

The Oregonian

Portland's neighborhood office employees spent appropriately, internal report finds

By Jessica Floum

April 17, 2017

Portland's neighborhood office employees got their city-issued credit cards back last week after their interim director earlier suspended use of the cards over overdue and incomplete expense reports.

Some employees were as much as 13 months behind at turning in receipts and explaining the purpose of their expenditures, the city's chief procurement officer found.

An internal check by leaders at the Office of Neighborhood Involvement, completed Friday, found that most of the 33 employees who used the cards consistently reported expenses but occasionally missed one or two receipts. Three cardholders had five or more receipts missing and one employee "had consistent issues meeting the requirements."

Though employees failed to properly record their spending, they did not spend improperly, the bureau's operations manager, Amy Archer-Masters, found.

The bureau's interim director, David Austin, said, "It was always clear to me that there was no malfeasance or improper spending. What was clear was that we needed to make sure we were up to date on our bookkeeping and our responsibility to keep track in a timely manner of taxpayers' dollars."

Employees used the cards to buy food for community events held during dinner time, to rent a tent to protect the Portlanders Against Hate candle light vigil from the rain and on limited travel expenses, Austin said.

"The issue has never been the purchases," Austin said. "The issue is the transparency and the bookkeeping."

Austin pledged to do better. Neighborhood office managers plan to set clearer deadlines, to follow up with employees and to set clearer consequences for failing to file expenses on time, the report said.

"I'm confident that we are doing that now," he said.

Willamette Week

Hey, Your Arts Tax Is Due Tomorrow

By Sophia June

April 17, 2017

If you live in Portland and make more than \$1,000 a year, your \$35 arts tax is due April 18. If you haven't paid it yet, make sure to do so by the end of the day, tomorrow. This tax includes anyone who moved into or out of Portland in 2016.

If you don't pay the tax on time, you'll be charged up to an extra \$35, [which could be spent on much more immediately gratifying things.](#)

You can pay [online](#), which keeps administration costs low and also takes, like, four minutes. Or you can [print off this form](#), or pick it up at the Office of Management & Finance at 111 SW Columbia Street, Suite 600, or a local library or neighborhood coalition office.

And remember, artists like Matt Groening and Mark Rothko are products of Portland's public education system...so just do it.

Portland's Painful Rental Market Keeps Softening as New Apartments Arrive

By Nigel Jaquiss

April 15, 2017

Your wallet may not be feeling the impact yet, but Portland economist Joe Cortright says there are significant signs of relief emerging for local renters.

"In the past year, there are growing signs that the surge in rental inflation has peaked," [Cortright writes at City Observatory's blog](#). "According to Zillow's estimates, the average price of a two-bedroom apartment in the Portland area (\$1,495) is almost exactly the same as it was a year ago. Rental price inflation has dropped from nearly 20 percent a year ago to effectively zero in the first few months of 2017."

As the chart below shows, Portland's rental inflation spiked after the end of the Great Recession. That spike stemmed from the fact that very little got built during the economic downturn but people continued to move to Portland.

Now, nearly four years into a red-hot market, the pace of construction is outstripping demand. Cortright cites a real estate industry report that there are 25,000 apartment units in the pipeline in Portland.

Even that tsunami of supply, however, is not enough to put a smile on the economist's face.

"The big uncertainty in the years ahead will be whether the policies the city has enacted (inclusionary zoning) and others that it is considering ([rent control](#)) will choke off future investment in local housing supply," Cortright concludes. "Once the current inventory of permitted housing is built (and much of it was permitted just prior to the new [inclusionary requirements](#) taking effect), it's far from clear that developers will find Portland as attractive a marketplace for new apartments as it has been in the past few years."

New Homeless Shelter Location in Inner Southeast, Provided by Developer

By Rachel Monahan

April 14, 2017

For a third time, a Portland developer is donating the space for a temporary homeless shelter, city and county officials announced Friday.

The old Shleifer Furniture building on Southeast Grand Street will open as a homeless shelter on Monday for up to a 100 people, including men, women and couples.

The shelter is expected to remain at that location until the fall as Beam Development and Urban Development + Partners prepare to turn the building into a hotel.

The Shleifer Furniture opens as the temporary shelter, located at the [Washington Center Building at SW Fourth and Washington Street](#), closes next week.

The Menashe family first donated the Washington Center Building space last year and helped reopen it again in January.

Developer Tom Cody is still hosting a homeless shelter at the Bushong & Co. building near O'Bryant Square. It opened last fall.

Full press release from the county and city below:

The City of Portland and Multnomah County have joined with a pair of Portland development firms to find a new home for downtown's Columbia shelter — building on a strong partnership with the business community that's helped hundreds of vulnerable neighbors find safety off the streets.

Columbia's new location — in the historic Shleifer Furniture building at 509 S.E. Grand at Stark — will begin welcoming guests Monday, April 17. It will continue providing overnight accommodations for up to 100 people, including men, women and some couples.

The Shleifer building's co-owners, Beam Development and Urban Development + Partners, are offering up the space as a shelter before they begin work restoring the 111-year-old building for use as a hotel later this year. The building will remain open as a shelter into the fall.

That collaboration means the community can maintain needed capacity in our shelter system. It also shows the continued power of partnership between the public and private sectors when it comes to addressing homelessness — and directly easing suffering on the streets.

"Homelessness is a growing issue in our city and it's important to remember that we all have a role to play in helping our neighbors in need," said Eric Cress, principal at Urban Development + Partners.

