

## The Oregonian

### More than 1,000 applied for 65 spots in city program aimed at bringing the gentrified home

*By Casey Parks  
August 17, 2016*

In early May, the Portland Housing Bureau offered people pushed or priced out of North and Northeast Portland a chance to return.

City actions displaced African Americans and poor people, housing officials said. Now city action will pay to bring some of them home.

More than 1,000 people applied for just 65 spots. This week, some of the top applicants will attend one of two meetings aimed at turning them into inner-city homeowners.

City leaders spent the spring and summer culling the list, awarding applicants up to six points based on how much urban renewal had shaped their old neighborhoods. Residents who were displaced, or are at risk now of being displaced, from neighborhoods between Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and North Interstate Avenue received three points. Former residents of Northeast Portland neighborhoods such as King earned two points.

The city also awarded points to applicants whose ancestors were displaced. If the city took an applicant's parents' property through eminent domain — as it did during the construction of the Memorial Coliseum as well as during the planning of a later-shelved Emanuel Hospital expansion — that applicant moves to the top of the list.

The higher the score, the higher a person is on the waiting list.

City officials plan to use urban renewal — the same tool blamed for the displacement — to pay for what it calls a "preference policy." For this first round, the city allocated about \$5 million to community groups who help African Americans and poor people buy homes.

Representatives from Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives and a collaborative led by the African American Alliance for Homeownership will work with applicants to buy homes in the 3,990-acre Interstate Corridor urban renewal area of North and Northeast Portland.

Those community groups will hold meetings Wednesday and Saturday nights. The meetings are not open to the public or media, said Martha Calhoon, a spokeswoman for the Portland Housing Bureau. Attendance at the sessions is a requirement for the program.

"It's also worth noting that at this stage in the process, we have only verified preference for these applicants," Calhoon wrote in an email. "We won't have determined their program eligibility for another few months and can't guarantee who or how many of the applicants at (the) briefing will go on to achieve homeownership through this process."

## Willamette Week

### A \$22 Million Federal Lawsuit Says Portland Discriminated Against a Black Nightclub Owner

The lawsuit says the shutdown of Exotica International Club for Men was part of a pattern of targeting black-owned bars.

*By Peter D'Auria and Beth Slovic*

*August 16, 2016*

The way Donna Thames sees it, her former business in Northeast Portland was part of a proud tradition of social hubs that catered to black Portlanders.

"It was everything," says Thames. "It was the spot. It meant a lot to a lot of people. It was bigger than Cheers."

Thames says her business, Exotica International Club for Men, was a rare, black-owned strip club that enjoyed mostly African-American clientele and employees.

The way city and state officials saw it, Thames' business was dangerous. She was forced to close Exotica in 2015 after three men were wounded in a parking lot shooting.

Thames doesn't deny a shooting occurred on the club's property. Instead, she says city and state officials punished Exotica more harshly than nearby, white-owned businesses where violent crimes also took place.

Now, she's alleging in court that the government response was part of a pattern of Portland-area regulators cracking down on black-owned nightspots.

Thames is bringing a \$22 million federal lawsuit against the agencies she says drove her from her business at the corner of Northeast Columbia and Martin Luther King Jr. boulevards.

A 48-page complaint, filed Aug. 12 in U.S. District Court, claims the business was the latest victim of long-standing discrimination against African-American club owners by the city of Portland and the Oregon Liquor Control Commission.

"This case is about unconscionable, illegal conduct creating insurmountable obstacles to success of black club owners catering to black people and clubs offering entertainment and playing music appealing to black people," the complaint reads. "The city of Portland, working in partnership with state liquor authorities, has a long and shameful history of knowingly and intentionally targeting black clubs with all of their regulatory power in a concerted effort to drive the clubs out of business."

The Portland Police Bureau, the city's Office of Neighborhood Involvement, and Mayor Charlie Hales declined *WW's* requests to comment on the lawsuit, saying they do not comment on pending litigation.

"OLCC will continue to provide a level of fairness for all liquor licensees across the state," agency spokeswoman Christie Scott writes in an email.

Thames' suit, filed by Portland attorney Tim Volpert and lawyers at Levi Merrithew Horst, details a long history of what Thames calls unfair treatment at the hands of city and OLCC officials.

It is the latest in a series of business-owner allegations that Portland agencies discriminate against black nightlife.

