

The Portland Tribune

Sources Say: Few candidates make fast break to file for primary

*By Jim Redden
September 22, 2017*

Plus, Fish starts raising campaign funds and Wiener loses his City Council candidate

Candidates were eligible to file to run in the 2018 primary election starting Sept. 7. But by the beginning of this week, few contenders had done so in the Portland area.

At the city level, NAACP Portland President Jo Ann Hardesty filed to run for City Council Position 3 and Auditor Mary Hull Caballero had filed for re-election. At the Multnomah County level, Maria Garcia and Susheela Jayapal filed for the Commissioner District 2 position that Loretta Smith must vacate due to term limits. Also, two employees of the county auditor's office, Jennifer McGuirk and Mark Ulanowicz, filed to replace their boss Steve March, who also must vacate the office due to term limits.

At the Metro level, only Councilor Shirley Craddick and Auditor Brian Evans had filed for re-election.

At the state level, state Democratic Sen. Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, District 17, had filed for re-election, and Jamie Woods had filed for the House District 45 seat held by state Rep. Barbara Smith Warner. Also, state Sen. Rod Monroe, D-District 24, had filed for re-election, with Democrats Shemia Fagan and Kayse Jama and Republican Ron Noble filing for the seat as well. And at the federal level, only Independent Mark Roberts had filed for the 2nd U.S. House District.

Many more local candidates will file before the March 6 deadline, especially given Commissioner Saltzman's unexpected announcement that he will not run for re-election. And most Portland legislators will undoubtedly file for re-election as well.

Fish starts raising campaign funds

Commissioner Nick Fish has quickly raised nearly \$5,000 in campaign contributions since deciding last week to continue running for re-election while being treated for abdominal cancer last week.

Contributions include \$500 from Concordia University Executive Vice President Gary Withers, attorney Robert Stoll and fellow Commissioner Amanda Fritz, and \$250 from REACH CDC Executive Director Dan Valliere and lawyers John Kodachi, Norman Sepenuk and Kat West. Fish also has loaned his campaign \$3,000.

Fish's only announced opponent, environmentalist Julia DeGraw, has reported just \$2,250 in cash and in-kind contributions as of Monday, with only two being over \$100. Margot Black, an affordable housing advocate who had been considering the race, told OPB she has decided against it.

Wiener loses his City Council candidate

Mark Wiener, the one-time best connected political consultant at City Hall, lost his only candidate for City Council when Commissioner Dan Saltzman unexpectedly decided not to run for re-election in 2018.

Although a majority of the council had retained Wiener's firm Winning Mark in the past, it is currently sidelined in next year's council elections, unless a new candidate retains it. Nick Fish, the other council member up for re-election next year, has retained Hilltop Public Solutions for his campaign.

All is not a total loss for Wiener, however. Saltzman paid his firm \$25,500 this year before he changed his mind about running.

Emmons 'seriously considering' running for Saltzman's seat

*By Jim Redden
September 24, 2017*

Race for rare open seat on the City Council is expected to get even more crowded in coming weeks

The race for Commissioner Dan Saltzman's seat on the City Council is likely to get even more crowded, with Portland architect Stuart Emmons now joining those interested in the race.

"I am seriously considering running for the seat. No final decision," Emmons tells the Portland Tribune.

Emmons finished in third place with 14 percent of the vote in the May 2016 Primary Election race for Commissioner Steve Novick's seat. Small business owner Chloe Eudaly came in just ahead of Emmons with 15 percent, and went on to defeat Novick in the November General Election.

Saltzman unexpectedly announced he will not seek reelection two weeks ago.

Those formally announcing for the seat so far include include NAACP of Portland President Jo Ann Hardesty, Multnomah County Commissioner Loretta Smith, and Downtown Neighborhood Association President Felicia Williams. Also expressing interest is Metro Councilor Sam Chase, who represents portions of Portland.

