

## The Oregonian

### Portland's fire-prone food carts get little oversight from city

By Jessica Floum

October 20, 2017

Wednesday's explosive fire that destroyed two Downtown Portland food carts, injured two and ignited nearby cars was the second fire in two years that scorched multiple carts.

Cardboard food containers, hot cooking oil and bustling activity packed into tiny confines can make food carts "highly flammable," Portland Fire Bureau spokeswoman Louisa Jones said.

That's in part why the fire at Southwest First Avenue and Columbia Street spread quickly, she said. A similar phenomenon occurred in a May 2015 fire that destroyed three food carts and damaged two more at the Portland State University pod.

Propane fueled both of the fires. The fire bureau promised after the 2015 fire "to make sure that propane use is safe" in food carts and trucks.

The Portland Fire Bureau does require all carts that use propane to obtain a yearly permit and agree to follow rules, including having commercial grade fire extinguishers. Yet, the Portland Fire Bureau does little to enforce that requirement or inspect carts for fire safety.

Portland's fire code does not apply to food carts like it does to restaurants and other permanent structures, Jones said. Because carts are "considered mobile units," their regulation falls to the Federal Department of Transportation, fire bureau officials said in a press release Wednesday.

Multnomah County licenses food carts. But only about 800 of the 1,200 food carts in Multnomah County have permits with the county, Jones said.

To get a propane permit from the Portland Fire Bureau, food cart owners need to pay \$25 and read a set of rules for how to use propane responsibly. The rules include having a fire extinguisher, storing the propane tank outside in a vented area and turning off the tank when it is not in use or when changing the tank. The rules also limit the amount of fuel that food carts can store.

The fire bureau could neither confirm nor deny Thursday whether the two food carts that caught fire Wednesday were properly permitted. Jones also could not say how many food carts have propane permits. The fire bureau does not have an electronic tracking system, making it harder to track who is following the propane rules.

Many carts are likely operating without propane permits, Jones said.

"These guys are mobile and at the end of the day, if they don't want to be regulated, they can pick up and move elsewhere," Jones said.

The fire bureau doesn't inspect food carts' propane set-ups before awarding a permit. It doesn't have the resources to inspect all the food carts in the city, she said.

"We would love to see of course all safety practices followed," Jones said. "It's hard when we can only regulate one very small portion."

In April, she said, a junior fire inspector led an "educational campaign" at food cart pods, telling cart owners the rules for propane usage and handing out permits. Senior inspectors only "spot check" food carts if they receive complaints about them.

Food cart owners, Jones said, need to take responsibility for safely operating their food cart.

Jones did not make Portland Fire Marshal Nate Takara available for comment Thursday. She said, however, that he believes in operating strictly according to code and considers inspecting food carts for fire safety a no-no because it goes beyond city.

"At this point it would require (the) City Council adopting city code," Jones said.

Portland Fire Commissioner Dan Saltzman did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

## **Police chief issues message to new Portland police recruits via video**

*By Maxine Bernstein*

*October 19, 2017*

Portland's new police chief wasn't at Thursday's hiring ceremony, welcoming new police recruits.

But Chief Danielle Outlaw, a former Oakland deputy chief who started her new job in Portland on Oct. 2, spoke to the group via a video feed.

The ceremony was held in the Police Bureau. In contrast to similar ceremonies in recent years, it wasn't publicized ahead of time. Instead, the bureau released a video of the ceremony at the end of the day. Nineteen new officers were sworn in.

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler, who serves as police commissioner, and Outlaw issued similar messages to the new officers, saying their jobs require much more than enforcement.

The mayor said the officers must be community ambassadors, social workers and problem solvers. The chief said they must work to "engage" the community with professionalism and compassion.

"This is a very challenging time to be a police officer in the United States. Your work is highly visible, and it's highly scrutinized," Wheeler said.

Outlaw said she had a previous commitment that conflicted with the ceremony but she wanted to address the new officers and make sure they understood her expectations.

