

The Oregonian

Attorney General Jeff Sessions to Meet separately with Federal, Local Law Enforcement in Portland

*By Maxine Bernstein
September 17, 2017*

U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions will be in Portland Tuesday to meet separately with federal and local law enforcement, an administration official confirmed Sunday night.

Sessions will discuss multiple subjects, including immigration, violent crime, drug enforcement and the opioid epidemic, the official said. Sessions will not be making any public appearances, said the Justice Department official who asked not to be named because he's not authorized to speak for Sessions.

Oregon's U.S. Attorney Billy J. Williams, who is among the federal law enforcement officials expected to meet with Sessions, did not return messages on Sunday.

Portland City Commissioner Nick Fish wrote on his Facebook page Saturday that Sessions would be in town this week.

"We need to let him know that Portland stands with our Dreamers," referring to the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, the Obama-era program that has shielded almost 800,000 immigrants from deportation who were brought here as children. The young undocumented immigrants are known as "dreamers."

Willamette Week first reported on Saturday Sessions' upcoming trip to Portland.

Earlier this month, Sessions announced the Trump administration would phase out DACA, calling it an "unconstitutional exercise of authority by the Executive Branch," while President Donald J. Trump urged Congress to come up with an alternative.

Sessions also has spoken out publicly at least twice about the local case of Sergio Martinez, a "serial immigration violator," who was in and out of Multnomah County's jails six times since December, after the local sheriff and his jail refused to respond to a request by federal immigration officials to be notified of Martinez's release in December. Martinez is now in custody in Portland, accused of attacks on two women in late July, charged with sodomy, sexual abuse, kidnapping and robbery.

In an address in Miami in August, Sessions blasted Multnomah County's refusal to alert immigration officers of Martinez's release from jail in December. "How can these politicians hear this story and do nothing?" he asked. "By protecting criminals from immigration enforcement, cities and states with so-called 'sanctuary' policies make all of us less safe."

On Friday, a federal judge in Chicago issued a nationwide injunction that blocks Sessions' attempt to deny certain funding to so-called "sanctuary" jurisdictions, such as Portland and Multnomah County that refuse to cooperate with federal immigration authorities.

Local activists have planned a protest to coincide with Sessions' visit to Portland.

Portland's Resistance, the political group Milenio.org and nonprofit Voz Hispana Cambio Comunitario have set up a Facebook page that reads, "Jeff Sessions You're not Welcome Here!!"

The protest is planned for 10 a.m. Tuesday, but a location has yet to be determined, according to the Facebook page.

Portland Police Still Can't Measure Effectiveness of Response to Mental Health Calls, Consultants Say

*By Maxine Bernstein
September 15, 2017*

Portland police still lack the ability to track whether officers are using less force against people with mental health issues three years into a federal settlement that was supposed to improve their response, outside consultants say.

"We do not believe the PPB has the data systems in place to adequately measure the effectiveness of their unique system," the Chicago-based consultants wrote in a report recently filed in federal court.

The city-hired consultants, Rosenbaum & Associates, tried to evaluate the bureau's Enhanced Crisis Intervention Team of officers who receive more than 40 hours of training to handle mental health crises. They work regular patrol, are scattered among the bureau's three precincts and go to mental health-related emergency calls if they're available.

A U.S. Justice Department investigation found in 2012 that Portland police used excessive force against people with mental illness. The negotiated settlement with the city, approved by a federal judge in 2014, calls for changes to Portland policies, training and oversight.

The agreement recommended a different method of crisis response modeled after a strategy Memphis police started that has a team of trained officers respond to mental health crisis calls as their full-time role. The team reports to one high-ranking supervisor.

"PPB continues to operate with a modified Memphis model but has yet to produce data to demonstrate its effectiveness and responsiveness to the Portland community," the report said.

