

The Oregonian

Portland prepared to enter secret deal with Portland General Electric

By Jessica Floum

August 15, 2017

Portland is considering putting taxpayer dollars at risk to sell hydroelectric power, and it won't tell the public exactly how much it stands to make — or lose — from the arrangement.

The city council will review a proposal Wednesday under which Portland General Electric would buy power from the city for more than the market rate—but only if the city tells no one how much PGE pays.

A risk analysis presented to council at a work session last week said the city probably will make money but could lose up to \$800,000 over the next three years, if Portland has extremely dry weather.

The money to cover any losses would come out of Portland's general fund, which pays for city services including homeless and affordable housing initiatives, parks maintenance and police and fire salaries.

PGE spokesman Steve Corson said the nondisclosure agreement is necessary to keep a competitive advantage in the energy market. Water bureau officials told the city council such secrecy is common for deals between public utilities and cities.

But energy consultant Robert McCullough said federal rules require energy companies to publicly disclose what they're spending on power each quarter to prevent market manipulation. Those override any local agreements.

Once those disclosures are made in federal filings, "There is nothing secret here at all," McCullough said. "An everyday inconsequential transaction is now top secret. One has to wonder why."

Corson argued that those filings won't put PGE at a competitive disadvantage because they happen after the power is already purchased and the reports aren't as detailed as a purchase contract would be.

Deputy City Attorney Karen Moynahan said PGE has nondisclosure agreements with several utility districts. But David Peters, the water bureau's principal engineer who oversees the hydroelectric operations, said he has not seen any.

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler questioned in a work session last week how the city's consultants could be sure nondisclosure is common. The deal, he said, reminded him of the shrouded deals he experienced working in private equity.

"It sounds like poker," Wheeler said.

Still, Wheeler supported the deal as of Tuesday afternoon, mayoral spokesman Michael Cox said.

Commissioner Dan Saltzman said Tuesday he also plans to support the arrangement, saying his past concerns over the bureau's failure to collect competing proposals were assuaged.

Water Bureau Commissioner Nick Fish was not available for comment Tuesday, according to his chief of staff Sonia Schmanski.

"The limited confidentiality of certain deal points – which were shared with members of council – was necessary to secure an above-market contract price," Schmanski said in a statement.

A City Budget Office analysis said the bureau expects to make \$3 million to \$8.5 million over the life of the 15-year deal, but that depends on whether the city can accurately predict how much power its plant produces each year. PGE will pay above-market rate for a certain amount of power promised by the city each year, but the city will have to pay the electricity company damages if it fails to produce that amount.

The damages would come out of the city's general fund until Portland's Bureau of Hydroelectric Power makes enough in reserves to cover the cost.

Portland' Chief Financial Officer Ken Rust said at the work session that the hydroelectric facility has always been backed by the general fund, although it has not yet had to draw on it.

He compared the arrangement to that of the Portland Parks & Recreation Bureau's golf fund, whose profits also depend in part on the weather.

This year, the city paid \$800,000 from the parks bureau's budget to bail out the city's golf courses after an unexpectedly wet season left the typically self-sustaining courses in the red, the Portland Mercury reported.

The water bureau analysis predicted the city has more than a 99 percent chance of making a profit from selling power to PGE over 15 years.

But McCullough said predicting how much water will fall and then move through the plant in a given year is very challenging, especially with climate change. He said his firm sends helicopters to investigate the snowpack in the Canadian Rockies in order to assess how much hydroelectricity the Columbia River could produce in a given year.

"There is absolutely no possible way the city of Portland would be able to forecast these issues with any precision," McCullough said.

Corson acknowledged that it's challenging to predict hydroelectric power production.

"Unexpected things happen," he said. "That really is subject to Mother Nature."

For decades, the city paid PGE to maintain and operate its hydroelectric facility at the Bull Run reservoir, then sold the power to the utility. The city made an average \$300,000 profit each year.

But PGE decided to cease operations when its contract is up later this month, forcing Portland to find a new operator to keep its federal operating license and continue selling power.

Before securing a buyer, the city council agreed last month to pay up to \$8 million over five years to a Washington-based agency, Energy Northwest, to operate the plant. The city council will consider three other contracts Wednesday. It will evaluate paying PGE \$1 million over the next five years to continue to transmit the power over its power lines. It will examine paying Eugene Water & Electric Board \$420,000 over five years to schedule when the plant releases power.

