

The Oregonian

Federal court hearing on status of Portland police reforms now set for mid-October

*By Maxine Bernstein
09/02/2015*

The first hearing to update a judge on the progress of federally mandated Portland police reforms has been pushed back a month to Oct. 21.

U.S. District Court Judge Michael H. Simon recognized in late August that he had erred by initially setting it for Sept. 14, which falls on the first day of the Jewish high holiday of Rosh Hashanah.

As a result, he has reset it to Oct. 21 at 2 p.m. in his courtroom, 13 B.

Hearings are to be held annually before the judge.

The federal court's involvement stems from a Justice Department investigation in 2012 that found Portland police engaged in a pattern or practice of excessive force against people with mental illness or perceived to have mental illness. The negotiated settlement, approved by Simon last August, calls for a wide range of changes to Portland policies, training and oversight.

In his original order in August 2014, Simon made it clear that he has no power to order further reforms but wrote that the parties might present evidence if requested at the periodic hearings.

The city balked, arguing that the federal judge didn't have the authority to require city officials to present evidence before him. The City Council last October voted 4-0 to appeal the judge's order to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals and mediation followed.

After months of talks between the city and federal officials, they reached an agreement that the sessions won't be called "evidentiary hearings" but instead "status conferences."

The parties agreed that during annual status conferences, all sides would describe progress on the reforms and any obstacles that exist, and respond to the court's questions.

The Portland Tribune

South Corridor open house set

*09/02/2015
By Jim Redden*

One of the next large scale redevelopment project in Portland could occur in the Broadway Corridor, the 24-acre section of the city at the south end of the Broadway Bridge that include Union Station and the new Pacific Northwest College of Art headquarters.

The Portland Development Commission already owns three properties in the area and is negotiating with the U.S. Post Office to acquire its 14-acre distribution center for development.

The PDC will hold a free public open house on the Broadway Corridor Framework Plan it is drafting to help guide development in the area from 5 to 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 8, in Room 142/144 of the University of Oregon building, 70 N.W. Couch St. It envisions high-density employment and signature city attractions, connecting the Old Town/Chinatown and Pearl District neighborhoods.

The open house will include the most current information on the framework plan, which is intended to serve as the first phase of the planning process for the area. A potential second phase is anticipated to include a detailed master plan after the PDC acquires the USPS site.

Although the open house is free, you can RSVP from the project's website, <http://www.pdc.us/our-work/urban-renewal-areas/river-district/current-projects/broadway-corridor.aspx>.

Hales appoints committee to advise on residential infill issues

*By Jim Redden
09/01/2015*

Keeping a promise to preservationists and activists concerned about the growing number of residential demolition and infill projects, Mayor Charlie Hales has appointed a 25-member Stakeholder Advisory Committee to help ensure that new or remodeled houses are well integrated and complement the fabric of neighborhoods throughout the city.

"There are many facets to the issue of preserving and enhancing Portland's unique neighborhoods. In addition to the Residential Infill Project, my Neighborhoods Initiative is addressing long-term citywide growth strategies through such efforts as the Comprehensive Plan Update, discouraging demolitions, and expanded affordable rental housing development to ensure Portland's prized neighborhoods remain livable and affordable," Hales said when he announced the advisory committee Tuesday.

The first meeting of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee will be 6 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 15, in Room 2500A of the 1900 Building, 1900 S.W. Fourth Ave., Following a brief introduction by the Hales, committee members will meet the project staff and fellow stakeholders, then hear more about the project and residential infill issues. The committee will continue to meet each month as necessary through the duration of the project.

The committee includes Portlanders involved in design, construction and the sale of single-dwelling homes, as well as people interested in how residential infill affects or contributes to neighborhoods and the city as a whole. Members were chosen from each Neighborhood District Coalition and United Neighborhoods for Reform, 1000 Friends of Oregon, the Portland Commission on Disability, Anti-Displacement PDX, the Energy Trust of Oregon, Scott Edwards Architects, Merrick Architecture, Oregon Remodelers Association, Homebuilders Association, Fish Construction NW, Orange Splot Construction, Habitat for Humanity and Everett Homes.