The consultants say they suggested that the Police Bureau track frequency of mental health calls, adequacy and availability of the specially trained officers by precinct and shift, outcomes of the calls and differences in outcomes when enhanced crisis intervention officer can't respond.

The bureau had been using a special screen that pops up on an officer's mobile computer to fill out information on all interactions with people who exhibit mental illness. But police halted the practice after the District Attorney's Office advised them that the information must be shared with defense lawyers if the people faced criminal prosecution.

To address the district attorney's concerns, the bureau switched to a different type of screen that an officer completes only if the call requires a written police report, to make the information more accessible for sharing with the defense at prosecution.

But that means the information no longer reflects all police contacts with people suffering from mental illness, consultants Dennis Rosenbaum and Amy Watson found.

Data the consultants reviewed from March 2016 through Jan. 31 showed that 10 percent, or 18,748, of Portland police calls had some type of mental health element involved. Of those, 6.3 percent, or 1,179, were considered of a type that should draw an enhanced crisis intervention officer. Of those 6.3 percent of calls, the officers with the extra training responded nearly 70 percent of the time.

The consultants asked the city Bureau of Emergency Communications, which dispatches police to 911 calls, for more detailed information on mental health calls, but the bureau said it didn't

have the staff to perform such data extraction or analysis. The consultants said the Police Bureau also has access to the information, but it also said it didn't have the staff to provide a data review.

"This significantly limits (both bureaus') capacity to analyze trends and assess the adequacy of their mental health response system," the consultants said.

Mary Claire Buckley, principal management analyst who works on the Police Bureau's Department of Justice compliance team, said the bureau is working to compare the outcomes of responses to mental health calls by enhanced crisis intervention officers versus other officers. She said she anticipates that analysis may be available next month.

Justice Department lawyers also noted in a report this summer, "Our team has repeatedly heard from officers, on ride-alongs and in the (enhanced crisis) training, that they are frustrated by repeated contacts with known individuals ... who they take to the hospital only to be released, over and over without any answers from PPB about what they should do."

The consultants also found that the bureau has failed to embrace computer tracking to identify at-risk officers or patterns of problems that would allow for early intervention, as required under the federal agreement.

The consultants said police supervisors who oversee the system have resisted their recommendations "time and again."

Police supervisors have told the consultants that the system's setup meets the settlement's requirements. It does track supervisors' performance reviews of officers under their command, and the rate that the officers use force as a ratio of their arrests and compared to that of other officers on their shifts.

The Justice Department expects more, the consultants said.

"We have seen little in the way of meaningful progress during this review period. ... After two years, we believe more progress should have been made and urge PPB to make substantive changes," the consultants wrote in their quarterly report, covering July through December 2016.

The Police Bureau says the Employee Information System is intended to allow a "comprehensive review" of an officer's performance on the job, benefit the bureau and officers by "facilitating professional growth" through feedback from supervisors -- but may not be used to make decisions about discipline, transfers or promotions.

The consultants said they'd like to see the tool used to " help save officers' careers and encourage good policing in general."

The system flags officers in the computer database if they have used force in 20 percent of their arrests in the prior six months, if they have used force three times more than the average number compared with other officers on the same shift, if they receive two or more complaints with similar allegations or if they have received three or more complaints within the prior six months.

The consultants said the system should track much more information over a longer period, including complaints against officers, their total number of responses to 911 calls, their use of force overall and compared to force used by officers by shift and precinct, ratio of force to arrests and ratio of force used to suspect injuries and officers injuries.

They also recommended that the system track the type of complaints, sustained complaints, ratio of complaints to interactions on the job, tendency to engage in car or foot chases after suspects, their use of sick leave, how frequently they charge a suspect with resisting arrest and how that compares to officers by shift and precinct.

About 90 percent of the flags that arose from the current system aren't forwarded to an officer's direct supervisor, but reviewed by the system administrator, the report said.

Seattle police, in contrast, require a direct supervisor review to determine if an intervention, such as mentoring, is warranted. The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office has a performance review committee of three commanders that makes such decisions.

