"People make a living driving taxis," responds Oregon AFL-CIO spokesman Russell Sanders. "We're just afraid that Uber's presence could undercut that."

City officials say Uber appeared unwilling to comply with city town-car rules regarding safety and fares.

Steve Entler, general manager of Radio Cab, denies his company is powerful enough to stop Uber, which he labels dangerous and elitist. "The only people they target are people with a smartphone and a credit card," Entler says. "Who's taking care of your mother?"

What's wrong with more choices? The concern about Airbnb and Uber remains one of accountability.

Cab companies warn that Uber drivers aren't vetted—"It's any yo-yo with a car," says Entler—and could be a menace on the roads. On New Year's Eve, an Uber driver hit and killed a 6-year-old girl in San Francisco. And this week, a Seattle woman said an Uber driver had raped her. (Seattle police have cleared the driver of any wrongdoing.)

Steger says Uber conducts background checks on its drivers—"but we welcome newcomers to the industry."

Airbnb's disruptions could hurt the city's housing market—if landlords can get more money renting out rooms to tourists, that could further raise rents in a city with a shortage of affordable apartments. And if something goes haywire during a rental—like when a New York City man discovered in March his apartment was being used for an orgy—Airbnb isn't legally responsible.

"It all sounds well and good," says Maureen MacNabb, president of Capital Property Management Services, "until someone loses an eye."

What's next?

The City Council is scheduled to vote July 23 whether to loosen city rules on short-term rentals and start collecting nearly \$500,000 a year in hotel taxes from Airbnb—the first city to do so ("City for Rent," WWJ, July 9, 2014).

"I hope that the city is able to prioritize innovation," says Uber's Steger, "especially after they welcomed Airbnb."

Hotseat: Ray Horton

A native Portlander talks about his (so far) lonely effort to recall the mayor and a city commissioner.

*By Aaron Mesh
July 16, 2014*

Ray Horton is fed up.

Like a lot of Portlanders, he resents the idea that households might have to pay a \$144-per-year fee to pave streets. And he's irritated by what he views as the high-handed city leaders who pursued the idea.

But the 69-year-old Mount Tabor resident and retired graphic designer hasn't just griped at his local coffee shop. He's going after the two people he holds most responsible: Mayor Charlie Hales and City Commissioner Steve Novick.

On July 11, Horton filed paperwork to recall Hales and Novick from office for "failure to exercise fiduciary duties."

Horton—a lifelong Portlander who owns three Model A Fords and isn't registered with any political party—has never gotten involved in politics before. But he says he represents citizens who feel alienated from a city government that ignores them unless it wants more money.

He talked to WW about why he has taken up a fight he knows isn't likely to succeed.

WW: What made you decide to try to recall the mayor and a city commissioner?

It started with the street tax, but it's really not about the street tax. Both Mayor Hales and Commissioner Novick have a dismissive attitude toward people who express concerns about budgeting. [At a May 29 City Hall hearing], Novick in particular was willing to argue with anyone who brought up a valid point. It was that almost hostile attitude that really pushed me over the edge.

So that triggered your recall effort?

The thing that really set me off was Mr. Novick saying, "We're going to do this, and if people don't like it, they can vote us out in 2016." That was the height of arrogance. I said, "We don't have to wait for 2016."

Why are you upset at Portland government?

You just get discontented as you get older, and I'm no different than most people. But I also think there's an attitude from City Hall that, oh boy, there's new people moving in, and we'll make a lot of money here.

I feel the city is my enemy. I used to go downtown and get a \$5 parking ticket. Now I get an \$80 parking ticket. It's about how much money they can get out of people, rather than how they can serve the people.

What specific budgeting choices do you have a problem with?

We could go back six or eight years to the light rail that's going to Milwaukie at the expense of paving streets. A nice thing for the city to have, but I don't think it's a priority, especially when Mayor Hales and Commissioner Novick are claiming, gosh, we just don't have the money to do what we should have been doing for the last 10 years.

That money was spent on light rail, and bicycle lanes, and conferences for teaching middle-aged white men how to behave.

Do you have other gripes about the city?

Apartments popping up on every corner. The math is pretty easy. You say, to heck with the character of neighborhoods and anything that makes the city charming. What's driving the apartments comes right back down to greed at City Hall.

You'll need 34,921 signatures to force a recall vote. How many have you collected so far?

I have 15. But I'm in the first minute of the game. LeBron James didn't have a great first minute in his first game.

Are you surprised by how much attention you've received?

Overwhelmed, really. And quite moved and humbled. I looked at this as tilting at windmills. And I've had 20 or 30 people email me or write me on Facebook to say they'll do whatever they need to get these petitions out.

What would you say to people who say trying to recall the mayor is a radical act?

They're absolutely right. It's almost a revolutionary act. On the other hand, it's gotten the City Council's attention. We're not just going to sit down and write another check for them, just because they say they want it.

The Mercury

A Key Operative in Fluoride, Water Fights Says He's On Board for Recall Campaign

*By Dirk VanderHart
July 16, 2014*

Ray Horton describes himself as a "flaming radical lefty." He voted for both Commissioner Steve Novick and Mayor Charlie Hales when they were elected in 2012, and he voted to keep Portland's water and sewer bureaus in city hall's possession in May, rather than turning them over to a new board.

Now Horton feels like he was sleeping with the enemy: "You wake up the next morning and say 'who is this person?'"