After the 2013 closing of the Fontaine Bleu, a Northeast Portland hip-hop nightclub, following a shooting outside, owner Rodney DeWalt filed a \$3 million lawsuit against OLCC and the city of Portland for "a campaign intended to thwart black-owned clubs or clubs that played hip-hop and catered to the black community." The suit is currently in U.S. District Court.

In 2011, after the closure of Seeznin's Bar and Lounge on Northeast 82nd Avenue, owner Sam Thompson accused authorities of racism when the OLCC imposed strict restrictions on Seeznin's because of a series of neighborhood shootings.

"It's better to be a bike or a dog in this town than a black male," Thompson told *The Skanner* in 2011.

Beth Creighton, a Portland civil rights lawyer, says discrimination cases can be challenging to prove when racism is not overt. "In this day in age, people have gotten smart about discriminating and hiding what their true motives are," she says.

Thames, 43, says scrutiny of Exotica intensified when she took over in 2010 from the previous owner, who was Jordanian.

"I felt like we were being targeted," she says. "The prior owner wasn't treated that way."

In August 2010, Thames alleges, about two months after she took ownership of the club, the OLCC granted her a liquor license, but imposed what Thames calls "draconian" restrictions.

The club was required to have three security officers on duty from Sunday to Thursday and four on Fridays and Saturdays—even on slow nights. Security staff was required to "patrol" the parking lot every 15 minutes. Club patrons were also prohibited from being in possession of more than one alcoholic drink at a time.

In August 2014, the suit alleges, OLCC officers came to the club, "ostensibly to review video of a patron who had been arrested." Thames recorded the interaction on her cellphone with the officers' consent. After viewing the video, officers demanded Thames' cellphone, saying, "It's now evidence in our criminal investigation."

When she would not give it to them, she claims the officers arrested her, confiscated her cellphone, and "marched [her], in handcuffs, through her club, past her customers and staff, and made her stand in the hot, midday sun" for "approximately one and one half hours."

She was arrested for resisting arrest and interfering with a peace officer. The Multnomah County District Attorney's Office declined to charge her, saying the arrest was unwarranted.

"It was very obvious that she had been targeted," her father, C.L. Thames, tells *WW*. "These people were basically coming at her from every possible angle."

The end came in 2015 after Exotica bouncers denied entry to a group of men believed to be in a gang. One of the ejected patrons then opened fire in Exotica's parking lot, wounding three people.

Thames says her club did nothing wrong, but she was told by city authorities with the Office of Neighborhood Involvement that Exotica was in need of a "prolonged cooling-off period" and would need to close at midnight for three months.

Her dancers and bartenders told Thames they wouldn't work for her if the club closed at midnight because that would cut significantly into their tips.

"Ms. Thames was told, in no uncertain terms, that she could either accept midnight closure for 90 days or face such a closure for a year," the suit alleges.

Thames' suit says no similar restrictions were placed on white-owned clubs where people had been shot.

"A business named 'Skinns,' operated by a white person not far from Exotica, experienced two homicides and a shooting involving two more victims in three separate incidents on the premises between 2011 and 2016," the complaint reads. "Neither the OLCC nor the City imposed any restrictions on that business. It continues to operate."

OLCC spokeswoman Scott confirms that Club Skinn currently operates without restrictions, but says the agency is conducting "a lengthy investigation" into the business.

Exotica International closed in July 2015.

Thames' suit says Portland's over-regulation has shut down most of the bars run by black people.

"Presently, black people in Portland comprise approximately 6.3 percent of the population, but there are only three black-owned clubs or bars in the city," the suit says. "There are no currently operating black clubs in Portland catering to young black people and playing hip-hop music."

## The Portland Mercury

### Hall Monitor: Unlikely Allies at Terminal 1

#### A Proposed Homeless Shelter in Northwest Portland Is Making for Strange Bedfellows

*by Dirk VanderHart*

*August 17, 2016*

**IT'S A** Terminal 1 miracle!

As the city moves forward with a **400-bed homeless shelter** at the Northwest Portland site, Commissioner Nick Fish and local attorney John DiLorenzo seem to see eye-to-eye for once: They agree the City of Portland might be on the verge of **breaking the law**.

For years now, DiLorenzo's been the man taking the city to task for its use of utility ratepayer money. In an ongoing lawsuit filed in 2011, he's argued—at times successfully—that some spending by the Portland Water Bureau (PWB) and Portland Bureau of Environmental Services (BES) **ran afoul of the city's charter**, since they didn't directly go toward the water and sewer systems.