"Policing in the 21st century is a complex job. Our community wants us to respond to crime, solve larger systematic issues related to homelessness and mental health and help them feel safe in their communities. They expect a lot from us, and they should," the chief said.

"We are guardians and our job is to protect. But we must be held accountable and be an agency that is introspective and continues to learn. It is my job to direct that process and it is your job to understand these expectations."

While the officers now head to basic training at Oregon's Department of Public Safety Standards and Training, Outlaw stressed that policing goes beyond criminal laws and tactical training.

She said she expects the new officers to engage the community once on the city's streets, show those in the public their "human side" and act in a "professional, compassionate and diligent" manner.

She told them she's on the journey with them as new members of the Portland Police Bureau. In fact, she will be spending two weeks at the state police training academy in November to receive training on Oregon laws.

"I sure know what it's like to be new!" she said on the video.

Among the officers hired were a Portland transportation utility worker who studied biblical sociology, a former emergency medical technician from Seattle and a Portland property manager who became interested in police work after an encounter with Portland officers.

Police spokesman Sgt. Chris Burley said the ceremony wasn't held at the Portland Building since it's being renovated, and there's limited space in the Police Bureau's conference room. He didn't explain why it wasn't publicized ahead of time, but said the bureau sent out a video of the ceremony via social media after it was concluded.

At the last ceremony held at the Portland Building, one woman attending was escorted out of the auditorium when she screamed out during former Chief Mike Marshman's address to recruits.

## **The Portland Tribune**

### **Mayor's office: Hazelnut Grove will move**

*By Lyndsey Hewitt  
October 19, 2017*

**North Portland neighbors, homeless village residents work toward solution after mediation process was 'disaster,' while city looks for new land and process to sanction the village.**

Disputes in North Portland's Overlook neighborhood in recent months over the Hazelnut Grove homeless village appear to be fizzling.

The neighborhood association and camp have been at odds since it was established in 2015, first as tents and then evolving into small wooden structures for about 13 people.

Recently, a member of the Hazelnut Grove village, Melissa Castor, was elected to the neighborhood association board.

"I want to bridge the gaps. There's an invisible wall that I want to break down and bring closer community and friendships through this because that's what neighbors are for," Castor said.

The association attempted to revise bylaws to exclude people without an official address. (The city said homeless people can participate and threatened to stop recognizing the association.)

The two groups had been trying to work out a Good Neighborhood Agreement, going through a mediation process organized by the Office of Neighborhood Involvement, with no success. Mayor Ted Wheeler's office had been mainly hands-off, wanting the process to work itself out. But since it didn't, his office is taking more of an "active role."

And, they're taking a more definitive stance on the camp's tenure, telling the neighborhood: It's not permanent and it will move.

Wheeler's policy advisor Seraphie Allen attended a neighborhood meeting Tuesday to tell them as much.

"I think the information that was going around was that that would be a permanent site and it's not. And it won't, especially when we're done with our housing emergency," she said. "It's not zoned properly, so we're going to need to find a better solution in terms of location for the Hazelnut Grove community."

Hazelnut Grove was formed by activists around the time the housing state of emergency was declared two years ago. The emergency was recently extended 18 more months.

City officials are looking for a new location and open to suggestions, including business or church partnerships. As part of a new position soon-to-be filled at the Office of Neighborhood Involvement, the new person will scout out new land for such alternative housing sites.

They're also looking to fit Hazelnut Grove into local government's "continuum." As such, it would then have oversight and resources provided by the city-county Joint Office of Homeless Services, similar to that of the tiny home village in Kenton neighborhood, or Dignity Village in Northeast Portland. Those are both sanctioned with oversight by the city and social service providers.

As of right now, Hazelnut Grove is a self-governed camp with no services, but occasional help from the city with things like fire extinguishers to keep it safe. Although some members of Hazelnut Grove have said they were skeptical of outside oversight, didn't want the site to move or to ever leave the village, others are more open to the idea.

