

The Portland Tribune

City Hall Watch: Want to Know What City Will Be Like in 2035? Go Online.

By Jim Redden

August 22, 2017

Plus, Better Naito finished and marked by press conference, and interactive affordable housing map posted.

The Bureau of Planning and Sustainability announced last week that it is now posting more public testimony about the city's planning projects online.

The most recent addition is testimony on the draft Central City 2035 plan that will be heard by the City Council on Sept. 7. The plan proposes multiple land-use and zoning changes to the most urban parts of the city, including downtown, the Pearl District, the Central Eastside Industrial District and the Lloyd District.

The Central City is expected to increase by 37,500 people and 51,000 jobs by 2035. The council will hold a public hearing on the draft growth plan at 2 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 7.

To learn more and read the testimony, go to portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/651051.

Naito safety projects completed

The Portland Bureau of Transportation announced last week that it has completed the Better Naito package of safety enhancements along Naito Parkway. They include traffic signal improvements, a new bicycle connection to the Steel Bridge, and safer access to Gov. Tom McCall Waterfront Park.

The announcement was made at a news conference by PBOT Director Leah Treat and Will Naito of Naito Development, grandson of the late Old Town businessman Bill Naito. He is active in Better Block PDX, the nonprofit group that started the multiuse-path pilot project.

"A thriving downtown depends on great biking and walking connections," Naito said.

Map shows affordable housing projects

The Portland Housing Bureau posted an interactive map on its website last week showing the location of city-supported affordable housing projects either under construction or scheduled to be completed by 2019.

According to the bureau, the projects will either create or preserve 2,200 units for low- and moderate-income Portlanders. They do not include any of the units to be financed by the affordable housing bond approved last year by city voters. The council is scheduled to approve a framework for spending those funds on Oct. 11.

The map can be found at portlandoregon.gov/phb/74246.

Wheeler, Fish Tilt Toward Police Critics

*By Nick Burdick
August 22, 2017*

This week, in an unusual development, Mayor Ted Wheeler and City Commissioner Nick Fish intend to defy the strong wishes of District Attorney Rod Underhill and adopt a policy to require prompt investigative interviews of officers after shootings.

Adopting the proposal would constitute an unaccustomed victory for groups like Portland Copwatch, the Portland chapter of the NAACP, and the National Lawyers Guild.

Following an Aug. 9 council meeting in which police critics found themselves making approving noises of Wheeler and Fish from the audience, Copwatch's Dan Handelman said he is "very surprised, and pleasantly surprised. It was long overdue."

Underhill's office, however, is not happy, saying the new proposed ordinance does not appear to do enough to keep any initial disciplinary interview separate from a criminal investigation of the shooting. That could infringe on the officer's rights and give them a free pass on any attempt to prosecute them.

"There does not appear to be any provision for walling off or otherwise keeping this statement apart from the criminal investigation," said Don Rees, a top deputy to Underhill.

The vote constitutes the latest installment of the so-called "48-hour rule" saga. Once an esoteric police accountability debate, the rule became a campaign issue, and now has triggered a public standoff between city officials and the most powerful law enforcement official in the county, Underhill.

Part of the Portland Police officers' union contract, the rule said they should not be interviewed by an internal investigator within the two days after an incident, as part of any disciplinary investigation.

Police accountability activists felt that in the event of a shooting, the rule gave too much time for officers and the union to modify statements to avoid administrative discipline. And federal prosecutors who oversee the Portland Police Bureau under a federal court settlement in 2014 agreed.

But while Wheeler supported elimination of the rule while running for mayor last year, his predecessor, Charlie Hales, spearheaded a contract that eliminated the rule before Wheeler took office.

Underhill, who was not consulted during the debate last year, issued a strongly worded memo in March saying that compelling a prompt statement by an officer could have the effect of immunizing them from any prosecution in the event of a shooting that was found to be a crime.

The police bureau had been set to accede to Underhill's wishes. But the lawyer who heads the city's civilian police review unit, Constantin Severe, issued his own memo disagreeing with the district attorney. And when the matter went public, Wheeler stepped in to rescue his campaign pledge, joining with Fish.

After hearings on Aug. 3 and 9, Wheeler and Fish spearheaded an ordinance that reflects the wishes of the activists who have long criticized police practices.

The new proposed policy would require administrative interviews to occur within 48 hours of a shooting, and also calls for the Portland City Attorney's office to get the matter validated by a court.

"We want to be crystal clear," Fish said at the Aug. 9 hearing. "We are not picking a fight with the district attorney. Reasonable people can disagree on this question."

The police officers' union met with Underhill in May to discuss the issue, several weeks after Underhill's memo was completed, records show.

But the union has been on the sidelines during the most recent debate, according to Portland Police Association President Daryl Turner. He said that while the group's lawyers agree with Underhill, the debate over what will replace the previous 48-hour rule "is between the city and the Multnomah district attorney. As for us, we agreed to delete it out of the contract, and it was."

Interestingly, the issue of police compelling statements went before voters on the November 1999 ballot, when the ACLU blasted as unconstitutional a law proposed by tough-on-crime groups. Measure 73 would have give prosecutors greater power to force defendants to give statements. It failed, with 53.6 percent of voters against.

But in its Aug. 2 memo arguing for compelled statements of police, the local chapter of the National Lawyers Guild contended that the ability to use deadly force means that police officers should be subjected to a different legal analysis from that afforded the public at large.

"The arguments in this memo are not intended to apply to procedures for obtaining statements from suspects who are not police officers," the memo said. "Police officers are permitted to do things that members of the public are not."

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Gambetti, Platt Appointed to Prosper Portland board

By Chuck Slothwer

August 21, 2017

Two new members have been appointed to the board of Prosper Portland.

Francesca Gambetti, a project manager and partner at Shiels Oblatz Johnsen, and Peter Platt, owner of the restaurant Andina, were appointed to three-year terms by Mayor Ted Wheeler, and unanimously approved by the City Council on Wednesday.

Gambetti served on the Portland Design Commission from 2003 to 2006. At Shiels Oblatz Johnsen, a local project-management consultancy, Gambetti has ushered projects that include Mercy Corps headquarters and Broadway Rose Theater.

Platt's Andina restaurant is a Peruvian fine-dining destination in the Pearl District. The restaurant was named The Oregonian's Restaurant of the Year in 2005.

The two newcomers replace Tom Kelly, who served as chairman and leads Neil Kelly, a residential remodeling firm; and Mark Edlen, co-founder and chairman of Gerding Edlen, a major Portland-based development firm. Their terms were expiring.

Wheeler said in a news release that both the new appointees had demonstrated a commitment to Portland. Gambetti and Platt said they were committed to equitable economic development.

Prosper Portland's board has a number of major projects in its near future. These include the remake of the U.S. Postal Service site and the wider Broadway corridor in Northwest Portland, attracting development to the Centennial Mills site, shaping a politically sensitive proposed project on a vacant lot owned by Legacy Health in North Portland, efforts to broaden prosperity to historically disadvantaged groups and finding solutions for Prosper Portland's long-term financial stability.