"The adequacy of the current review process is unknown because of a lack of documentation, but on its face, does not appear sufficient in light of best practices," the report said. "Also, a system of intervention has not been established to our knowledge which is the primary goal of (such) systems. As such, we see no evidence that officers who truly would benefit from supplemental instruction and guidance are receiving it."

Buckley said the bureau has made changes to the system since the consultants completed their report. For example, more is being shared with officers' direct supervisors when a flag is triggered in the system, and the supervisors are now required to document if they took any action, such as a debriefing, extra counseling or training, Buckley said.

The bureau has met the settlement requirements governing what the system tracks and what would trigger an alert about an officer, Buckley said.

"Certainly we're going to be looking at improvements to the system. But we first want to comply with the settlement agreement before we're able to add things," she said. She added that the bureau's resources are limited, noting there's one sergeant who is in charge of the Employee Information System, and the programmer is based in Denver.

The consultants expect to release an updated report next month.

Portland Rental Housing Tool NoAppFee Gets Boost from City

*By Jessica Floum
September 15, 2017*

Portland will partner with a local entrepreneur to offer residents a single online destination where those seeking housing can pay for a background check, find housing for which they qualify and apply.

The city will enter a three-year contract with Tyrone Poole, who developed NoAppFee.com after experiencing homelessness himself, Mayor Ted Wheeler announced Friday.

Poole "did more than just identify that renters need a quicker, easier and more efficient way to find housing," Wheeler said in a statement. "He created a solution."

The application removes the need for multiple costly applications by screening potential renters against all vacancies.

Portland awarded Poole a \$150,000 grant in October after soliciting proposals for a housing-related web tool. That money will go toward adding nonprofits' screening criteria, including median family income, to the application. The city then plans to pay Poole an additional \$375,000 over the next three years to maintain the website, housing bureau spokeswoman Martha Calhoon said.

In June, Poole told a crowd in Washington, D.C., that his application would help serve those who most struggle to find a place to live. People with Section 8 vouchers, bad credit, an eviction, a criminal background or who have experienced domestic violence could find housing through his app, he said.

The Portland Tribune

Proposed City Rules Could Change Demolition of Old Portland Homes

*By Daniel Forbes
September 15, 2017*

Contractors who use excavators to whack old houses to bits could be required to take extra steps, preventing clouds of dust laden with lead from flying.

Portland Commissioner Chloe Eudaly is considering sweeping new regulations on demolitions of old Portland homes to curb clouds of lead dust that fly onto tens of thousands of residential lots each year.

Eudaly's draft ordinance, which surfaced early this week and could go to the council later this year, is still being finalized. Her chief of staff, Marshall Runkel, and two top officials with the Portland Bureau of Development Services told the Portland Tribune that the proposal needs a full public airing. Portland's builders and developers have yet to weigh in on a measure likely to increase their costs.

The proposed ordinance could dramatically change the way demolitions are done in Portland, where it's common for contractors to use excavators to whack a house to bits, sending clouds of dust laden with lead flying. According to numerous studies, ingesting lead (which doesn't degrade) causes cognitive impairment, particularly among children. Two years ago, Portland Public Schools shut off drinking fountains in its buildings when it discovered lead leaching into the water supply.

Balancing needs

Eudaly's draft ordinance was crafted with technical input from Perry Cabot, a program specialist with the Multnomah County Health Department, in consultation with Tony Green, deputy ombudsman with the city auditor's office. Should it be approved, it would require a series of new steps before any home built before 1960 could be demolished.

Under the proposal:

- Windows, doors and their frames would need to be removed.
- All siding would need to be removed.
- All materials removed would need to be wrapped in plastic sheeting and placed in a covered container until it is taken to a landfill or recycling facility.

According to David Greenhill, owner of Good Wood Deconstruction and Salvage, the proposed requirements could cost developers up to \$3,000 in labor costs, plus \$500 for disposal.