The members include: Linda Bauer, East Portland Action Plan (EPAP); Sarah Cantine, Scott Edwards Architecture; Alan DeLaTorre, Portland Commission on Disability; Jim Gorter, Southwest Neighbors, Inc. (SWNI); John Hasenberg, Oregon Remodelers Association; Marshall Johnson, Energy Trust of Oregon; Emily Kemper, Manufactured Structures Board; Douglas MacLeod, Homebuilders Association (HBA); Mary Kyle McCurdy, 1000 Friends of Oregon; Maggie McGann, Habitat for Humanity; Rod Merrick, Merrick Architecture Planning; Rick Michaelson (pending), Neighbors West Northwest (NWNW); Michael Molinaro, Southeast Uplift (SEUL); Danell Norby, Anti-Displacement PDX; Vic Remmers, Everett Homes; Brandon Spencer-Hartle, Restore Oregon; Eli Spevak, Orange Splot Construction; Barbara Strunk, United Neighborhoods for Reform (UNR); Teresa St. Martin, Planning and Sustainability Commission (PSC); Young Sun, Immigrant and Refugee Committee Organization (IRCO); David Sweet, Central Northeast Neighbors (CNN); Eric Thompson, Homebuilders Association (HBA); Justin Wood, Fish Construction NW; Garlynn Woodsong, Northeast Coalition of Neighbors (NECN); Tatiana Xenelis-Mendoza, North Portland Neighborhood Services (NPNS).

"Due to the large number of applications we received, we could not appoint everyone. However, we had some stellar candidates — too many in fact," Hales said. "This is a good problem to have."

The Mercury

Blocking Out the Sun

The State's Second-Largest Energy Provider Is at War with Solar Power

By Dirk VanderHart

09/02/2015

OREGON'S SECOND-LARGEST power provider is an addict.

Pacific Power supplies electricity to more than half a million Oregonians and still draws nearly two-thirds of that power from coal—the dirtiest major source of energy. But at a time when the pope and president are taking historic stances on climate change, Pacific's biggest concern isn't trying to kick its carbon-spewing habit.

Instead, the energy giant's working to stymie far cleaner sources of power.

Right now, Pacific—one of several subsidiaries of Portland-based PacifiCorp—is pushing hard for new state regulations that many worry would stop Oregon's fragile solar power industry in its tracks. Like anything involving utility regulation, the battle's complicated, and it's playing out in relative obscurity. But the outcome, observers say, may well dictate what Oregon's energy landscape looks like decades into the future.

The stakes are high enough that the City of Portland is considering jumping into the fray. On Wednesday, September 2, Portland City Council's scheduled to decide whether the city attorney's office should intervene in Pacific's request before Oregon's Public Utility Commission (PUC)—just as renewable energy advocates and solar developers have done in recent months.

Like those advocates, city officials worry rules like those that Pacific's clamoring for could "constrain" its ability to develop renewable energy projects—a proposed solar development on city land in Boring, for instance—just as Portland's recently revamped Climate Action Plan pushes clean power harder than ever.

"The proposal undermines the city's ability to meet the goals of the Climate Action Plan, its ability to support rural economic development, and its ability to support the Oregon solar industry," reads a document city staff wrote for city council. "The proposal is also detrimental to city livability, as it slows the transition from fossil fuels as a source of electricity."

In Portland, Pacific Power supplies electricity to most of the city east of I-5 and north of I-84. If you live in that region, this latest fight means your power company's essentially battling renewable energy, and using you as an excuse.

Here's how. Since the 1970s, federal law has dictated that US power companies must buy renewable energy from qualified small-scale solar, wind, and hydroelectric projects—a policy aimed at encouraging efficiency and conservation. It's a national law, but the feds have left it up to individual states to set the rules for what those deals look like.

In the case it filed before Oregon's three-member Public Utility Commission in May, Pacific Power is asking for two important changes to those rules.

First, the company wants to slash the duration of the contracts it has to sign with qualified renewable projects from 15 years to three years—a move which would allow the energy company to more-nimbly change the rates it pays for that clean power, but which advocates say would make it extremely difficult for new solar projects to find up front funding.

Pacific's also seeking more leverage in negotiating those contracts, by making only the tiniest solar and wind projects eligible to get a guaranteed "standard" price for their power. Other projects of even modest size would be forced to haggle at length with the energy giant—whether they've got the resources to do so or not.

