

The Oregonian

Developer: 20-story tower with 170-room 'national hotel' coming to downtown Portland

*By Luke Hammill
08/24/2015*

A Portland developer on Monday announced plans to build a 20-story tower on Southwest Broadway that it says will include a 170-room hotel, 200,000 square feet of office space and 320 parking spaces.

BPM Real Estate Group said in a news release that it would break ground in April of next year on a 30,000-square-foot lot between Southwest Columbia and Southwest Clay streets, half a block from the South Park Blocks. The developer expects to complete the project in the spring of 2018.

An unnamed "national hotel" is expected to occupy the first seven floors of the building, according to the release.

BPM is also developing the nine-story Pearl West building, scheduled to open in March at Northwest 14th Avenue and Northwest Irving Street.

"Like Pearl West, we will build [the newly announced building on Broadway] on a speculative basis," said Walter Bowen, BPM's president. "But interestingly, we have already heard from several large prospective tenants who are interested in leasing space."

Portland has one of the highest occupancy rates in the nation for "Class A" – meaning high-end – office space, Bowen said in the release.

"Given the success we are having with leasing our Pearl West building to companies like Wacom, Howard S. Wright and Regus, I believe it is time for another well designed and built office building to be constructed downtown," Bowen said in the release.

Howard S. Wright, the general contractor and a future tenant at Pearl West, will also construct the Broadway building. Portland-based GBD Architects is the designer.

Bowen said in the release that the new building "will feature one of the largest contiguous blocks of office space in the region." It will also have "rooftop amenity space" and an on-site bar, restaurant and fitness center. All told, the building will comprise 448,000 square feet.

BPM Real Estate Group lists the same Northwest Lovejoy Street address with the Oregon Secretary of State as BPM Senior Living Company, an operator of independent and assisted living facilities for senior citizens in Oregon, Nevada and California.

Portland names deputy ombudsman

*By Brad Schmidt
08/24/2015*

The city agency that fields and investigates public complaints about Portland government is getting bigger.

Tony Green, the spokesman for the Oregon Secretary of State and a former Oregonian reporter, has been named Portland's deputy ombudsman.

His hiring will double the size of Portland's ombudsman's office.

"Tony brings a wealth of knowledge and talent that will help us conduct independent and impartial investigations and advocate for a good, fair and just City government," Ombudsman Margie Sollinger said in a statement.

Auditor Mary Hull Caballero, who took office in January and oversees the ombudsman's office, wanted to increase resources and restored the deputy position, which had long ago been cut.

The ombudsman's office in recent years helped the city secure a \$17,000 settlement for bogus billing by a contractor and privately challenged the city's purchasing and transportation divisions over contracting decisions. Sollinger also publicly sparred with the state over access to records during a city investigation.

Green has worked as a spokesman for the Oregon Secretary of State's office, the Oregon Department of Justice and the state Department of Administrative Services since 2009. Before that, he spent 21 years as a reporter at The Oregonian, where he covered statewide legal issues, among other topics.

Green, who holds a Masters of Studies in Law from Yale, begins Sept. 8. He'll earn \$83,720 annually.

Willamette Week

Park Rangers Supervisor on Paid Leave After Ombudsman Opens Investigation

Questions concern a contract awarded to the employee's private company.

By Beth Slovic
08/24/2015

The supervisor of Portland park rangers is on paid administrative leave after the city ombudsman opened an investigation into a possible conflict of interest, WW has learned.

Hasan Artharee, 37, has led the city's park rangers since 2012. But he also owns Safeguard Security Enforcement, a Northeast Portland company that inked a contract in May to provide nighttime security to a Portland park that park rangers patrolled during the day.

His leave started Friday, a deputy city attorney says. The Portland Mercury first reported on the existence of the contract Aug. 5.

Earlier this month, in response to questions from WW and The Mercury about the unusual security contract, officials with Portland Parks & Recreation defended it, saying the city played no role in awarding the contract to Artharee's side business.

Instead, a private company that works with Portland officials to provide activities at Holladay Park near Lloyd Center mall issued the contract, city officials said. Biederman Redevelopment Ventures, the New York-based company, helped bring foosball and pingpong, among other activities, to Holladay Park to improve visitors' sense of safety.

"Mr. Artharee was not involved and continues to be uninvolved in the implementation of the contract, both in his capacity as a parks supervisor and as owner of Safeguard Security," a spokesman for the Parks Bureau, Mark Ross, wrote in an Aug. 3 email to WW. "Furthermore, the contract is limited to night security and protection of assets. Safeguard does not provide enforcement of park rules."

City code prohibits purchasing goods, including services, from city employees.

But the city attorney's office told parks officials the contract didn't present a conflict of interest, according to documents released by the Parks Bureau earlier this month.

A representative of the private company that issued the contract says there's no conflict because the city didn't directly issue the contract.

"They gave us the OK to proceed, and we did," says Rodrigo Rodarte of Biederman Redevelopment Ventures.