Other potential candidates are expected to surface in coming weeks because council seats don't open up very often. Fifteen people ended up filing for mayor in 2016 after incumbent Charlie Hales pulled out of the race

Proposed park likely to liven up section of East Portland

*By Teresa Carson
September 22, 2017*

Plans show 7.5 acres of playgrounds, new gardens and picnic areas off Division Street.

Portland Parks & Recreation unveiled plans for a new 7.5-acre park at Southeast Division Street and 150th Avenue Wednesday evening at the site of the future green space, but threatening skies and cool weather kept a lot of community members away from the event.

Sherry Willmschen, who lives near the proposed park and among those who braved the weather, noted she is thrilled about the playgrounds and other amenities in the space.

"The sooner, the better," she said.

Willmschen said she hopes the park is finished before her 2- and 4-year-old grandchildren are too old to enjoy the park.

She was questioning designer Tim Strand about the large soccer field planned for the center of the park.

"Is this an area where you could have concerts too?" she asked.

Strand, who works for Mayer/Reed Inc., explained that "the soccer field is designed to be a flexible, multi-purpose space."

At a community meeting regarding the park, local residents got to see how their many suggestions were worked into Portland Parks' plans for the recreation space. The agency held several community meetings and asked people what items and recreation opportunities they would like to see in the park.

Plans include a small skate park, a splash pad for hot weather play, basketball court, picnic area with a shelter, playground and nature spot, an off-leash dog area, a pollinator garden with a path, restrooms, a large field for soccer and other activities, and community garden plots.

At Wednesday's gathering Portland parks put large, numbered markers to coincide with the park's features on a map. There were yummy Vietnamese rolls and children's activities, along with tours and plenty of people to answer questions.

PP&R does not yet have funding for this particular park, now referred to as D150, and may refine the master plan once funding is secured, PP&R said on its web page for the park. D150's master plan must be approved by the Portland City Council before moving forward.

"We go before the City Council on Nov. 8 and ask them to approve the plan. Then we start the conversations about the funding," said Jaime English, Portland Parks' project manager, adding there is no timeline for when work might get started nor a cost estimate.

D150 is a gently rolling site with views of Powell Butte. Portland Parks has owned the property since 2014. The neighbors in the single and multi-family housing surrounding the potential park speak Russian, Somali, Nepali and Spanish, as well as English.

Not wanting to let the undeveloped land go unused while they are planning D150, PP&R partnered with Outgrowing Hunger, which turned some of the D150 land into 80 community garden plots that are 450 square feet each. About three-quarters of the gardeners are refugees from Burma or Nepali-speaking Bhutanese. The community garden plots have been incorporated into the park plans.

"One thing we've heard is that this park has the potential to be a community heart," English said. "Families and people of all ages can come together here."

The yet-to-be named park should be a welcome addition to the eastern part of Portland, which has a general dearth of play and green spaces. The wide swath of Portland Parks territory between Interstate 205 and the Gresham and Fairview city lines tends to lack the wealth of outdoor spaces and activities programming in other sections of Portland.

The paucity, often called the play gap, is especially acute east of 122nd Avenue. It leaves lots of families — many of them low-income, ethnically diverse and living in apartments — with few places to get outdoors or for their children to play. PP&R found 40 percent of Portland's children live east of I-205.

The agency's target is to have a park within a half mile — or a 15 to 20 minute walk — of every household in the city. That target has been hit for 80 percent of Portland residents, but for only 61 percent of residents east of I-205, according to Portland Parks.

Just weeks earlier, parks officials gathered people at Lynchview Park to provide suggestions on how to develop the 7.6-acre park at Southeast 165th Avenue and Southeast Market Street, which abuts Patrick Lynch Elementary School.

The future Lynchview Park right now is just an expanse of grass with a few trees. Portland Parks, which has owned the Lynchview Park land since 1993, plans to build a playground along with other amenities. After gathering suggestions from the community, planning and securing permits, PP&R plans to begin construction on Lynchview Park in 2019.

Willamette Week

Stuart Emmons, Who Ran Last Year for City Council, Reports a \$10,000 Donation as He Weighs Another Race

*By Rachel Monahan
September 24, 2017*

Emmons says he's "seriously considering" a run.