In tandem, renewable energy boosters say the changes would kill solar and wind generation in Oregon before it even gets off the ground.

"The utilities are talking about their concerns about climate and then turning around and basically trying to restrain one of the most important programs we've got," says Fred Heutte, a senior policy associate with the Northwest Energy Coalition, which is fighting Pacific's request.

To make its case, Pacific is relying on some misleading numbers. The company notes that it's been inundated with proposals for new solar projects that want to sell its power lately—the result of falling prices for solar panels and generous tax credits. If all of the projects are built and the PUC declines to change its policies, Pacific warns, it will "pose significant price risk and harm" to customers, who might have to pay more for solar power than cheap, dirty coal.

"When we purchase that power, the cost gets embedded into rates," says Pacific Power spokesperson Ry Schwark. "The people paying for this are customers, and we have to advocate for them in this process."

There's a problem with this argument, though. Proposed solar facilities and completed solar facilities are two very different things. The vast majority of projects that are proposed ultimately fall through.

In truth, Pacific isn't currently being forced to purchase even a single watt of solar power due to the rules it's trying to change, despite those rules being in place for decades. It grudgingly acknowledged this point in a filing with the PUC after being called out by David Brown, a Lake Oswego-based solar developer. But despite this, Pacific says it thinks 75 percent of currently proposed projects are going to be built.

"Their claim is, 'all these horrible solar developers want to build these solar projects and we've never been more terrified,'" says Brown. But for new projects, "there's a 90 percent failure rate."

Pacific power does pay a number of wind facilities for their power, and tells the Mercury its Oregon customers overpaid for that power by \$7 million dollars last year, compared to the price of cheaper power like coal—an average of about \$12.50 per customer.

The company's tried this tack before. In 2012, Pacific joined with Portland General Electric and Idaho Power to ask the PUC for some of the very same changes it's advocating for today. The commission declined that request last year, so Pacific is asking again (Idaho Power, which operates in Eastern Oregon, also is pushing for changes in a separate case).

Brown worries the commission will accept this time around.

"They're doing this in hurry-up fashion," he says of the PUC. "They're just jamming it through."

Brown has reason to fight Pacific here. He's at work building what he says will be the first solar facility in the state that a utility—Pacific Power, in this case—will be forced to purchase from under federal law. As solar and wind power technology grow cheaper, that decades-old policy is becoming more workable than ever in Oregon.

But huge hurdles remain. Energy is cheap right now, thanks to fossil fuels, which makes it difficult for solar projects to compete even with their falling costs. That could change as the energy market does, but advocates say it might not matter if the PUC grants Pacific Power's (or Idaho Power's) request.

Oregon is far from the only battleground in this fight. Pacific and its brethren have pushed similar changes in a host of Western states. They got an early victory in August, when Idaho's Public Utilities Commission agreed to modify its regulations in much the same way Pacific is seeking here.

The Snake River Alliance, a clean energy advocacy group in the state, called the decision "tantamount to killing utility-scale solar developments in Idaho."

Whether or not that happens in Oregon may not be decided for months or years, but the PUC is already helping Pacific out. In mid-August, the commission granted the power company's request to temporarily limit the kinds of new solar and wind projects eligible for guaranteed rates. That decision would be reversed if the PUC ultimately decides against Pacific. It would be bolstered if the body agrees.

"Oregon needs to get back in the seat as a leader in renewable energy," says Heutte, of the Northwest Energy Coalition. "Here's an opportunity to do that. Everybody knows we have to deal with the climate."

Portland Business Journal

City explores demolition, \$145M indoor track, remodeled arena options for Veterans Memorial Coliseum (Renderings)

By Andy Giegerich
08/31/2015

After a year of studying potential uses for Veterans Memorial Coliseum, Portland leaders will begin exploring three options that could define the structure's future.

The options, presented in the Veterans Memorial Coliseum Options Study, are:

1. Continue current operations after a temporary closure.
2. Permanently close and redevelop the site.
3. "Renovate/Remodel/Transform" the structure.

For the latter option, five different scenarios are presented for the public's perusal. Those options include adding a "dynamic floor system" that accommodates an indoor track and field facility and a broad array of other uses, as well as a "covered open-air arena." The former option would cost the most of any of the five ideas, at \$115 million to \$145 million. The latter option is the second-most expensive, at \$95.2 million.