Whether or not the city can make money off of selling hydroelectric power to PGE will depend on how accurately it bets on water, Fish said at last week's work session.

"Ultimately, we have to make a judgment about our tolerance for risk," Fish said.

The Portland Tribune

Secrecy wins out over public's right to know

By Nick Budnick

August 16, 2017

Hiding the names of police chief finalists could set precedent for future public hirings

At a time when many agencies in Oregon are moving toward greater transparency, Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill and Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler have paved the way for more secrecy in the hiring of local officials — arguing that Portlanders shouldn't have the opportunity to vet finalists who don't want to be disclosed publicly.

With Underhill's backing, Wheeler didn't reveal that Danielle Outlaw of Oakland had been a finalist for the Portland police chief's job until Aug. 7 — when he announced she was the mayor's pick to replace Mike Marshman as top cop.

"We were not willing to lose a top recruit for the top law enforcement position in the city," said Wheeler spokesman Michael Cox, of the mayor's decision to prioritize finalists' preferences for confidentiality over public vetting.

The new legal position backing secrecy, however, contradicts the prevailing analysis set by the Oregon attorney general nearly 30 years ago, which calls for letting the public know the finalists for agency director jobs.

Underhill's decision to back Wheeler's wishes also sets what amounts to a precedent that will encourage greater secrecy not only at the city of Portland but at other agencies with Multnomah County as well, observers said.

Under the new stance taken by Wheeler and Underhill, said lawyer Duane Bosworth, "in the city of Portland you would never get finalist names for any job of any stature."

In late July, the Tribune reported that Wheeler had done a 180-degree turn from a January pledge to allow public vetting of finalists, as many cities do.

Activists and others had hoped to research finalists' names in part to avoid what's happened in Portland in the past, when top agency directors were named only to have issues surface from their past — sometimes crippling their leadership or even ending their tenure or consideration for the job.

Job called for transparency

The job announcement for Portland police chief called for the ability "to lead an organization committed to community policing, transparency and accountability."

Wheeler at first revealed only that Marshman, the incumbent chief, was one of four finalists for the job.

In response to a records request by the Tribune, Wheeler disclosed a second finalist. But his office refused to release the names of two other finalists, saying they'd requested confidentiality.

That's where Underhill entered the picture

In approving the 1973 Oregon Public Records Law, the Legislature gave Oregonians the ability to overturn agency record-request denials without having to hire a lawyer. For state agencies, the Oregon attorney general is tasked with being a neutral arbiter on records appeals, while county district attorneys handle appeals concerning local agencies.

When the Tribune appealed Wheeler's denial, Deputy City Attorney Heidi Brown sent Underhill an affidavit from city human resources director Anna Kanwit. It said that since a 2013 order by Underhill supporting the release of finalist names, one candidate had dropped out before being named a finalist after learning from the city that he was not considered the best candidate.

Brown contended that applicants could be fired from their current job if named publicly and that disclosing finalists risked discouraging people from applying out of personal privacy concerns.

Brown cited a 1988 attorney general records-law opinion as if it supported the city position. In reality, the opinion called for releasing finalists' names — as has been the state's practice ever since, state officials confirmed.

On Aug. 2, Underhill nevertheless sided with Wheeler and Brown, opining that "we conclude that the disclosure of the names would cause public harm." He cited "the chilling effect of the loss of confidentiality for current finalists, who could withdraw their candidacy if the city were ordered to disclose their names at this time."

Underhill decision questioned

But Bosworth, a public records specialist who frequently represents the media, noted that Underhill's decision erroneously claims that not one, but two city candidates for previous city jobs had withdrawn from consideration rather than be named. Nor did Underhill note that the candidate who withdrew had been informed he wasn't considered the best candidate.

Underhill didn't properly consider the public's right to know about its government, and also didn't satisfy the personal privacy exemption, which calls for protecting individuals only from the release of information that an ordinary person would find "highly offensive," Bosworth said.

Lawyer Jack Orchard, another records-law expert, echoed Bosworth, saying, "These candidates knew of the high public interest in this decision. There are no secrets to be kept."

Outlaw: Job wasn't at risk

In a press conference last week, Outlaw dismissed the notion put forth by the city that disclosure would have jeopardized her job. Her chief was fine with her applying, she said.

