

The Oregonian

No council meeting this week, but big night meetings coming: Portland City Hall Roundup

*By Andrew Theen
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Portland officials are frequently criticized for holding major public meetings during times when the general public, the 9-5 crowd, may not be able to attend.

Well, book your calendars for 2015, civic-minded Portlanders, because at least two high-profile City Council meetings are already scheduled for the evening hours.

A first reading of the latest iteration of the Portland Street Fund (details to be released Dec. 31, although the expectation is a return to a hybrid plan based on a user fee) is set for 6 p.m. Jan. 8.

The meeting to decide Portland's involvement in the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force will also be held at night, at 5 p.m. Feb. 5.

Josh Alpert, Mayor Charlie Hales' director of strategic initiatives, said the City Council is considering holding more night meetings in the future.

On the street funding front, both Alpert and Commissioner Steve Novick said the fate of the proposal is still up in the air. A 3-2 vote from the City Council isn't out of the question, Alpert noted.

"This has proved for a year to be a very controversial issue," he said. "It doesn't reflect poorly on the city to have a close decision on this."

Programming note: City Hall Watch is gone fishing this week. We're taking some time to hang out with friends and family during the holiday season.

We'll return next week.

Since City Hall is a bit dark this week, here are a few stories from 2014 that you might have missed.

The Portland Tribune

PBOT says it has turned documents over to street fee critics

*By Jim Redden
December 23, 2014*

The Portland Bureau of Transportation says it has complied with a public records lawsuit by a neighborhood coalition group questioning the nonresidential portion of the proposed street fee.

PBOT spokesman Dylan Rivera says the requested documents were provided to the coalition on Tuesday, the day after a bizarre confrontation before a Multnomah County Circuit Court judge over them. Deputy City Attorney Wage Tucker appeared before Judge John Wittmayer to request the issue be assigned to another judge for a hearing.

But Wittmayer determined the city had not filed the required motion for such a move, angrily berated Tucker, and told him to respond to the coalition's lawyers by 5:00 p.m.

That did not happen. But Rivera says PBOT made the requested information available to the coalition Tuesday and dropped the processing costs from over \$2,700 to under \$2,600. Rivera says the cost includes time need to redact confidential business income data from the documents.

The documents were requested by Southeast Uplift, the neighborhood coalition office represent around 30 neighborhood associations in southeast Portland. SEUL President Robert McCullough believes the spreadsheets will show PBOT misclassified a number of businesses when determining how much they will pay under the nonresidential portion of the proposed fee. He is convinced this mistake is minimizing the

amount to be paid by large transportation companies that do a disproportionate amount of damage to the streets.

The city has filed a motion to set a date to dismiss the suit at a Wednesday morning hearing. McCullough says the coalition will oppose the motion if the documents are incomplete.

The fee proposed by Mayor Charlie Hales and Commissioner Steve Novick is intended to raise around \$40 million a year for maintenance and safety projects. It has undergone numerous changes since being unveiled in May and is expected to be changed again before the final vote. A new version could be filed on Dec. 31, with an evening public hearing scheduled for Jan. 7. The final vote could then be held on Jan. 14.