Portland's Office of Finance and Management put out the call for the public to weigh in on the Coliseum in coming months.

KOIN

Veterans Memorial Coliseum: Restore or destroy?

A study released this week lays out 7 options for the 55-year-old coliseum

*By Chris Woodard and KOIN 6 News Staff
08/31/2015*

Tear it down or sink millions of dollars into renovations?

Those are the options being discussed as the City of Portland decides what to do with Veterans Memorial Coliseum.

A study released this week lays out 7 options for the 55-year-old coliseum with 3 basic ideas: do nothing, and the building won't last long; demolish it for \$14 million; or renovate and transform it into something new.

"We are sitting on a really great building that can be a centerpiece for a restored Rose Quarter and Convention Center area," Friends of Memorial Coliseum co-chair Stuart Emmons said. "It's just a gem, we are so lucky to have the building in Portland."

The Portland City Council will ultimately decide the fate of the historic building. But according to Emmons, he and others with Friends of Memorial Coliseum won't allow the structure to be compromised without a fight.

"Demolishing a building that can be such an asset to our city, and is so tied to the culture of our city, is just haywire," he said. "It doesn't stand for what Portland is all about."

But demolition isn't the only option. A dramatic makeover for Veterans Memorial Coliseum could include an indoor track, a party deck or transforming it into an open-air arena.

Making the coliseum an open-air arena, however, would draw fewer events to the venue every year. An indoor track would allow 112 events a year, but would force the Portland Winterhawks to be booted from the facility.

"This building was designed for hockey and for basketball," Emmons commented. "I think it's just dead wrong. It's kind of an insult to the original idea."

A \$35 million restoration option for essential repairs could still end up costing the facility money every year. Restoration efforts could go all the way up to \$91 million to create enhancements like a party deck, new concessions and a wireless network.

"We ought to get as much restoration dollars into this building as possible," Emmons said.

Pictures of the new design ideas by a team of consultants were released on Monday. They began looking at the building last fall, and their report lays out the opportunities and challenges faced in any of the proposed plans.

The report notes the coliseum has hosted more than 5000 events over 55 years and still averages about 117 events per year.

To leave your input on the issue, [click here](#).

Table 1: Summary Comparison of Study Options and Findings

Option/Scenario		Annual Number of Events Total Attendance ¹	Estimated Annual Operating Profit or (Loss)	Estimated Annual Revenue or (Expense) to SVVAF	Total Construction Cost Estimate (2016 \$)	Economic Impact From Annual Operations ²
Continue Current Operations/Temporary Closure		$\frac{117}{384,000}$	(\$110,000)	(\$612,560) ²	NA	Output \$26.7M Jobs (FTE) 360 Earnings \$13.1M
Permanent Closure/Deconstruction		NA	NA	Unknown	\$14,029,458	NA
Renovate/Remodel Scenarios	Essential Repair & Replacement	$\frac{116}{371,200}$	(\$94,000)	(\$100,000)	\$35,080,444	Output \$26.8M Jobs (FTE) 370 Earnings \$13.3M
	Tenant/User Enhancements	$\frac{128}{430,300}$	\$253,000	\$150,000	\$61,293,199	Output \$31.6M Jobs (FTE) 440 Earnings \$16.1M
	Strategic Market Enhancements	$\frac{133}{453,700}$	\$449,000	\$258,000	\$91,047,168	Output \$33.9M Jobs (FTE) 480 Earnings \$17.5M
Transformative Scenarios	Dynamic Floor/Indoor Track	$\frac{112}{309,700}$	\$139,000	(\$490,000)	\$142,925,073	Output \$30.4M Jobs (FTE) 400 Earnings \$14.1M
	Covered Open Air Arena	$\frac{57}{178,400}$	\$207,000	(\$112,000)	\$95,252,340	Output \$16M Jobs (FTE) 240 Earnings \$9.3M

¹ Current operations based on average of last three years; scenarios based on market study.

² Does not include known capital replacement needs such as roof replacement which is currently estimated at \$3.2 million (2016 dollars).

³ Based on stabilized year of operations; output includes direct, indirect and induced spending.