The Tribune reached out to numerous builders, plus the local and state homebuilders associations. In an email statement, the Home Builders Association of Metropolitan Portland said

it looked "forward to being part of the process moving forward to ensure an effective policy for the city" one "that balances the needs of our community."

In addition to removing and wrapping the building materials the draft ordinance would require that a "fine water or mist shall be applied to the building structure before and during demolition," and "as debris is loaded into disposal containers."

Some builders use garden hoses to spray structures during a demolition. But David Jacobs, of the National Center for Healthy Housing said, such a practice likely doesn't do much to stem the dust. "I doubt it has much efficacy. It's better than nothing," he said, but "it's unlikely to be able to deliver the adequate flowrate" necessary to control the dust.

In the vanguard

Runkel and other proponents are confident an ordinance in some form will pass. Runkel sent the builders a copy Sept. 12 and is hoping revisions can be made in time for a December council vote.

Pushback from builders is likely as they well may point to the increased costs involved. BDS spokesman David Austin said his agency did not have an estimate of what proposed new regulations would cost and is looking to homebuilders to provide that information. Builders are scheduled to meet next week with BDS officials.

Nor did Runkel or BDS officials yet have a handle on fines that could be incorporated to enforce the proposed ordinance. Runkel doesn't think BDS will send city staffers to the field to provide on-site enforcement. Rather, he envisions "citizens with cameras" and the threat of post-demolition fines to keep builders in line with proposed new health-protective measures.

Cabot, the county's community health expert, said some sort of monitoring of demolitions is key. "Without consistent, reliable oversight, which takes time and money, no program will be able to offer effective protections as intended by the rules," he said.

The BDS permit process requires that developers simply sign a certificate attesting that they will conduct lead-paint abatement. "Our staff have neither the authority nor the knowledge to determine if any violations have occurred," City Commissioners Dan Saltzman and then-BDS Director Paul L. Scarlett wrote in a Dec. 9 letter to this reporter.

Their letter added that though the certification signed "under penalty of perjury" by developers promises remediation of lead-based paint, "it is not a legally binding document."

Eudaly took over the bureau from Saltzman in January, ousted Scarlett in April, and has made tougher regulations a priority.

Cabot is hopeful, if there is way to enforce any new rules. "With an integrated and functioning compliance mechanism, this would place Portland in the vanguard nationally," he said.

Portland Supports App to Help Renters Find Housing

*By Jim Redden
September 15, 2017*

Development star later this month and new platform to help renter find housing could go live later this year, according to City Hall press conference

The City of Portland is supporting the launch of an online platform later this year to make it easier for renters to find housing.

One App Oregon is being developed by local innovator Tyrone Poole following his own experience with homelessness and housing instability. The Portland Housing Bureau is supporting the project with a one-time \$150,000 Innovation grant and a three-year, \$375,000 contract of \$125,000 annual maintenance payments.

The project was announced at a Friday morning press conference by Poole, Mayor Ted Wheeler and Commissioner Chloe Eudaly.

According to Wheeler's office, the lack of a user-friendly, comprehensive listing of available and affordable rental units for Portland is a barrier for renters searching for housing in the current market and exacerbates our city's housing crisis. Portland renters often have to search multiple sources to find vacancies, make numerous phone calls, drive from property to property, receive multiple denials, and pay fees to apply for units they may not ultimately qualify to rent. This repetitive, laborious process means it can take months for a family to get approved for housing, the office says.

The platform developed by Poole's company NoAppFee is designed to help by screening applicants against a comprehensive listing of vacancies in rental properties for a single fee, and connects them with the properties for which they qualify, reducing the time and cost to families in search of housing. Development on the project begins this month and is expected to go live later this year, Wheeler's office says.