Fish, who's overseen BES and PWB since 2013, has had to play defense against those claims for years, and often remarks that it's imperative ratepayer dollars are spent appropriately.

So it was interesting last week to see the two men appear to find agreement. It was also sort of inevitable: The fight over whether to put a homeless shelter at the city's Terminal 1 property, 2400 NW Front, is scrambling battle lines all over the place.

That was clear last Wednesday, August 10, when Portland City Council convened to consider whether to **force BES to lease all or part of the 14.5-acre property** to the Portland Housing Bureau for up to a year and a half.

Pretty much everyone who testified at the hearing—business types, neighbors, and even constant advocates for the homeless—voiced concerns about the shelter being pushed by developer **Homer Williams**. A resolution to pursue the project passed anyway, with Commissioner Dan Saltzman, Mayor Charlie Hales, and Commissioner Steve Novick making up a slim 3-2 majority.

Along that same vote, council also shot down amendments Fish had proposed, which were largely focused on making sure BES was able to lease the property at market rate. A realty firm has said that going rate could be nearly **\$100,000 a month** for all of Terminal 1. The resolution council passed dictated the housing bureau might be able to lease a portion of the property for a 10th of that.

Fish's office argued before the hearing that it was improper. DiLorenzo feels the same way—so much so that in the hours after the Terminal 1 vote he was **threatening to make fresh legal claims**.

"It is obvious that the arrangement outlined in the ordinance deprives the sewer ratepayers of significant value," DiLorenzo wrote in an email to City Attorney Tracy Reeve. "We believe the action is tantamount to commanding the sewer fund to deprive itself of value to perform a service which has no reasonable relation to the provision of sewer services...."

DiLorenzo says he'll pursue claims on the matter if the city doesn't rescind its decision by August 20 (there are no signs it will do so). And Fish, though he wouldn't agree with DiLorenzo's letter outright, seemed to be **feeling vindicated by the saber-rattling** a day after the vote.

"We know that we can't subsidize a non-ratepayer activity," he said. "If my colleagues think that this deal should have a discount, then we can have that discussion. It may have to be **decided by a court.**"

## **The Portland Business Journal**

### **City planning a \$25M Smart Park renovation**

*By Jon Bell*

*August 16, 2016*

One of the busiest city-owned parking garages in downtown Portland is about to get an overhaul, to the tune of up to \$25 million.

At its regular meeting this week, the Portland City Council will consider approving an alternative contracting method for \$14 million worth of work on the Smart Park garage at Southwest 10th Avenue and Southwest Yamhill Street. The alternative method would allow the city to forgo the usual low-bid process and instead select a construction manager and general contractor with a proven track record for the kind of work the garage needs.

Though the estimated budget for the construction work is \$14 million, the city estimates that the entire project budget, including construction, design services, insurance, bonding and other costs, will be close to \$25 million.

According to council documents, the seven-story, 1978 Smart Park garage "is in desperate need of renovation and repair ... beyond what could be considered standard maintenance and upkeep activities." The garage, which has 799 parking spaces and 27,000 square feet of retail space, needs repairs to address structural stability, building systems and ADA compliance. The retail spaces will be renovated, as well.

The downtown garage, which serves nearly half a million customers a year, generates about \$3 million in revenue annually. Funding for the renovation will come from that revenue, as well as Tax Increment Financing from the Portland Development Commission.

PDC is spearheading its own, separate parking garage project by the Oregon Convention Center, as well. That \$26 million project would deliver 425 parking spaces near the convention center and the forthcoming Oregon Convention Center Hotel.

In a separate item on this week's council agenda, the council will also consider whether or not to approve a nearly \$1.3 million contract with FFA Architecture and Interiors for design work on the Smart Park project.

The city hopes to complete the project in about a year. It will likely be broken up into phases to allow the garage and retailers to remain open during construction.

### **Google suspends Portland high-speed internet plans**

*By Andy Giegerich*

*August 17, 2016*

Google's much-ballyhooed, and intensely sought, fast-speed Internet service isn't coming to Portland after all.

Sources at City Hall confirmed a small section in a Monday Wall Street Journal story revealing that Google Fiber plans have been "suspended" in Portland and San Jose.

Google cited the cost of laying fiber optic materials under streets, the sources said.

Instead, it will, according to the Wall Street Journal, look to "use wireless technology to connect homes, rather than cables, in about a dozen new metro areas, "including Los Angeles, Chicago and Dallas, according to people familiar with the company's plans."