"As building owners and developers, we have a unique opportunity to provide access to safe spaces and services for people in our community who would otherwise be sleeping on the street. This temporary shelter wouldn't be happening without the vision and hard work of community leaders, elected officials, and city and county staff who are committed to addressing homelessness in a comprehensive and compassionate way."

"Homelessness is a citywide challenge that requires citywide solutions," said Jonathan Malsin, principal at Beam Development. "We're proud to be part of one solution with a temporary site for shelter and services while we are completing our renovation plans for the historic Hotel Chamberlain.

"Folks from the city, the county, and community organizations are engaging in outstanding work to fill in the rest of the puzzle, pursuing innovative strategies to address homelessness in every corner of the city. We look forward to seeing more partnerships to provide shelter and services to those who need them and address the root causes that push people to the streets in the first place."

Columbia's original location, in the Washington Center Building at SW Fourth and Washington Street, opened only as a temporary shelter in January. It was set to close this week.

The Menashe family first opened the Washington Center Building as shelter space last year, as the Peace shelter. The space was reopened as the Columbia shelter, after the Menashe family worked with Greystar Real Estate Partners, which was under contract to purchase the property at the time.

The agreement to open Columbia came near the height of an unprecedented and deadly bout of severe winter weather. And it made an immediate difference for people freezing on our streets.

"It's been fantastic. It rescued me off the streets," said C.M., one of the guests who stayed at Columbia. "If it wasn't for you guys, I'd be dope sick somewhere, sleeping in the street. You guys are giving me a lot of inspiration to start the ball rolling and get back into school."

"Life saving and life changing. In one word, awesome," said D.H., another guest. "Without Columbia, it'd be hell on earth. I'd probably be dead this winter."

Developer Tom Cody, who owns the Bushong & Co. building at 333 SW Park near O'Bryant Square, also came forward with a similar arrangement in the fall. That building is still hosting the Peace 2 men's shelter.

The new location for the Columbia shelter adds another partner to the effort by the City/County Joint Office for Homeless Services and A Home For Everyone to increase shelter beds for homeless neighbors.

A Home for Everyone is the first community-wide initiative to respond to homelessness in Multnomah County. It brings together people who experience homelessness; elected officials from Portland, Gresham, and the county; and leaders from the faith, philanthropy, business, and nonprofit sectors to craft shared strategies.

"Addressing homelessness in our community requires the entire community's participation. Government cannot do this alone," said Mayor Ted Wheeler. "Thank you to our private sector partners for stepping up."

Overall, A Home for Everyone and its partners have nearly doubled the number of publicly funded, year-round shelter beds in Multnomah County over the past year, adding roughly 600 beds.

Including space provided by privately funded organizations, our community now has more than 1,450 year-round beds available. Nearly 300 additional beds are available for short-term use.

"In true Portland spirit, when we asked the business community to help, they stepped up," said Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury. "First it was the Menashe family, then it was Tom Cody and Project, and now it's Brad Malsin and Beam. Who's next?" But shelter is also akin to seeking treatment for a chronic condition in the emergency room.

That's why A Home for Everyone remains committed to preventing as many people as possible from becoming homeless in the first place, helping more than 5,200 last fiscal year.

The office also works to help those who do fall into homelessness regain housing as quickly as possible, and then keep it. More than 4,600 people were moved from homelessness into housing last year, more than ever.

Making sure people in crisis don't need shelter, either because they can stay in their homes or can quickly return to permanent housing, also helps our current shelter capacity go further.

In all, partners in A Home for Everyone helped more than 25,600 people — also more than ever.

Transition Projects will continue managing the Columbia Shelter, with operations funded through the City/County Joint Office of Homeless Services. Organizers have worked closely with the Portland Business Alliance on this initiative.

“We're thankful for another opportunity to partner with business leaders like Beam Development and Urban Development Partners to help ensure some of the county's most vulnerable have a safe place to sleep off the streets,” said George Devendorf, executive director of Transition Projects.

OPB

Portland Developers Donate Space For Temporary Homeless Shelter

*By Amelia Templeton and Emily Fuller
April 17, 2017*

Two Portland development firms are donating space for a temporary homeless shelter in the Shleifer Furniture building in the heart of the city's central east side.

The shelter opened Monday. It will provide a place to sleep at night for up to 100 people.

It will remain open until the fall.

George Devendorf is the executive director of Transition Projects, the nonprofit that manages the shelter, along with several others in the Portland area.

“When folks who are living outside don't have to worry about where they're going to be sleeping tonight, they're much better able to focus on those things that they want to do and need to do to rebuild their lives. That's the main value of a place like this,” he said.

Men, women, couples and pets can make reservations to stay at the shelter.

The Shleifer building's co-owners, Beam Development and Urban Development + Partners, are offering up space as a shelter before they begin work restoring the building for use as a hotel later this year.

It's the third time Multnomah County and the City of Portland have partnered with local developers to turn unused commercial properties into temporary shelters for the homeless.

The east side shelter is coming online as the city prepares this week to close a winter shelter in a downtown property donated by the real estate investors Barry and Jordan Menashe.

The historic Shleifer Furniture building is located at 509 S.E. Grand at Stark. Built in 1901, the Shleifer family first opened a furniture business there in 1936. [It remained a furniture store until 2015](#), when Stuart Shleifer decided to retire, close the business and sell the historic building.

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Including space provided by privately funded organizations, the county now has 1,450 year-round beds available.