City Loans for ADUs Considered to Help Stem Gentrification

*By Steve Law
September 14, 2017*

In a new element of city's 'Right of Return' strategy, plan aims to keep North, Northeast residents, especially African-Americans, in the community

The city of Portland might help long-term North and Northeast Portland homeowners build "granny flats" or accessory dwelling units, to help lower-income people — particularly African-Americans, stay in their homes.

Details are still being hashed out, but the city has discussed loans to homeowners to finance conversion of their basements into separate dwelling units. Homeowners could rent those accessory dwelling units to earn more income, or move into the ADUs and rent out the rest of their homes, says Kurt Creager, Portland Housing Bureau director.

The idea is one component of the city's grand strategy to stem gentrification in inner North and Northeast Portland and right some of the wrongs committed over several decades, when thousands of low-income people, particularly African-Americans, were displaced by a series of improvement projects.

The Albina area of inner North and Northeast Portland, the historic heart of Portland's African-American community, was in the path of least resistance — and cheapest land to condemn — when it came time to site and build Interstate 5 and Memorial Coliseum and expand Emanuel Hospital, though that expansion was later canceled. Property values in the area later skyrocketed,

resulting in more displacement and gentrification, after creation of the city's Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Area built around the new Interstate MAX line.

Now, as part of the city's N/NE Neighborhood Housing Strategy, it's embarking on the nation's most aggressive "right of return" policy, to lure back some of those displaced people or their descendants. Some money will be used to help those people buy homes or rent subsidized apartments in North and Northeast Portland.

The ADU pilot program is the flip side of that, an effort to prevent more displacements.

Building family wealth

Studies show that home equity is the largest chunk of many families' financial assets, and vital to their ability to pass on wealth to their children.

"In looking at the household wealth accumulated by different ethnic groups, the difference between African-American households and Anglo households is largely the value of the single-family home," Creager says. It's hoped that having a rentable unit will keep more lower-income people in their homes as their neighborhoods are gentrified.

"Eventually, their household value will be increased and their resiliency, if you will, will be expanded," Creager says.

Doling out loans may be tricky

Eligible homeowners must have resided in the boundaries of the urban renewal area since at least 2001, he says. It's not clear what other eligibility criteria are being considered, though other parts of the city's "Right of Return" project give people "points" if they or their families were displaced by past projects. The city can't legally dedicate funds just to African-Americans, despite the disproportionate impact of past policies.

One proposed restriction for the pilot program is barring use of the ADUs as short-term rentals, such as for Airbnb. There already are plenty of short-term rentals in North/Northeast and most hosts aren't getting required city permits, Creager says. Some blocks have so many short-term rentals they are starting to feel like transient communities, he says.

The city also wants to increase the supply of affordable housing.

Creager evaluated some 2,700 properties being used as short-term rentals in the city. "I estimated that 1,000 had previously been affordable on the month-to-month market," he says.

Airbnb disputes that number, especially after it removed more than 500 listings by hosts who were using multiple properties as short-term rentals.

"Even if it's 500, it's 500 too many units that have been lost," Creager says.

Easier said than done

"The concept makes a lot of sense, and the theory behind why they're trying to do the program makes a lot of sense," says Kol Peterson, a Portland ADU consultant and organizer of the annual ADU tour that took place last weekend.

Peterson, who discussed the pilot project with city officials, says the early notion was to restrict the loans to basement conversions, on the theory that those are the cheapest way to add ADUs.

But basements often have cracked foundations that are costly to fix, he says, and some conversions might require the homeowner to move furnaces and other home features out of the basement. Such conversions can cost up to \$50,000 or even \$100,000 or more, he says.

Peterson urged the city to also allow conversions of garages to ADUs, because those also can be among the cheapest ways to add apartment units to single-family lots.

Though the ADU pilot sounds rather narrow, it could turn out to be very ambitious and complicated, like the rest of the city's emerging Right to Return policies.

"No program like this has been done anywhere around the country, as far as I know," Peterson says.

"The challenge is going to be finding the right candidates."