She requested confidentiality out of personal preference, to avoid the discomfort that comes with scrutiny, she said.

"When you put yourself out there as a chief's candidate, you're really exposing yourself to a lot. You're exposing yourself to scrutiny personally, professionally. Up until a certain point in the process, the expectation is, depending on the agency, that there is some confidentiality."

She suggested she would have been comfortable with the city releasing her name at some point, but until then wanted to avoid "distraction."

"... At some point — and I was prepared for this — when the city tells you 'heads up, we're going to release your name,' that's something we have to prepare for. For me, given that I was still actively working in my current organization, I didn't want a lot of distractions. My chief was very supportive; she knew what I was doing. But I didn't need the distraction in my professional life, and I didn't want my family to be distracted by what was going on here as well."

Willamette Week

Critics Blast a Portland Plan to Divert Money Earmarked for the Black Community to Help a Health Care Giant

Prosper Portland promised to spend millions to aid people displaced from North Portland. It now plans to use some of that money on the institution from the razing of black neighborhoods.

By Nigel Jaquiss
August 16, 2017

Leesha Posey remembers cutting across a vacant lot in North Portland on her way to Harriet Tubman Middle School. "It's been empty since I was a little girl," says Posey, 41.

That was three decades ago. But the lot still sits empty—a rarity in a city where vacant land is coveted, especially in the red-hot North Williams Avenue corridor.

Its emptiness is a reminder of what the city and its urban renewal agency, Prosper Portland, took from the black community.

In the 1960s, the city-owned agency, then known as the Portland Development Commission, condemned vast tracts of inner North and Northeast Portland. The takings—including the still-vacant block at the northwest corner of North Williams Avenue and Russell Street—allowed urban renewal, including construction of parts of Interstate 5, the Oregon Convention Center and Legacy Emanuel Hospital. But in the process, the agency gutted neighborhoods and dispersed the black community.

In a belated effort at compensation, city officials pledged in 2013 to direct tens of millions of dollars to benefit individuals and businesses in North and Northeast Portland.

But that's not what Prosper Portland is proposing. Instead, it wants to use some of that money to help one of the institutions that benefited from the razing of black neighborhoods: Legacy Health.

Legacy owns the empty lot on Williams. And Prosper Portland wants to expand the boundaries of where it can subsidize building projects—in order to bring Legacy's land inside.

To Posey and other critics, Prosper Portland's unexpected Aug. 1 announcement that it wants to partner with Legacy is a bitter continuation of the agency's history of favoring powerful institutions over the residents, mostly black, who long lived in the area.

"You've changed your name," local resident Rahsaan Muhammad told the Prosper Portland board last week, "but you haven't changed your behavior."

The lot Posey used as a shortcut was once known as the Hill block, a thriving mixed-use complex that until 1969 held a drug store, a dry cleaners and apartments.

The city demolished the structures in 1969, and in 1980, the city sold the property for \$397,000 to Emanuel Hospital. The hospital planned to redevelop the lot, but that never happened. (Legacy spokesman Brian Terrett says federal funding for a planned hospital expansion evaporated and Legacy has not found a suitable use for the land since then.)

The city had already spent \$150 million in urban renewal money on a new light-rail line and other improvements in the Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Area—almost 4,000 acres

covering an area between North Interstate Avenue and Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and much of North Portland.

Such money comes from tax increment financing, a practice that allows the city to direct property taxes for use within specific geographic boundaries.

On the heels of community outcry at a proposed Trader Joe's grocery store 20 blocks away in 2013, city officials decided to rectify the damage from its urban renewal policies.

In January 2015, the City Council voted to commit the money remaining in the urban renewal area—about \$32 million—to what's called the North/Northeast Portland Community Development Initiative Action Plan.

That plan aimed "to foster economic prosperity among communities and individuals that have not fully participated in, or benefited from, economic opportunities in the Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Area."

To help guide expenditures, Prosper Portland convened a community oversight committee this year that included local residents such as Posey and Michael Davis.

Both say they had questions about something referred to in Prosper Portland documents as a "cultural business hub," which would absorb \$4.5 million—or about 12 percent—of the remaining money.

Committee members wanted all the money to go instead to uses such as promoting black home ownership and supporting black-owned businesses.