Stuart Emmons, who ran unsuccessfully for Portland City Council last year, says he's still weighing a run for the open seat created by City Commissioner Dan Saltzman's decision to retire.

But Emmons is already fundraising. Last week, he reported the largest single campaign contribution in City Council races so far this year.

A donor to his last campaign, Jean McGuire Coleman, gave him \$10,000 on Sept. 20. (He wouldn't need to report that till next month, but has done so early.)

He reports one other donation of \$250 from last week.

"I'm seriously considering it," he says. (The Portland Tribune first reported today that he's weighing a run.)

Emmons, an architect, narrowly lost in the primary election to now City Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, who went on to defeat then-incumbent Steve Novick.

"I want to bring innovation to City Hall," he says. "I'm about housing—homeless housing, affordable housing, market housing."

Housing was a key issue in Eudaly's victory, as well as in Mayor Ted Wheeler's campaign last year, but Emmons says he's still looking for results.

"I don't see the urgency," he says.

No other council candidates have posted a single check as large, but others still have an advantage in fundraising.

County Commissioner Loretta Smith reports raising \$30,294 in cash. Jo Ann Hardesty, head of the NAACP of Portland, reports \$27,043.25 raised.

Metro Councilor Sam Chase, who also says he's weighing a run, hasn't reported any fundraising this year. Felicia Williams, the Downtown Neighborhood Association president, has not posted any records related to a campaign finance committee.

The Daily Journal of Commerce

Mass Timber Considered for 10-Story Project

*By Garrett Andrews
September 22, 2017*

The four partnering agencies behind a 10-story project tentatively called 4th and Montgomery are in the early stages of exploring the use of mass timber.

The proposed idea was confirmed Wednesday by Alisa Kane, the city of Portland's green building manager. Joining the city to develop the project are Portland State University, Oregon Health and Sciences University, and Portland Community College.

The building is planned for a site near PSU known as the Jasmine Block and will feature some retail and commercial space along the classrooms and offices. PSU is leading the project and will be the anchor tenant.

The site was once proposed as the site for the Oregon Sustainability Center, an ambitious high-rise that would have showcased Oregon's green industry.

The city is a tenant and owner of one floor of the project. Its Bureau of Planning and Sustainability will relocate to the building upon completion.

The project is in the planning stage until May. Move-in is scheduled for fall 2020

OPB

Mayor Urges Portland Schools To Let Charter School Stay Put

*By Rob Manning
September 21, 2017*

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler is the latest area leader to call on Oregon's largest school district to let a small charter school stay where it is.

Portland Public Schools' expansive plan to reconfigure schools on the district's east side includes forcing Kairos PDX to move from the Humboldt school building in North Portland.

Roughly two-thirds of Kairos students are African-American and the Humboldt building is in a historically black Portland neighborhood.

The district has proposed moving in ACCESS Academy — a program for students designated as “talented and gifted.” Most of those students are white.

It's part of a complicated set of changes to relieve overcrowding and repurpose two buildings as middle schools.

Wheeler is urging PPS board members not to approve the move. In a letter, he said “this proposal conflicts with your stated goals around both equity and excellence.”

That follows similar concerns voiced this week by Speaker of the Oregon House Tina Kotek, D-Portland.

As reported earlier this week by the Portland Tribune, Kotek told school board members that ACCESS students were being prioritized “in a way that unnecessarily undermines the educational opportunity of predominately low-income students and students of color who are enrolled at KairosPDX.”

Kairos PDX opened in fall 2014, and spent the last school year at Humboldt — a PPS building that closed at the end of the 2011-12 school year.

Kairos’ longevity at Humboldt was always in question for district officials, given the major reconfigurations underway in North and Northeast Portland.

But the school’s supporters point to its steady growth and focus on student groups that PPS struggles to educate, as reasons to keep the school in its current location.

With Legal Challenge Over, What's Next For Portland's Arts Tax?