After learning about the contract, city officials asked Artharee to sign a document pledging not to blur his public and private roles.

Meanwhile, an anonymous tipster informed the city's ombudsman, Margie Sollinger, about the contract.

In 2012, after the Portland Water Bureau awarded a subcontract to a Water Bureau employee, Sollinger recommended to the city's contracting department that it prohibit the awarding of subcontracts to city employees.

Three years later, that hasn't happened. "We don't have any control over what our prime contractor picks up as a subcontractor," Jen Clodius, a spokeswoman for the city's contracting department, tells WW.

Sollinger, the ombudsman, referred questions to Heidi Brown, deputy city attorney. Sollinger tells WW that she received an anonymous tip about the contract, opened an investigation and last week provided preliminary observations to city officials about the arrangement. Brown declined to comment.

Parks & Rec spokesman Mark Ross confirms Artharee is on paid administrative leave. "It's a personnel matter," he said. "We can't comment."

Artharee has not returned calls from WW.

In response to inquiries from WW earlier this month, a seasonal park ranger who also worked for Safeguard Security disclosed to city officials his work for the private company. Such work is allowed, so long as employees tell the city about it in advance to avoid even the appearance of a conflict.

Artharee's father, Baruti Artharee, operates the company as general manager.

Baruti Artharee previously worked for Mayor Charlie Hales as his adviser on police issues until coming under fire in 2013 for sexually inappropriate remarks he made toward Multnomah County Commissioner Loretta Smith.

The Portland Business Journal

Portland considers 5 more Eastside bike lanes

By Andy Giegerich
08/25/2015

Portland's City Council will consider moving forward with plans that could lead to five new "neighborhood greenways" that would bring "bicycle boulevards" to more areas.

The Council, as it examines an assessment of how well the greenways are working, could also decide to improve six existing bike routes. City Commissioners will field the report at tomorrow's Council meeting.

The five new greenways, which are in or nearing the design and construction phases, would be:

- The Northeast Rodney neighborhood greenway, a 2.1-mile north-south route adjacent to N Williams Ave. and NE MLK Blvd.

- The 20s bikeway, a 9.1-mile north-south bicycle route in the inner east side, which follows the streets between 20th and 29th avenue, generally.
- The 100s neighborhood greenway, a 4.3-mile north-south route in East Portland.
- The 130s neighborhood greenway and bikeway, an 8.6-mile north-south route in East Portland.
- The 150s neighborhood greenway, a 3.7-mile north-south route in East Portland.

The Council will also look at improvements to greenways that run through Northeast Alameda and Tillamook-Hancock areas, the Southeast Ankeny, Clinton-Woodward and Lincoln-Harrison-Ladd, the Northwest Greenways.

Among other change: The city's transportation bureau "should temporarily test traffic diversions to manage automobile volumes and collect data to better understand how the measures impact traffic volumes, both on the neighborhood greenways and nearby local streets."

The report offers no cost projections on the projects.

Developers behind Pearl West plan a 20-story office and hotel tower downtown

*By Jon Bell
08/24/2015*

Next up for the real estate development firm behind the Pearl West office building in the Pearl District: a 20-story tower that will be home to a 170-room hotel and 200,000 square feet of Class A office space.

Portland based BPM Real Estate Group announced today that it will break ground in early 2016 on a 20-story mixed use tower that will include a hotel, offices and underground parking with 320 spaces in between Southwest Columbia and Southwest Clay streets along Broadway. The parcel is currently vacant.

"Portland has one of the highest Class A office occupancy rates in the nation," said Walter Bowen, BPM's president, in a release "Given the success we are having with leasing our Pearl West building to companies like WACOM, Howard S. Wright, and Regus, I believe it is time for another well-designed and -built office building to be constructed downtown."

BPM is working with the city of Portland on the entitlement process for the property and expects to break ground on the project in April 2016. Completion is expected by in spring 2018.

"This building will feature one of the largest contiguous blocks of office space in the region," Bowen said.

"Like Pearl West, we will build it on a speculative basis, but interestingly, we have already heard from several large prospective tenants who are interested in leasing space."

The entire building tops out at 448,000 square feet. The hotel, which has not been named yet, is expected to occupy the first seven floors. Floors eight through 20 will all be office space.

Designed by GBD Architects of Portland and to be constructed by Howard S. Wright, a Balfour Beatty company, the building's exterior will be a high performance curtain wall system comprised of composite metal panels and large expanses of glass to provide plenty of natural light.

There will be rooftop amenity space that takes advantage of views of the Cascade mountains, the West Hills and the urban landscape of downtown Portland. BPM, GBD Architects, and Howard S. Wright are targeting LEED Gold when completed.

"There are some details to work out, but we are excited about this project and what it brings to Portland,"

Bowen said. "In the weeks and months ahead, BPM expects to have more information to share about our new project, and Pearl West which is slated for completion in Spring 2016."