A Google spokeswoman, however, indicated to Willamette Week that the Fiber option is still in play in Portland and other cities.

The company had told Portland officials in February 2014 the city was a candidate to get the high-speed service. Instead, Google introduced the service in Kansas City, in 2011, and several Southern cities.

Businesses would have benefitted from the faster speeds because their workforce would both be better connected as well as enjoy more telecommuting options, wrote Alan George, president of the Search Engine Marketing Professionals of Portland, in November 2014.

"Google Fiber would not only encourage burgeoning Portland-based entrepreneurs, but it could also help move existing companies, especially Internet-based ones, to town," he wrote.

The Google Fiber speeds are about 30 times faster than most systems.

## 5 things to know today, and Portland's mayor-elect is all wet

*By Andy Giegerich*

*August 17, 2016*

Good morning, Portland.

It's been a bit of a draggy two days, news-wise, so far. Looks like there's a ton going on around town, mostly bad, through the balance of the week. Here are Five Things to watch for as we prepare for the weekend's heat blast.

### **Squaring off**

From the PBJ's Matthew Kish comes word that Aequitas's service providers — its financial and legal advisers — will face legal challenges of their own.

The matter pits two major Portland law firms — Miller Nash Graham and Dunn, which filed the suit on behalf of investors, and Tonkon Torp LLP — against each other.

### **Stay cool**

Yup, gonna be a hot one. Specifically, triple digits Thursday through Saturday.

Here are Multnomah County's cooling center locations:

- The Walnut Park building, at 5325 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd The building will be open between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. Thursday and Friday and 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturday.

- The Hollywood Senior Center, at 1820 N.E. 40th Ave., between 4:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. Thursday and Friday and 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday.

### **Drive time**

It's not only going to be hot as a sauna this weekend, it's going to be tough getting around town.

The Sellwood Bridge will be closed to all users between 7 p.m. on Friday and 6 a.m. on Tuesday. Workers will use the down time to seal the bridge deck, remove temporary striping, add permanent lane striping and activate new traffic signals at each end of the bridge.

One good thing: Once the bridge reopens, it will result in a traffic change that allows westbound travelers to turn left onto southbound Highway 43, as opposed to having to travel north to a turnaround.

One bad thing: During the closure, several ramps that connect Highway 43 with the Ross Island Bridge/City Center/I-5 south will also be closed for repairs. Drivers can, naturally, expect traffic congestion approaching the Ross Island Bridge from the west during the Monday commute.

Then there's the Hawthorne Bridge.

That structure will be closed to motor vehicles between 5 a.m. and 5 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. Crews will repair the lift span operator's structure during the closure.

Drivers can also expect this: Through mid-September, "there will be more frequent and longer openings of the Hawthorne Bridge lift span on weekdays between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.," according to the county.

That will allow maintenance crews to remove grease from and inspect the lift span cables, according to Multnomah County, which maintains the Hawthorne and Sellwood bridges.

### **Sidestrokes**

The Five Things desk today is staffed by someone who's not particularly buoyant.

That is, the thought of swimming across the Willamette River is ... nope, there's no way. I'm a 50-foot at a time swimmer, at best.

That said, if you're an intermediate swimmer who's not afraid to stick more than a toe in the Willamette, and if you like politics, there's an event just for you.

The Human Access Project, which advocates more usage of the city's south-north flowing river, is hosting its first-ever Mayoral Swim tonight. The crawl features Mayor-elect Ted Wheeler, a triathlete who doesn't blink at the shore-to-shore task.

Which, according to the Human Access Project, is "only a 1/4 (mile) wide, a simple 15-minute swim for intermediate swimmers."

Yeah, give me about three life jackets and, say, a tow from a kind canoe-rower, and I'll think about it.

### **Dig this**

From the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office comes this: Obsidian pieces found by a Willamette Valley landowner have been identified as a collection of Native American artifacts.

And, they're likely to be between 1,000 and 4,000 years old.

Here's why the 15 bifaces are important: "For starters, we wouldn't know the site existed if the landowner hadn't reached out to our office to report the find," said Assistant State Archaeologist John Pouley, in a release. "Aside from the importance of his stewardship, the biface cache is additionally a rare type of archaeological site.

"Of approximately 35,000 recorded archaeological sites in Oregon, few, likely less than 25, consist of biface caches, he added. "Of the known biface cache sites, it is believed to be the first recorded in the Willamette Valley."

Hope you dig the rest of your Wednesday.