But Aug. 1, Prosper Portland dropped a bombshell—it proposed expanding the boundaries of the urban renewal area to include the Legacy-owned vacant lot.

That proposal meant a chunk of the \$32 million—it's unclear how much, but critics fear it's the \$4.5 million in cultural business hub money—could now be spent to develop the Legacy land.

Oversight committee members say they never heard a word about Legacy in three previous public meetings.

"Bottom line, the funds are not going to do what they are supposed to do," says Davis. "[Prosper Portland] says one thing and does another. They're just repeating history."

Unlike small, black-owned businesses the city said it wanted to help, Legacy is a giant, with annual revenues of more than \$1.7 billion and a financial position greatly strengthened by the Affordable Care Act ("Thanks, Obama!" WW, April 13, 2016).

"Why do we need to include this property," Posey asks, "when there's a measly amount of money left? Now we're going to give some of it to an organization that has the resources to develop it on their own?"

Kimberly Branam, executive director of Prosper Portland, says Legacy would fund whatever improvements, such as medical office buildings, it develops. Any public money, she says, would go toward investments the black community chooses, such as affordable housing.

"Legacy's not asking Prosper Portland to pay for anything that would benefit them," Branam tells WW.

But critics note the land has remained vacant for nearly 50 years and that Legacy would only develop it now by leveraging scarce urban renewal dollars Prosper Portland claims are dedicated to historically underserved individuals and businesses.

On Aug. 9, just eight days after the announcement of the Legacy deal, the Prosper Portland commission was set to vote on adding the proposal.

The deal looked like a slam dunk.

Commissioners responded enthusiastically, particularly when Legacy CEO Dr. George Brown, Legacy board member and former PDC chairman Charles Wilhoite, and Maurice Henderson, chief of staff to Mayor Ted Wheeler, extolled the deal's virtues. (All three men are black.)

"This project has Legacy's complete support," Brown testified.

Then something rare happened. Posey, Davis and other members of the oversight committee slammed the idea.

"Our job is to ensure the \$32 million is allocated to people of color," said Shannon Olive, a committee member. "I don't think it's fair to give a large institution another chance after 37 years."

The confident smiles of the Legacy contingent disappeared. Commission members beat a hasty retreat. They pulled the Legacy vote from the agenda.

For a while at least, the little guys had won.

"If [Prosper Portland] is actually trying to build a new level of trust," Posey said later, "they need to stop having these closed-door meetings and making decisions without community input."

Branam acknowledges it was a mistake to unveil the Legacy deal without first involving the oversight committee.

"We did do some outreach, but in hindsight, we should have done more," she says. "Our board listened to what the community had to say."

What's the Truth About the New Portland Police Chief and Federal Immigration Agents?

Danielle Outlaw explained a deal with ICE one way in Oakland. She portrays it differently now.

By Katie Shepherd

August 16, 2017

Last month, incoming Portland Police Chief Danielle Outlaw touted the merits of a partnership between the Oakland Police Department and a branch of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Outlaw now wants to explain that partnership away.

On July 11, she said the partnership between police and the Homeland Security Investigations unit of ICE resulted in at least two successful gang enforcement operations in Oakland, where she was deputy chief. That testimony could prove politically dicey in Portland, which like Oakland is a "sanctuary city" that takes a dim view of federal immigration law.

Last week, *WW* reported on Outlaw's remarks in Oakland. Hours after *WW*'s story, Outlaw held her first press conference in Portland—and insisted she wasn't testifying in favor of the

partnership but merely "clarifying" how it worked. That's a semantic argument, and a narrow squeeze.

But more substantively, Outlaw told Portland media that the memorandum of understanding, or MOU, that defined the Oakland partnership with ICE hadn't been used for a year. That seemed to contradict her previous statements about ongoing cooperation between the two agencies.

So what's true? Let's take a look.

What Outlaw said in Oakland:

On July 11, she testified that the partnership with ICE provided a meaningful crime-fighting tool. "The current MOU as it stands, we believe, supports sanctuary city policy and that it does provide parameters and accountability.... We work with HSI in doing human traffic investigations, gang investigations, and we work with them as well during our cease-fire operations, which focuses on our most violent criminals here in the city of Oakland."