The contentiousness of the city's "street fee" debate have turned the southeast Portland resident's allegiances. On Friday, Horton, a 69-year-old retired graphic designer and rabid Model A enthusiast, filed petitions to recall both Hales and Novick.

Those efforts might seem like long shots—enraged voters, after all, twice failed to land a recall of former Mayor Sam Adams on the ballot after a sex scandal—but there are reasons Hales and Novick might be bracing for impact. And the chief reason could be Hiram Asmuth.

Asmuth is the man whose Encore Political Services collected more-than 50,000 signatures to land the Portland Public Water District on May's ballot (it netted nearly \$140,000 for that work, according to campaign finance records). He had a hand in getting the successful anti-fluoride measure before voters the year before. Now, he says he's going to pour those same energies into booting Hales and Novick from office.

"I'm going to throw as much of my weight into this as I possibly can," Asmuth said this morning from Colorado, where he says he's working on a separate issue. "When I get back, I'm going to try to kickstart this thing. I'm willing to take a massive pay cut to get it on the ballot."

Asmuth, like Horton, says the street fee—which would assign residents a flat monthly fee, and assess charges on businesses via a much-debated sliding scale to raise up to \$50 million a year for road improvements—is a death knell for the city's small businesses. Like Horton, he's adamant city hall needs to better prioritize its existing cash rather than forcing a regressive fee on voters (though as we've explored, such theoretical prioritizing is no easy feat).

"It's terrible across the board," Asmuth says. "There are much better ways to do this."

He concedes that the recall effort will be tough. Horton needs about 35,000 valid signatures for each Novick and Hales by October 9 to get recalls on the November ballot. Just days into campaign—and up in Washington for a Model A convention—he says he's got about 15.

"Recalls are never a slam dunk," Asmuth says. "If it gets on the ballot I think its a slam dunk because guys have betrayed us at so many levels."

A freelance graphic designer for nearly 40 years, Horton says he's never been much of a political animal. He's never so much as volunteered for a campaign. But he was incensed enough by the street fee discussion, and in particular Hales and Novick's insistence on passing a fee without a public vote, that he filed the recall petitions on Friday. Horton's since taken steps to arrange things with his bank to be able to accept political donations.

And he says there's no going back. Even if Hales and Novick killed the street fee discussion today, Horton says he'd move forward with the recall effort. Enough supporters have emerged that he actually believes it has a chance. That wasn't the case when he filed.

"It's been a realization that this can actually happen," Horton tells the Mercury. "These guys need to be aware that people are upset."

Can A Proposed Nonprofit Reverse Mayor Charlie Hales' Reforms of Last Thursday?

*By Dirk VanderHart
July 15, 2014*

It's been more than the year since a nonprofit group that for years helped organize Alberta's Last Thursday festival held a press conference to announce they were quitting.

Friends of Last Thursday (FoLT) resigned over new strictures on the freewheeling event proposed by Mayor Charlie Hales—changes that have since been realized—and left the mayor's office looking for another organization to take up the cause.

Now that organization is perhaps in the works. Michael O'Connor, a former FoLT member who took off in 2012 to begin a new street fair in southeast, sent out a release Monday night announcing a fundraiser this week for a new organizing group.

"Our current vision is to form an organization of artists, musicians, performers, and fun makers," O'Connor wrote.

"These are the people that make Last Thursday the incredible event that it is."

O'Connor says the group he has in mind will oversee the "infrastructure, management, and support needed to make Last Thursday the best that it can be." It would use grants and fundraising, apparently, to cover the sizable costs associated with Last Thursday. Hales' office estimates the city spent \$75,000-80,000 running the event last year.

O'Connor also takes exception with Hales' handling of the event recently. He writes: "In particular, the City recently began fining musicians who can be heard from 150 feet away, and plans to charge participants fees and collect their personal information. We believe that a better solution is possible, and we will do everything we can to alleviate the City's concerns while preserving the rights of our community."

But it's unclear whether the mayor's office would be willing to let its new regulations lapse. Officials and some neighbors view them as valuable to toning down what can be a raucous and problematic event. O'Connor says he's been in frequent contact with the mayor's office, and that he's not aware of any conditions on his group's stewardship. He says he'll push for different solutions than those the mayor has imposed.

"Any conditions they set, they'll have to have a legal right to do so," he tells the Mercury. "We have legal representation through the ACLU that is helping us make sure."

The group is holding a fundraiser at 7 pm on Thursday at two Alberta bars, The Knock Backand Cruzroom, hoping to raise \$600 to register with the state and federal government and set up a website.

Update, 3:30 pm: The mayor's office says it's true O'Connor has called and e-mailed about his ideas. He even had an attorney call. But Hales' staff will need to see financial legitimacy before handing over the reins of last Thursday, says Policy Assistant Chad Stover.

"What it boils down to, for my side, is clearly understanding the logistics and the costs," Stover says. "We need a group that can step up and has the appropriate funding capabilities."

Just what all that means is sort of up in the air, Stover says. Police details for the event cost less now that Last Thursday ends an hour earlier, and there may be less police required overall. It's not clear exactly what costs will be associated with the event going forward, right now, so demanding a specific cash outlay from a nonprofit is tough.

"I'm hoping when we do get to that point we'll be able to say, 'these are some things that are recommended and need to be covered, and here are the costs for doing it,'" Stover says.