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Willamette Week

Metro Councilor Sam Chase Considering Entering Race to Succeed Dan Saltzman

*By Nigel Jaquiss
September 15, 2017*

A third experienced politician is sizing up the opportunity to succeed Portland's longest-serving city commissioner, Dan Saltzman, who announced earlier this week he will not seek re-election next year.

Sam Chase, now in his second term on the Metro council, says he may join Portland NAACP chief and former state Rep. Jo Ann Hardesty (D-Portland) and Multnomah County Commissioner Loretta Smith in the race.

"I'm very interested in it," Chase tells WW. Oregon Public Broadcasting first reported Chase was considering getting into the race.

Chase, 49, served as chief of staff to Commissioner Nick Fish before winning a Metro seat in 2012. Prior to that, he ran the Oregon Opportunity Network, an affordable housing advisory group; developed non-profit housing, and prior to that, served as housing advisor to the late former City Commissioner Gretchen Kafoury.

"I'm getting a lot done at Metro but I think I could get even more done at the city," Chase says. He'd like to see the city lead a regional housing strategy.

"We'll never solve our housing problems unless we focus on a regional solution," Chase says.

He has no particular timetable for a decision on whether to enter the race and because he will be midway through his second term at Metro, can run without resigning his seat.

"I'll talk with my family and close advisors and make a decision," Chase says.

The Daily Journal of Commerce

Proposed Design Guidelines Receive First Public Comments

By Kent Hohlfeld

September 15, 2017

New design guidelines proposed for Chinatown/Japantown got an overwhelmingly positive reception during a first reading before the Portland City Council on Thursday. This was the first opportunity for the public to comment on the guidelines before city commissioners.

City staffers have been working on the project for a year and a half and were supported by the Historic Landmarks Commission.

“We are enormously enthusiastic because this makes our job easier,” Historic Landmarks Commissioner Wendy Chung said.

The proposed rules would help developers better understand what is required for projects to meet the commission’s standards, she said.

“(Developers) don’t have a clear idea of what is expected to get approval,” Chung said. “The key is getting more authentic elements in the plans we see.”

Extensive outreach was performed to communicate with stakeholders in the area. The Bureau of Planning and Sustainability held open houses to gain input, according to BPS senior planner Brandon Spencer-Hartle.

“Design teams won’t have to scratch their heads as to what it takes to be authentic,” he said.

The new guidelines have largely been well received by stakeholders in the area, Spencer-Hartle said. Also, everyone who testified on Thursday was in favor of the proposed guidelines being adopted.

Some designers are already incorporating the new concepts in their designs to present to the Historic Landmarks Commission, Spencer-Hartle said.

“In the early phases of the project, we made an effort to hear from those that are there now and those that were in the area historically to get something that is historically accurate,” he said.

The proposed guidelines will return before the City Council on Sept. 28 for a final reading and vote. A vote of approval by the council would be followed by a 28-day appeal period before the new rules could become final.

Metro-Area Communities Doling Out Excise Tax Dollars

By Garrett Andrews

September 15, 2017

Millions of Metro grant dollars are now hitting the streets to help identify solutions to housing unaffordability in Greater Portland.

Seven agencies received one-time Community Planning and Development Grant awards of \$100,000 or less in 2016. It was the final round using the “Community Planning and Development Grant” title. The name will change next round to “2040 Planning and Development Grants,” and be based on Metro’s 2040 Growth Concept planning document.

A request for proposals from the city of Beaverton is seeking a consultant to identify possible “anti-displacement” policies the city could adopt to preserve and increase affordable housing options. The contract would be valued at \$100,000.

Also receiving grants were the cities of Portland (\$100,000), Oregon City (\$100,000), Milwaukie (\$65,000), Wilsonville (\$62,000) and Tigard (\$50,000), and Washington County (\$9,750). The grants will serve different objectives, from finding opportunities to increase “missing middle housing” in the city code (Oregon City) to finding affordable housing options near areas in Southwest Portland eyed for light-rail expansion.