What Outlaw said in Portland:

On Aug. 10, she told Portland media that the Oakland police agreement with ICE hadn't been put into use for a year. "What the MOU did was allow overtime reimbursements and to allow officers to be deputized so we can charge at the federal level. That was it. And quite frankly, we hadn't even really done any of that at all. We hadn't even enforced the MOU at all in about a year."

So what's true?

Oakland officials say Outlaw is telling the truth about the MOU lying dormant for a year. But she is leaving out ways in which Oakland police worked with ICE—outside the deal's parameters—on gang enforcement investigations during the past year. Oakland police officers were never deputized to make arrests for federal crimes and never received overtime pay from the feds, but the department did work with ICE agents to make some arrests and investigate cross-border crimes. Outlaw cited those investigations when she explained the deal to Oakland officials, but she left them out in Portland. That could raise questions about her approach to working informally with ICE in her new hometown.

Now that Same-Sex Marriage is Legal, Why Does the City of Portland Continue to Provide Benefits to Domestic Partners?

And who determines the relationship is more than just a friend in need?

*By Marty Smith
August 16, 2017*

Now that same-sex marriage is legal, why does the city of Portland continue to provide benefits to domestic partners? And who determines the relationship is more than just a friend in need? —Milt J.

You're barking up two separate trees here: Whom an employer chooses to cover is a (somewhat) separate issue from which relationships are recognized by the state.

The city, like any other employer, has always been free to extend benefits to whomever it wants. Some forward-thinking companies offered benefits to same-sex partners before domestic-partnership laws were even a thing, relying on affidavits to establish the relationship. Others

hesitated until civil unions and other legally recognized partnerships came into being in several states.

Even today, plenty of employers don't offer benefits to plain old legally married, opposite-sex, insert-tab-A-in-slot-B-every-other-Friday spouses, much less same-sex cohabitants. It's perfectly legal, as long as all comers get the same lousy deal.

Historically, of course, some employers used the difference in legal standing as a pretext to favor opposite-sex over same-sex relationships. This eventually led to many states' adopting a wildly varying array of civil-union and domestic-partnership statutes.

The whole thing was rendered somewhat moot in 2015, when gay marriage became legal nationwide as part of the Affordable Care Act.* Nevertheless, Oregon's 2007 domestic-partnership law—which, unlike most others, expressly forbids the extension of domestic-partner status to opposite-sex couples—remains on the books.

Your gripe, Milt, appears to be that Oregon's commitment-phobic gays can legally solemnify their relationship as a domestic partnership without quite having to pull that final, till-death-do-us-part trigger of marriage with a capital M. Meanwhile, our opposite-sex couples have to go all in; matrimony or nothing.

Well, maybe so. But consider: When same-sex marriage was legalized, several states converted the civil unions on their books to full marriage, automatically, in perpetuity, without asking first. Would you want to take that chance?

* Psych! But seriously, try to get your racist uncle to believe this at your next family gathering.

The Portland Mercury

The Run-down Stewart Apartments Are a Sanctuary for Poor Portlanders

They Might Be Gone at the End of the Month

*By Dirk VanderHart
August 16, 2017*

IN JUNE, the rumors began wafting through the Stewart Apartments like the cigarette smoke that often clouds its halls.

The 55-unit building's long-time manager had passed away on May 28. If no one stepped in to replace him, 66 residents would soon be looking for a place to live—with little hope of finding a suitable spot.

The first rumblings of a looming mass eviction came not long after apartment manager Mike Narver's death. But by August 11—20 days before Narver's lease to run the building was set to expire—no one was any clearer on their future.

“It's so back and forth,” said Eddie Grant, a 62-year old resident who clerks the Stewart's front desk, as he emptied a garbage bin in the building's lobby last week. “Now I heard we might be out at by the end of the month, or next week.”

Marge Appling, a 20-year resident and the building's on-site manager, had heard different. "I was told we had an extra six months, but it could be tomorrow for all we know," she told the *Mercury*. "They're not keeping us very well informed."

In fact, no one knows what will become of the Stewart, a decrepit and dingy two-story warren above Mary's Club, where a single room with a shared bathroom will run you between \$560 and \$600 a month. The building's co-owner, Leon Drennan, says the apartments are in disrepair—an opinion backed up by city officials—and that everyone will have to leave if a new manager isn't secured.