*By April Baer
September 21, 2017*

Portland leaders are expressing relief over the Oregon Supreme Court decision to reject a constitutional challenge to Portland’s Arts Education and Access fund — better known as the arts tax.

Plaintiff George Wittemeyer went head-to-head with Portland over its \$35-per-adult yearly levy. His beef: an Oregon constitutional provision that says state and city governments can’t apply flat taxes across the board, regardless of income. Those taxes are sometimes referred to as poll or head taxes.

Wittemeyer admitted the city has some poverty exemptions. But, he said, that just determines whether you pay.

“The consideration of income here,” Wittemeyer said, “is before any levy or assessment of the tax.”

The 31-page Supreme Court opinion, issued Thursday, is heady stuff — it includes a digression about whether zero income is, in fact, a numeric amount, and digs all the way back into Babylonian tax laws.

In short, the justices concluded, a tax that takes into account income, property or other resources does not violate Oregon’s Constitution.

Wittemeyer expressed surprise at the decision.

“I thought at least there would be some dissent,” he said of the unanimous decision. “They’ve obviously narrowed the definition to poll or head tax to the point where nobody will ever use it again. This will be the standard.”

Portland Commissioner Nick Fish spoke for a lot of people at City Hall when he expressed his gratitude and relief.

“We now know it’s on firm constitutional ground,” he said, “and there’s no excuse not to pay it.”

But lack of payment is the much larger issue for the arts tax.

The city’s tax collectors estimate each year thousands of Portlanders just skip the filing, which can’t be done within federal and state tax returns.

And, each year, arts advocates remind the City Council that thousands of kids’ art and music teachers rely on the tax for funding.

Parkrose Elementary music teacher Carolynn Langston is a fan of the tax.

“We went from having one elementary music specialist in the entire district, to having one in every building,” Langston said.

Lose the arts tax, and you lose a lot of art in the schools.

Under the law, Portland can spend no more than 5 percent of arts tax revenues on collections and administrative costs. Some years, the city’s Revenue Bureau has spent as much as 9 percent trying to get more of the \$35 checks from residents.

City Council is deeply divided on what to do and whether the 5 percent cap on collection should be adjusted without sending the tax back to the ballot.

Last week, Mayor Ted Wheeler and Commissioner Dan Saltzman were visibly skeptical as an oversight committee chair suggested it might not be possible to honor the 5 percent cap while boosting collections.

“I’m not sure I buy where you’re going with this,” Saltzman said.

“I want to second that,” Wheeler added. “I’m not going to agree to that statement.”

Saltzman continued: “When voters think 95 percent of the money’s going toward programs, and we’re telling them it’s not 95 percent anymore, that begs the question maybe we should go back to voters with the proper numbers.”

Revenue Director Thomas Lannom stepped into the discussion to point out the city has increased collections.

Hiring a consulting agency for \$186,000 brought in more than \$2 million in outstanding payments, Lannom said.

One-in-four Portlanders who should have paid the tax last year simply didn’t. But, Lannom said, even the IRS — with all its robust enforcement — gets only about an 85 percent voluntary compliance on income tax.

“I’ll be very candid,” Lannom told the commissioners, “I think 5 percent polled very well in 2012, but it was never realistic. I think that’s all come home to roost now.”

Wheeler alluded to mistakes of the past as he suggested further discussion in a coming weeks. Lannom sent a memo to council a few weeks ago outlining possible remedies.

Fish, who oversees the arts portfolio, said he’s hopeful council will agree to spending general fund money or other cash to boost collections.

He acknowledged, there’s work to do, but said no one’s suggesting money to staff new committees or produce glossy literature.

The problem is as simple as getting people to pay on time.

“If I told you for \$1 of general fund investment, we could collect \$5 for the arts, you’d consider it a pretty good deal,” Fish said.

The reason arts advocates went to bat for this tax in the first place was to spare everyone the painful annual wrangling to carve money out of the city budget for art.

But now city leaders may end up having to take on just those kinds of battles to get the arts tax collected.