Bob Brimmer, 24, has lived at the grove for two years and came to Portland from upstate New York. He wanted to go to school but couldn't afford college application fees, he said. He ended up in the Pacific Northwest for the temperate weather.

"I guess becoming more like Dignity [Village] has its advantages, because you have that tag of legitimacy that we lack currently, which makes us kind of an easy target for the ire of people who dislike the houseless," he said. "Getting rid of that would be nice."

But Brimmer adds what might come attached to the oversight is a sticking point. He believes that the city and county are just trying to "revamp the same old processes" and is doubtful that all homeless people will want to get in permanent supportive housing, which local government sees as a better long-term solution to the crisis than villages. Some advocates have been pushing the village model as an alternative way of living.

"The supportive housing thing totally works and will help a lot of people, but ... I think getting [homeless] people to participate in it will be a huge challenge. They just see it as another program that they have to jump through all these hoops for," Brimmer said.

Neighborhood board chair and vocal critic of the camp's location, Chris Trejbal, is happy that the mayor's office is handling the process since the mediation wasn't successful.

"The mediation was such a disaster, we didn't want to go back to that. We want to work with the city's oversight," he said.

At the Tuesday meeting, many neighbors were interested in continuing the conversation about Hazelnut Grove including some saying they did not share the position of ridding the neighborhood of the camp.

In some cases, they felt their neighborhood had been improperly represented on the entire issue.

There's no set timeline for when the camp will move, and if history is any indication, it could take some time. It took years for Right 2 Dream Too to be relocated.

Trejbal hopes the city can find Hazelnut Grove a new spot after a year.

## The Portland Mercury

# Mayor Ted Wheeler is Looking to Buy Mobile Bathrooms for Southeast Portland's Homeless

*By Dirk VanderHart*

*October 19, 2017*

Step aside food carts, public restrooms might become the latest Portland sensation on wheels.

Backing up a hint he dropped in a recent press conference, Mayor Ted Wheeler is mulling spending nearly \$160,000 to purchase and operate two mobile restroom trailers meant to serve homeless people living in the Central Eastside and the Lents neighborhood, the Mercury has learned. The six-month pilot project, dubbed "PDX Pit Stops," showed up in a last-minute request Wheeler's office filed as part of the upcoming budget monitoring process (BMP, or "bump"), where officials are preparing to dole out around \$12 million in surplus cash from last year.

"We'd like them to go to high-traffic, low-facility areas (think Central Eastside)," Wheeler spokesperson Michael Cox tells the Mercury.

According to a program proposal [PDF] subsequently supplied by the mayor's office, the restrooms would be operated and staffed by Central City Concern—a move similar to a pilot program that provided day storage for the homeless under former Mayor Charlie Hales.

"Neighborhoods in Southeast Portland have high populations of individuals experiencing homelessness," reads the proposal, noting the city frequently gets complaints about human waste "on sidewalks, in city parks and natural areas, and even on private property."

"Lack of restroom facilities compromises an already vulnerable homeless community, and threatens the health, safety, and livability of our neighborhoods," the document reads.

Under the pilot project, the city would purchase two, 16-foot trailers, containing three stalls apiece. The trailers would be supplied with hot water for hand washing, disposal containers for used needles, and trash collection, and be available from 7 am to 3 pm, Thursday through Monday.

"The restroom trailers would be driven to a specific location every morning, cleaned on site, and then transported and stored at a lock facility daily," the proposal reads. City officials say the six-month pilot would cost \$158,953, between purchasing the trailers and paying for operations.

Wheeler's office slipped in a \$100,000 request to help fund the project as part of a last-minute "supplemental" ask, filed after the deadline had already passed for bureaus to ask for BMP money. Such late requests typically signal that a councilmember's office is keen on prioritizing a project, but Cox says Wheeler's not necessarily set on making the "Pit Stops" program happen right away.

"I would describe our posture on this as very interested in the concept," Cox says, noting there are competing priorities for roughly \$8.4 million the city has to play with as part of the BMP (along with millions more required to be spent on city infrastructure maintenance). "We can also get creative on financing."