Meanwhile, the Portland Housing Bureau (PHB) is scrambling to identify an organization qualified to step in and take over so that dozens of poor Portlanders don't suddenly find themselves homeless in a city where rents are rising by the day. As of Monday, bureau Director Kurt Creager wouldn't comment on possible leads.

"I think every option needs to be on the table," Creager said in a separate interview last week. "The short-term interest is to stabilize the situation for the tenants."

Drennan doesn't appear optimistic.

"The ideal solution, of course, would be for a new entity to operate the apartments," he wrote in an email. "Whether that can occur by August 31 is wishful thinking, at this point."

If the Stewart's cheap units *do* go away, it will be the latest development in one of Portland's persistent trends.

In 2002, the central city was home to nearly 2,900 units of housing considered "market affordable" to households earning less than 60 percent of the area's median income. In other words, they were affordable even without government subsidies or policies artificially lowering rents. By 2016, that number had dwindled to just 156, according to the PHB [[PDF](#)].

The trend flies in the face of a "no net loss" policy that directed Portland officials to preserve affordable housing in the city's core—a policy Creager says he'll uphold.

"Previous directors didn't feel like they were empowered or resourced to deal with [the policy]," Creager says. In light of the city's housing crisis, he says, "We have a mandate from [city] council and we have resources available."

Officials are so adamant about keeping "low-barrier" housing options like the Stewart that last year the city struck a deal to **purchase the Joyce Hotel**, a flophouse at Southwest 11th and Stark, for \$4.2 million.

But Narver's death presents a hurdle to maintaining these kinds of resources. During decades of management that **included battles** with city code enforcers, Narver oversaw low-income apartments not only at the Stewart, but at two other nearby buildings: the Westwind and Home apartments.

Each of the three buildings house tenants that include people of limited means whose disabilities or other struggles have put other living options out of reach. And it appears the fate of the Westwind, which Narver owned, might also be in jeopardy.

Creager says he's heard "entirely secondhand" that tenants could soon be evicted from the building, which sits at the intersection of Northwest Everett and 6th. Word has spread among local social workers that such an eviction is imminent.

But it's tough to piece together exactly what's going on. Rich Carlson, the Lake Oswego-based attorney for Narver's business, didn't return calls or emails from the *Mercury*. When finally reached by phone, he said he didn't have permission to discuss the situation.

To be clear, it's not that buildings like the Stewart or Westwind are particularly nice places to live. An afternoon visit to the Stewart's hazy second-floor lobby turned up plenty of residents who offer a conflicted stance.

The building can be a chaotic mess, they say—just look to a March incident when a resident set fire to his closet, causing damage that's being partly blamed for the **upcoming closure of Tugboat Brewing** on the building's ground floor. But it's also their chaos.

"It's pretty run-down," says 36-year-old resident Bryan Cole, who, moments later, adds, "I met some pretty cool people there." Cole was homeless before landing a spot at the Stewart in 2015. He was attending one of the building's twice-monthly Bible studies in 2015, he says, when he was offered an opportunity to move in.

And despite his qualms with building upkeep, Cole counts himself lucky. Not long ago, he says, building management said it was going to update plumbing in some rooms, but wound up tearing their sinks out. Cole's room, at least, still has running water.

In fact, pretty much everyone you talk to at the Stewart offers some take on the building's decrepitude.

Grant, the desk clerk, says the place would be strewn with trash without the intervention of on-site staff. People casually mention residents stealing communal garbage cans. Both Cole and Appling say Narver neglected the place.

"He was here for the money," Appling says.

The building's poor condition is reflected in a flood of code violations turned up by city inspectors in July. Among 21 individual violations listed in a July 26 letter [\[PDF\]](#) are details of unapproved electrical wiring, excessive use of extension cords, evidence of a cockroach infestation in the building's common areas, and a lack of bathroom ventilation resulting in mold.

Drennan, the building owner, says the violations point to a "habitual 30-year refusal to protect our investment," on Narver's part. (Carlson, Narver's attorney, didn't offer a response to that accusation.)

"We are presuming all 55 units will need to be completely rewired, and that most water and sewer lines are in need of replacement or repair, given the age of the building," says Drennan, who estimates renovations will cost a minimum of \$250,000.

