

The Portland Tribune

Local group wants to change neighborhood system

By Lyndsey Hewitt

October 3, 2017

Portland Assembly members act to boost diversity of participants in local issues

A new group in town is tired of the same old neighborhood system and is interested in getting to what they see are the root problems in society.

Are people still lending sugar to their next-door neighbors or dropping off the occasional casserole?

"Not making casseroles for neighbors anymore is a root problem in society," said Portland Assembly member Dan Martin.

Portland Assembly is anti-fascist, anti-racist, anti-police and not fans of President Donald Trump. The group works in tandem with Neighborhood Action Councils (NAC), an idea they took from Neighborhood Action Coalitions in Seattle, which formed at the heels of Trump's election in November.

Compared to past generations, residents now are more distrusting of their neighbors and less likely to spend social evenings with them, according to data cited in a 2016 Pew Research Center report.

The group is working to integrate its new neighborhood model into Portland, with no official sanctioning by the city.

On the cutting edge

The Office of Neighborhood Involvement's new director Suk Rhee said Portland might be ahead of Seattle.

While Seattle cut ties with its neighborhood association system in an effort to better serve a more diverse population, Rhee doesn't see that as an answer. Instead, the group is looking at the neighborhood association system as an "additive."

"Portland might be a little bit ahead of Seattle in embracing other forms of communities and how they organize themselves and express their voice," Rhee said. Only a few weeks into the new job, she and those in the bureau are still figuring out what "involvement" looks like under her direction.

"We don't want to set a vision where we are right now, or five minutes from now. We need to set a vision for how we're growing as a region in 15-20 years," Rhee said.

The agency has prioritized reaching out to other organizations that target specific groups. Recently, it has started new initiatives like Portland United Against Hate, which tracks hate acts, a part of its New Portlanders program that integrates immigrants and refugees into the city. It also recently hired two people to engage with neighborhoods on homeless issues.

Adam Lyons, executive director of the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods (NECN), said their district is just trying to get people to think less about the neighborhood associations and more about the district coalitions. Seven coalitions oversee the neighborhood system, depending on region. The city doesn't track demographic data of who's participating, although neighborhood coalitions reported about 4,200 people per month.

"If we're funded by city dollars ... while we respect neighborhood associations, we also want to respect and support 60,000 people and many other smaller organizations that might not have a communications apparatus to the city bureaucracy," he said. NECN oversees 11 neighborhoods and only a fraction of the people living in its district participates in an association. Associations operate as independent nonprofit organizations, run by volunteers, but receive guidance and minimal funding from the city.

"We're as oriented to the neighborhood association system as we feel warranted and as ethically as we should be," Lyons said.

Taking steps

But where does all that leave the neighborhood associations?

Some are taking steps to do outreach and be more inclusive, such as bringing in translators (including in Creston Kenilworth and Cully) and welcoming homeless people into membership (St. Johns).

Overlook even started plastering flyers in bars in an effort to reach younger renters. Each neighborhood has a different level of resident involvement. The city only provides so much in funding and translators can be expensive, making it tough for neighborhood associations with lesser means to reach out.

"As a renter in the same neighborhood — I've lived in the Buckman neighborhood for 15 years — I never heard about a neighborhood association meeting," said Liz Kinnaman, who works as the director of forensics at Clark College. She now participates in Portland Assembly.

Alma Velazquez, a former journalist and Spanish speaker who has lived in the Cully neighborhood for 12 years, puts together the Cully Association of Neighbors quarterly newsletter, which goes out to 5,000 residents in both Spanish and English.

The Cully neighborhood is considered one of the city's most diverse, with higher levels of low-income residents. And while they continue to work to include more diversity in their meetings, she says general membership meetings are still attended by "monolingual, white homeowners, and also people who are not very young."

The King Neighborhood Association has been in a state of disorder for some time. As one of the city's historically black neighborhoods, it has two people of color as board members, but little participation beyond that.

"(Outreach is) something we're trying to do better with and obviously need to work on. We still don't have many people who aren't board members coming to our meetings period, much less people of color," said Vice Chair David Kennedy.

New routes

Portland Assembly is taking a new route from the neighborhood association system.

It doesn't have presidents or chairs or secretaries. With a few hundred participants at this point, according to Portland Assembly members, the group operates on a spokescouncil model, in which there is one large neighborhood confederation spokescouncil that sends a delegate to individual neighborhood NACs. So far, an online map shows eight NACs spread across the city.

The group is doing things like advocating for rights of homeless people, fighting racism and renters' rights.