The grant money comes from Metro’s 0.12 percent construction excise tax on projects valued over \$100,000.

For projects valued over \$10 million, a \$12,000 payment is due

The Portland Business Journal

5 things to know for Monday, and is Portland ready for Jeff Sessions?

*By Andy Giegerich
September 17, 2017*

It's wet out there, Portland. Which is something we've not been able to say for several months. Here are Five Things to know as we start a busy, and, yes, continued rainy, week.

We ate it up

Another Feast Portland has come and gone. We hit a few events, including the opening of the Grand Tasting on Friday.

The event seems to keep getting bigger, as evidenced by the sightings of foodies spread throughout the town. We can't wait to see what's in store for next year's Feast, size-wise and, well, food-wise.

They give and give and give...

Our Corporate Philanthropy Awards are coming up next month.

Here's a look at who's bringing home the hardware(although we won't, of course, reveal the exact order until our Oct. 11 program, for which tickets are available [here](#)).

Reaching out

Can a conservative fellow from Alabama get his message through to skeptics in the Rose City?

Willamette Week reported Friday that U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions will hit town tomorrow "to meet with local law enforcement officials." The Oregonian confirmed the meeting last night.

He will, according to the O, talk with Oregon's U.S. Attorney Billy Williams about immigration, violent crime, drug enforcement and the opioid epidemic. And, he'll make no public appearances, a Justice Department official told the paper.

That means there'll likely be no statements on the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. The Trump administration has seemingly vacillated on that topic over the past week.

Nice threads

The Blazers have introduced the third set of uniforms they'll wear under the NBA's 2017-18 Nike deal.

The team says the "striking red and black color combination ... breaks away from any look ever boasted by the team." A quick take: The colors, yes, are different. The rest of the "Statement" uniform designs don't seem horribly different.

A shout-out to Nike for this: The unis fabric is partly comprised from Alpha Yarns and recycled polyester, meaning "each individual NBA uniform represents approximately 20 recycled polyethylene terephthalate plastic bottles."

Wheels in the booth keeps on turnin'

Hey, this is good news: Brian Wheeler will be back with the Blazers for at least the next few years. The team revealed that the ace announcer has signed a multi-year contract.

Wheeler is the rare announcer who can tread the line of homer — he clearly loves the team — and expert game chronicler. He never misses a thing on the court, and conveys it with a booming voice that has captivated radio audiences for the past 20 years.

Hard to believe it's been that long since he replaces the beloved Bill Schonely. But, in testament to Wheeler's skills, he's nearing the point in Portland where, should he ever leave, it would be a sad day in Rip City.

Michael Holton, a former Blazer who has a foot in the business world, will join Wheeler for color commentary during home games.

The team's first game this year is Oct. 18 in Phoenix.

OPB

Who's Running for Portland's First Open City Council Seat In A Decade?

*By Amelia Templeton
September 15, 2017*

For the first time in a decade, there's an open seat on Portland's City Council. Longtime Portland City Commissioner Dan Saltzman announced this week that he won't seek re-election next year.

Saltzman, 63, has served on the City Council since 1998.

"By presenting an open seat, I'm hoping that other people who've always thought they have something to contribute might indeed step up," he said.

Here's a shortlist of local politicians who could be contenders for the seat, and what they said when asked if they intend to run.

Jo Ann Hardesty

Jo Ann Hardesty is the only candidate so far who's filed the paperwork to qualify for the primary ballot in May.

She is the president of the Portland chapter of the NAACP. Hardesty also served three terms in the state Legislature from 1995 to 2000.

Hardesty has said her frustration with the City Council's renegotiation of the police union contract last year — including a decision to hold the final vote on the contract behind closed doors — led her to run.