The neglect was bad enough, says Drennan, that he decided last year not to renew Narver's lease to operate the apartments. But in light of the man's death and the impending mass eviction, Drennan has since offered Narver's family a three-month extension.

"Anyone on the premises after the [lease's] expiry date will become guilty of trespassing and subject to arrest: not at all our desire," Drennan writes.

There's another reason why the landlord might want to keep tenants around. In February, the city passed a new law mandating relocation payments for renters who are issued no-cause evictions. Creager says that law will apply to each of the Stewart's 55 units if people are forced out.

Stewart residents are aware of the law, but no one seems sure what payments could be. Grant heard a figure in the \$50,000 range. Cole says he heard \$4,500 was realistic.

Neither is correct. The Stewart rents out single room occupancy units, which under the relocation payment ordinance require a payment of \$2,900 per unit.

That's enough for more than five months' rent at the Stewart. But of course, if the money comes, the Stewart won't be there to accept it.

"I think most of us are in panic," says Angela Crisman, a resident who says some of her health problems have re-emerged since she learned of a possible eviction. "It's stressing me out. It's bothering me."

Hall Monitor: The People in Your Neighborhood

Overlook's Neighborhood Association Has a Dumb Idea: Exclude the Homeless!

By Dirk VanderHart

August 16, 2017

EVERY NOW and again, someone utters the useless truism that "Portland is a city of neighborhoods."

The saying is supposed to reflect a unique flavor imparted by the 95 distinct neighborhoods within city limits, but it's really just a tired cliché. What decent sized city *isn't* a "city of neighborhoods," after all?

Still, the sentiment has come to mind more than once lately, as neighborhood associations throughout Portland have aired new, novel, and often-contradictory approaches to dealing with **the city's rising homeless population**.

Laurelhurst recently sought heightened criminal penalties for homeless people camping near the park (Mayor Ted Wheeler said no). Montavilla wanted the city to stop sweeping homeless camps altogether (which got the same answer from Wheeler).

And now we've got **Overlook**—my own neighborhood—floating one of the more head-scratching proposals to date.

This week, the Overlook Neighborhood Association (OKNA) board planned to take up an item aimed at **preventing homeless people from participating in its monthly meetings**. A proposed amendment to the association's bylaws would have dictated that residents have a "legal address and domicile" within the neighborhood in order to qualify for membership.

It's a sinister, tone-deaf, and **wholly discriminatory** idea that's opposite the direction the city should be headed—but the OKNA insisted it had merit.

Under current city rules, the association argued, "it is possible that anyone who happens to be in the neighborhood on the day of a meeting could be eligible to vote. This includes houseless individuals camping illegally in Overlook or squatters occupying a vacant building."

Of course, OKNA's real concerns aren't nearly so broad.

Since late 2015, the group's been at war with **Hazelnut Grove**, the self-run homeless encampment at North Greeley and Interstate. The association has pressured the city to set conditions for a formal permit, to no avail. The two parties have engaged in mediation in an effort to adopt a "good-neighbor agreement," without success.

So instead, the OKNA considered **freezing the homeless encampment out of neighborhood process** unless it got its way. Under the new membership requirements, Hazelnut Grove residents would be ineligible to participate in meetings unless they got a city permit (and therefore a “legal address”).

Thankfully, the city once again said no. The Office of Neighborhood Involvement (ONI) sent a letter to OKNA on August 11, **threatening to cease officially recognizing** the group if it pressed forward. ONI notes its rules prioritize inclusion and prevent associations from discriminating on the basis of income.

“I thought the language [of the proposal] was deplorable,” ONI Interim Director Dave Austin told me. “It’s not helping us, as a city, [to] solve problems.”

The OKNA wanted to explore its options. After receiving the letter, the group’s board scheduled a special meeting to discuss next steps. Notably, Chair **Chris Trejbal** argued the group could still advocate for neighbors without the city’s formal recognition.

Instead, the group blinked. At Tuesday’s meeting, Trejbal announced he was tabling the bylaw, and **accused Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, who oversees ONI, of “bullying.”** But the larger observation about neighborhood flavor still holds.

Consider: On August 14, the St. Johns Neighborhood Association took up a bylaw tweak of its own, to be voted on next month.

Far from excluding houseless Portlanders like Overlook, St. Johns is proposing to **specifically allow them to join.**

It’s a city of neighborhoods, after all.