On their website (portlandassembly.com), they promote downloading an Anti-Racist Neighborhood Watch Starter Kit, which encourages users to post fliers in the neighborhood warning that residents are watching for hate crimes. It includes a phone number that reaches the Pacific Northwest Antifascist workers collective.

The group wants an overhaul and is hoping its model of neighborhood involvement offers more opportunities than the city's neighborhood association system.

"The way the system is set up already, it's obvious it's not functioning the way it needs," said Jonathan Ogden, 27, and a Portland Assembly participant.

They advocate for a municipalist movement, which is gaining some traction internationally, including in Barcelona, Spain. It touts creating citizens' assemblies by neighborhood to boost democracy. The Portland Assembly would like to see a new commissioner system where council members "act as directly recallable delegates to each neighborhood association recognized by the city of Portland."

Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, who Portland Assembly members have looked to as an elected official who more aptly represents their views, represented Portland at an International Municipalist Summit in Barcelona in June, called Fearless Cities, where she discussed some of the city's approaches to homelessness and renters' rights.

The Portland Assembly isn't wholly interested in seeing the neighborhood association system go away. Instead, it hopes to work with it. Ogden also participated as the vice chair of the Montavilla Neighborhood Association and helped craft the controversial resolution critical of the city's approach to clearing homeless camps that made headlines in July.

The whole ordeal left the association in disorder, with infighting and arguing on social media. Many left the board as neighbors were pitted against neighbors.

Only a few board members are left, however, with board elections up this month.

Ogden said their ideas aren't that radical.

"It only feels radical because it's something we haven't engaged before. But when we think about it — equity isn't that radical," he said.

While neighborhood associations have paved the way for political involvement in Portland, including for Commissioner Amanda Fritz, Portland Assembly folks aren't interested in becoming politicians.

"It's not about surface issues, or elections," reiterated Martin, who represents a council for everything east of 82nd Avenue. "It's about looking at the root issues of society."

Ogden agreed.

"We're talking about the way these structures affect the neighbors' behavior. We want to bring it back to a human level," he said.

Neighborhood funding

The neighborhood association system gets \$2.2 million of the Office of Neighborhood Involvement's budget of \$10.9 million.

According to city officials, that money is distributed for things like operations, leadership development and communications — and it's divided up between the seven neighborhood coalitions that oversee the system based on region.

A 2016 audit of the ONI showed that funding distribution to coalitions was disproportionate to their populations — especially the East Portland Neighborhood Office.

Of that \$2.2 million, \$95,000 is allocated to the neighborhood associations directly, with the idea that each neighborhood is eligible for \$1,000 for communications expenses.

However, over time the mandate to be used for communications expenses has changed and each coalition board of directors can decide whether to pass that on to their respective associations, or use it for a larger coalitionwide strategy.

For instance:

- The Southwest Neighborhoods Inc. (SWNI) produces a monthly print newsletter;
- The East Portland Neighborhood Office produces a quarterly newsletter as well as offers funds to their associations;
- The Central Northeast Neighbors (CNN) passes all of its funds to each association, which produces newsletters, according to ONI.

NECN gives out the \$1,000 to use for efforts that can extend beyond communications, including hiring contractors or consultants to help themselves, or they can use it for outreach.

The city offers another \$106,399 in grant money, which is divided up between the coalitions for a neighborhood small grants program. It's a competitive process, and between 40 to 50 percent of those funds go to neighborhood associations. The rest goes to other community organizations within the neighborhood boundaries and the average award amount is about \$1,800.

It's not clear how each of the individual neighborhoods might be using this money for outreach.

Robert McCullough, former chair of the Eastmoreland Neighborhood Association and Southeast Uplift, says Eastmoreland was given \$400, which wasn't enough to support its newsletter to reach people.

NECN is working on a report to see what worked and what didn't in terms of neighborhood association funding, for their part.

City Hall Watch: First Inclusionary Housing projects OK'd

*By Jim Redden
October 3, 2017*

Plus, historic resources project launched and Jade District gets trash can pilot project

On Wednesday, the City Council approved the first three apartment buildings to receive tax credits under the new Inclusionary Housing policy.

The projects are to be built in the Woodstock, Mount Tabor and Buckman neighborhoods. They will include 170 units, 23 of which will be affordable to people making between 60 and 80 percent of the area's median household income.

In December, the council approved the policy requiring affordable units to be included in projects with more than 20 units. Before the ruling took effect in February, developers submitted four year's worth of permit applications for projects. Most are still awaiting approval.

Historic resources project launched

The Bureau of Planning and Sustainability announced Wednesday that it has launched a 14-month Historic Resources Code Project that will propose changes to how the city identifies, designates and protects historic resources.