"I've been an advocate for years now and have felt so many times like I'm just banging my head against the doors of City Hall, hoping that somehow things will change," she wrote on her website. "I'm running because I want every Portlander to feel like they can be heard at City Hall."

Hardesty told Willamette Week that she met with Saltzman earlier this year and demanded he resign, a meeting Saltzman confirms.

She's suggested that he chose not to seek a sixth term because he didn't want to run against her.

Saltzman attributes his change of heart to seeing other city leaders develop health problems after years in public service, as well as his desire to work more directly on children's issues.

Hardesty's campaign has reported raising about \$24,000 so far, and received \$19,000 in donated services, primarily web design.

Loretta Smith

Multnomah County Commissioner Loretta Smith announced her plans to run for the council seat on Facebook just hours after Saltzman stepped out of the race.

"The opportunity to continue to fight for the most vulnerable on the Portland City Council would be an honor and a privilege," she wrote.

Smith was elected Multnomah County Commissioner representing North and Northeast Portland in 2010, and is finishing her second term.

Smith faces a dilemma. The Multnomah County charter bars commissioners from running for most other elected positions until the final year of their term, meaning Smith will have to delay filing as a primary candidate until January 2018 or resign her seat on the county commission.

Before winning office, Smith spent 21 years working for Oregon Democratic Sen. Ron Wyden, most recently as his Multnomah County field representative.

This year, the county hired a labor and employment law firm to investigate allegations of unprofessional and unethical conduct by Smith after a staffer and a former staffer filed complaints.

Investigators concluded that Smith made demeaning and negative comments to female staffers, and likely required staffers to use their paid time off to work on her campaign events.

Smith has denied any wrongdoing in the matter. Prominent leaders in Portland's African-American community accused county chair Deborah Kafoury of conducting a racially motivated investigation, an allegation Kafoury has denied.

Smith did not immediately respond to a phone call to her county office.

Sam Chase

Metro Councilor Sam Chase has said he's interested in the seat.

"I certainly will consider running for the position," Chase said. "It will require me to sit down with my family and assess what makes sense for all of us."

Chase was elected to the Metro Council in 2013. Metro is a regional government agency that manages land use planning and a number of facilities in the Portland area including landfills, the Convention Center and the Oregon Zoo.

Prior to joining Metro, Chase was chief of staff to Commissioner Nick Fish.

Chase said if he runs, his focus will be on pushing Portland to work more closely with its suburbs on solutions to the region's affordable housing crisis.

"Portland is about a third of the region's population, but is putting by far the most resources into affordable housing," he said.

"Portland is not going to solve the affordable housing crisis on its own."

Marissa Madrigal

City Hall insiders suggest Marissa Madrigal would also be a strong candidate.

Madrigal is the chief operating officer for Multnomah County. In 2013, she served as interim Multnomah County chair for 10 months after Jeff Cogen resigned over revelations he'd had an affair.

She grew up in Los Angeles, Mexico City and Ridgefield, Washington, and was the county's first Latino chair.

Madrigal did not respond to calls inquiring about her plans.

Jules Bailey

Some people have speculated that former Multnomah County commissioner and former state lawmaker Jules Bailey might run for the seat.

Bailey came in second to Ted Wheeler in the race for Portland mayor last May. This week, he ruled out the possibility of a run for City Council.

Portland mayoral candidate Jules Bailey speaks with a supporter on election night at the Falcon Building in Northwest Portland on May 17, 2016. Bailey lost the mayoral race to state Treasurer Ted Wheeler.

Portland mayoral candidate Jules Bailey speaks with a supporter on election night at the Falcon Building in Northwest Portland on May 17, 2016. Bailey lost the mayoral race to state Treasurer Ted Wheeler.

"I appreciate you asking," he said. "I am definitely not running for that position."

Bailey now works as chief stewardship officer for the Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative, the group that carries out Oregon's bottle deposit program.

"I love my job that I'm in now," Bailey said. "And I am focused right now on being a dad and being a husband."