The project will build upon previous historic resource zoning code projects, the most recent of which was adopted in 2013 and made changes to review procedures for minor exterior alteration projects in historic districts. It also follows a 2016 Oregon Supreme Court ruling that found the historic designation of a property can only be removed by the owner at the time of the designation.

Opportunities for public involvement will be posted on the project's website at: portlandoregon.gov/bps/58976

Jade District gets trash can pilot project

The Bureau of Planning and Sustainability announced Thursday that it has started an expanded public trash can pilot project in the Jade District. The project, which includes a new can design and graphics, is in response to a citywide increase authorized by the City Council in 2016. If successful, it will be expanded into all 31 city centers over the next five years.

The bureau administers the program that provides approximately 600 public trash cans and collection services in downtown and other business districts. The council has authorized the expansion into neighborhood, town and regional centers as defined in the Comprehensive Plan that governs city growth through 2035.

The bureau also has taken over collection responsibilities in the Pearl District, which previously had been run by the neighborhood association there.

UPDATE: Fish wants press restrictions removed from proposed conflict policy

*By Jim Redden
October 2, 2017*

Commissioner said he was not aware that reform package included recommendation that advisory committee members not talk to reporters

Public disclosure and other policies covering volunteers serving on advisory committees will be considered by the City Council on Wednesday.

The proposed policies require such members to declare their potential conflicts of interest, and to identify family members with such potential conflicts, too. They also include restrictions on members talking to the press without first going through the city agencies they are advising.

Commissioner Nick Fish, who co-sponsored the reform package, says he was not aware of the proposed press restrictions and will move to delete them when they are heard on Oct. 4.

"A lot of people worked on the package and I'm not sure how they got in there, but it is not our policy to tell anyone they cannot talk to the press," Fish told the Portland Tribune after the paper posted a story that mentioned the restrictions on its website on Sunday.

The resolution is also sponsored by commissioners Amanda Fritz and Chloe Eudaly. Among other things, it says, "the City does not have standard policies to ensure effective functioning of

advisory bodies, including a comprehensive database of advisory bodies, uniform training for members and staff, and conflict of interest disclosures."

The issue gained traction after accusations of undisclosed conflicts of interest by members of a stakeholder group advisory the city on possible zoning and other changes in the downtown area a few years ago. The City Ombudsman ruled the members were public officials subject to state laws on disclosing potential conflicts, although the city was not requiring compliance.

The council directed that new policies be developed by the Office of Neighborhood Associations in May 2017. At the time, the council said that although the city has over 100 such committees, there is no central registry of them.

A "Conflict of Interest" form attached to the resolution asks for all potential interests in the topic being discussed by the committee, along with the names of any relatives with such interests or involvement with city government.

One section of "Communications" attached to the resolution says, "While not precluded from communicating with the media, members agree to generally defer to the Bureau liaison to field and route all media communications related to the Body's processes and recommendations." It also says, "Members agree to raise all their concerns, especially those being raised for the first time, at a meeting and not in or through the media."

That is the section Fish says he will move to delete.

"That's why we have hearings, so we can learn about any improvements we need to make," Fish said.

You can find the proposed resolution and attachments at www.portlandoregon.gov/auditor/26997.

You can read a previous Portland Tribune story on the issue at www.pamplinmedia.com/pt/9-news/373270-257298-conflicts-of-interest-snap-central-city-plan.

City: Crypto found again, but water safe

*By Jim Redden
October 2, 2017*

Portland Water Bureau says water supply is still safe, but advises those with immune problems to take precautions

The Portland Water Bureau is once again reporting the detection of a potentially disease-causing microorganism in the Bull Run Watershed.

According to a late Monday afternoon press release from the bureau, Cryptosporidium was detected in test results from sample collected on Sept. 27.

This is the first positive detection since a sample taken on Sept. 24. Between the two dates, 18 other samples were all negative for crypto, as the microorganism is commonly called. Before that, crypto had not been detected for years until early 2017.

Bureau officials say they believe water from the watershed — the primary source of water for Portland and many suburban communities — is still safe to drink.

"Even from a highly protected watershed such as the Bull Run, it is not unusual to detect low levels of Cryptosporidium from wildlife sources. We continuously monitor the rate of human

illness caused by Cryptosporidium and will know if there is an increase" Multnomah County Health Officer Dr. Paul Lewis said in the announcement. "Fortunately, there has never been a documented outbreak of Cryptosporidium linked to Bull Run water."

According to the release, as always, the bureau recommends that people with severely weakened immune systems seek specific advice from their health care providers about drinking water.

"Together with our public health partners at Multnomah County, we continue to believe Bull Run water is safe to drink," Portland Water Bureau Administrator Michael Stuhr said. "We will continue monitoring our water and working with our health partners to make the best decisions for public health in our community."

Since the earlier detections, the City Council has approved the construction of a filtration plant that could cost up to \$500 million that would remove the microorganism and other contaminants from the Bull Run water. It cannot be complete for another 10 years or so, however.

The bureau says it will continue to sample the Bull Run for crypto and notify the public, its regulators and health officials of any additional detections.

The public is encouraged to view all sampling results posted to the city's website at www.portlandoregon.gov/water/cryptoresults.

Customers with questions regarding water quality can call the Water Line at 503-823-7525.

Council to consider third housing emergency

*By Jim Redden
October 2, 2017*

Mayor Ted Wheeler wants the City Council to extend the Housing State of Emergency by 18 months on Wednesday

When he ran for mayor, Ted Wheeler promised that by the end of 2018, all homeless people in Portland would have a safe place to sleep.

Nearly two years later, Wheeler is asking the City Council to extend the existing Housing State of Emergency that allows emergency shelters to be more quickly opened past that deadline. The ordinance the council will consider on Oct. 4 extends the emergency for 18 months, compared to the 12 months in the two ordinances approved when Charlie Hales was mayor.

The ordinance admits that despite largely successful efforts by the city and Multnomah County to increase services to the homeless and those at risk of losing their homes, the number of people without permanent housing in the city and county has increased over the previous two years. According to the federally required point-in-time count conducted earlier this year, the homeless population in Multnomah County increased nearly 10 percent over the past two years to at least 4,177 people without permanent housing on any given night.

Like the previous ordinances, the new one allows the council to waive zoning policies to create emergency shelters quicker, among other things. Such waivers are thought necessary to continue the temporary homeless shelter in the county-owned Hansen Building in East Portland and open the new 200-bed shelter in Old Town/Chinatown being studied by the city.

According to the mayor's office, the proposed ordinance also directs that a group be formed to identify metrics that can be used to determine whether the declared emergency can be lifted and develop a plan for transitioning out of the emergency if and when it is appropriate.

The lengthy ordinance is loaded with grim statistics justifying the extension through early 2019. Among other things:

- Portland has grown by more than 80,000 people in 29,000 households since 2000, but housing supply has not come close to meeting the demand, resulting in low vacancy rates and housing price increases with severe consequences.
- Average rents in Portland have increased nearly 30 percent since 2012. In 2016 alone, Portland rents increased an average 7 percent over the previous year — or roughly \$75 per month. The largest rent increases of 12 to 18 percent were in one, two and three-bedroom units, which are needed for families.
- The number of people using emergency shelter increased to 4,177 in 2017 from 3,801 in 2016. Despite adding more than 600 new permanent shelter beds over the past year, the existing 1,458 are not enough to meet the demand.

"These combined circumstances are contributing to significant human suffering, creating an immediate need to provide adequate, safe, and habitable shelters for persons experiencing homelessness, and to rapidly increase the supply of permanent affordable housing. The severe shortages of rental housing and shelter space arise from human-made events and circumstances, causing or threatening to cause human suffering and contributing to a growing deterioration of public spaces throughout the city," the ordinance says.

The ordinance also says that within 180 days of its passage, the Portland Housing Bureau and the city-county Joint Office of Homeless Services will determine criteria for ending the housing emergency and report their findings to the council and to the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners.

According to the ordinance, the number of homeless has increased despite significant steps taken by the council to address the crisis. In addition to creating more shelter beds, since the first emergency was declared in 2015, the council has approved a record \$60 million for new affordable housing projects. Portland voters also approved a \$258.4 million bond at the November 2016 general election to preserve or build 1,300 units of affordable housing.

Officials are also working to ensure at least 300 units of permanent supportive housing (PSH) are reserved for chronically homeless people who need intensive social services to stay off the streets. There are 2,888 supportive units in the county, according to a recent report, but another 2,000 supportive units are needed.

To address the issue of people being displaced because of dramatic rent increases, in February the council approved an ordinance that requires landlords to pay relocation assistance if they issue a no-cause eviction or increase rent by 10 percent or more in a 12-month period. It also passed an Inclusionary Housing policy requiring developers to include affordable units in residential projects with more than 20 apartments.

The city is also warming up to the idea of "innovative housing" strategies, including sanctioning tiny-home villages for homeless people, such as the women's village established in the Kenton neighborhood this summer. But conflicts remain in other neighborhoods, most notably Overlook, where the association chair has demanded the unregulated Hazelnut Grove camp there leave.

Also on Wednesday, the council will consider extending the renter relocation assistance program to April 6, 2019. The council is expected to consider the framework for spending the affordable housing bond funds on Oct. 11, and the first allocation could be made the following week.

Reporter Lyndsey Hewitt contributed to this story.

Willamette Week

Policy Proposal That Would Muzzle Volunteers From Talking to the Press Will Be Amended

*By Rachel Monahan
October 2, 2017*

Ethics reform for boards and commissions includes draft language that limits commission members' ability to talk to the press.

A Portland city policy that would have limited the ability of members of boards and commissions from speaking to the press is being hastily revised.

The City Council, led by Commissioner Nick Fish's office, has embarked on an effort to reform the ethics rules for the many city boards and commissions staffed by volunteers.

A new round of reforms, sponsored by Fish, Commissioner Chloe Eudaly and Commissioner Amanda Fritz, goes before Council this Wednesday.

It includes bylaws that would limit the volunteers' ability to speak to the press, the Portland Tribune first reported.

These provisions include at least three that appear to attempt to limit the contact between the media and the volunteers:

—”Members agree to raise all their concerns, especially those being raised for the first time, at a meeting and not in or through the media.”

—”Members agree to not negotiate through the media, or to use the media to undermine the work of the Body.”

—”While not precluded from communicating with the media, members agree to generally defer to the Bureau liaison to field and route all media communications related to the Body’s processes and recommendations.”

Related: This isn’t the first time this year Portland leaders have gotten confused about how the First Amendment works.

Fish says it's not clear how the language ended up in the draft.

"My first amendment on this Wednesday will be to strike it," says Fish, adding he'll explicitly refer to the other First Amendment in his remarks. "This was never discussed and never our intent to restrict what board and commission members say to the media."

NIMBYs Are Vandalizing Cars With Stickers That Read “No Car Camping in Ladd’s Addition”

*By Sophia June
October 2, 2017*

These stickers aren't the first instance Portlanders have resorted to the tactic to express concerns over hot-button issues.

People in Ladd's Addition, one of Portland's most idyllic neighborhoods, seem to have a problem with homeless people. And some in the neighborhood are resorting to guerrilla tactics to harass people they think are living in their cars—sometimes at the expense of other Ladd's Addition residents.

As reported by WW's news partner KATU-TV, there are stickers covering cars in Southeast Portland reading "No Car Camping in Ladd's Addition."

A Reddit user posted a photo of the sticker on his car four days ago, prompting other users to comment that they also had stickers stuck to their cars. The topic has been especially heated on the Ladd's Addition Nextdoor site recently, when a woman wrote that her car had also been vandalized with the sticker:

The Reddit user wrote that he was not homeless and has lived in the neighborhood for 10 years. His van was recently hit while parked outside his house, so he started parking his car a block over in Ladd's.

"I understand car camping is a problem in some areas of Portland, but not every Sprinter has someone living in it," he wrote on Reddit.

Someone has now modified at least one sticker to read "I'm Not Car Camping in Ladd's Addition."

These stickers aren't the first instance Portlanders have resorted to this tactic to express concerns over hot-button issues.

In 2015, "No Californians" stickers were slapped on For Sale signs on homes. Back in April, a group calling themselves "Rose City Saboteurs" vandalized at least 11 BikeTown stations, slapping them with stickers reading: "Our city is not a corporate amusement park."

May we suggest a new sticker? You can order one now for \$2.75.

The Skanner

Danielle Outlaw Sworn in as Chief of Police

*By Portland Police Bureau
October 2, 2017*

Danielle Outlaw was sworn in today as the Chief of Police for the Portland Police Bureau.

She is the 48th Police Chief since 1870, when the Metropolitan Police Department was formed. Chief Outlaw was selected as Chief of Police in August by Mayor Ted Wheeler, following a national search.

She is the third woman to be police chief in Portland and the first African American woman to hold the position.

Chief Outlaw was most recently a deputy chief for the Oakland Police Department, where she served for 19 years.

OPB

Danielle Outlaw Sworn In As Portland Police Chief

By AP

October 2, 2017

Danielle Outlaw has been sworn in as chief of the Portland Police Bureau.

Outlaw is the third woman, and first black woman, to become chief of police in Oregon's largest city.

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler hired Outlaw this summer following a national search. Wheeler said he and Outlaw are both dedicated to increasing diversity and embracing equity.

Outlaw was sworn in Monday by city auditor Mary Hull Caballero during a private ceremony at the Justice Center in downtown Portland.

Outlaw was most recently a deputy chief for the Oakland Police Department.