Wheeler first hinted at the restroom program a couple weeks ago, at a press conference he convened to defend and explain the city's recent response to the homelessness crisis. At the time, Wheeler suggested he'd ask business groups like the Portland Business Alliance (PBA) to step up with funding for bathrooms, along with mobile laundry and shower services.

"I would like to see some of these pilot projects paid for by the private sector," Wheeler said at the time. "In other communities, the business community supports these kinds of efforts." (A PBA official on hand at the press conference was noncommittal.)

About those other communities: San Francisco, Sacramento, and Denver have all pursued similar projects (frequently also calling them "pit stop"). Sacramento scrapped its program after six months, citing cost overruns (city staff are keen to point out that Portland's program would be run differently—using CCC workers rather than Portland employees).

Portland, of course, has already sought to partly address the need for public restrooms with its Portland Loos. The city's seven loos are all west of the Willamette River, though.

## **More than 1,000 City Employees Could Go On Strike Next Month**

*By Dirk VanderHart  
October 19, 2017*

The city's largest group of unionized employees is ready to walk off the job.

In a vote tallied this evening, employees represented by the District Council of Trade Unions (DCTU) voted to go on strike November 3, if an ongoing contract dispute with the City of Portland hasn't been resolved.

According to Rob Wheaton, an American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) representative who bargains on behalf of the DCTU, 702 members voted to strike, with 76 members against. There are 1,043 employees in the bargaining unit, Wheaton said.

The DCTU is made up of six public-employee unions. Its members range from parking enforcers, to water bureau employees, to permit inspectors, to police records staff.

As the Mercury recently reported, the DCTU and the city have clashed over a number of provisions while negotiating a new three-year contract. The city wants to alter a policy for awarding promotions (which it says will encourage more diversity) and require employees to get periodic physicals in order to keep health care costs down. The DCTU has resisted those ideas, and is asking for across the board raises the city's been unwilling to agree to.

A "final offer" [PDF] the union group offered up earlier this month would cost the city an additional \$51.6 million over three years compared to the current deal, according to a cost analysis the DCTU submitted. The Mercury wasn't able to get a copy of the city's final offer.

It's been 16 years since a strike among City of Portland employees, and even that was an incredibly brief affair. According to news reports from 2001, there was confusion in the ranks about whether a strike was formally under way or not, but some workers walked off the job. The matter was settled in under a half-hour.

This could be a bigger deal—or it could be nothing at all. Under state labor law, the unions can't strike until early November. The city and DCTU bargain teams are planning to meet prior to that, according to Wheaton.

## **The Daily Journal of Commerce**

### **City approves tax exemption on Northeast Portland apartments**

*By Chuck Slothower  
October 19, 2017*

Portland's City Council on Wednesday approved a property-tax exemption for a multifamily development in Northeast Portland that will include 18 affordable units.

The exemption is part of the city's Multiple Unit Limited Tax Exemption, or MULTE, program, which provides a 10-year property tax exemption in exchange for providing rent-restricted apartments for 10 years.

The project at 2821 N.E. Everett St. comes from Urban Development Group. Of the building's 119 units, 18 apartments, or 15 percent, will be affordable at the level of 80 percent of area median family income.

The building will have 33 studio apartments (including five affordable units) and 86 one-bedroom apartments (including 13 affordable).

The city and Multnomah County will forego an estimated \$210,000 of property tax revenue.

"Developers, who are taking full stock of their options, are choosing to opt in to these offsets," Housing Director Kurt Creager told commissioners. "We think this is the beginning of a trend, and we're very closely interested in all of their success."

Portland has sought to persuade developers to include affordable units in projects that vested before the city's inclusionary housing rules took effect on Feb. 1. Creager, pointing to Portland's years-long pipeline of housing projects, said the Housing Bureau is open to any developer who wishes to opt in to MULTE.

"We remain open for business and will work with any developer with a project in the pipeline," Creager said.

Separately, the City Council also set a formal goal to create 2,000 additional supportive housing units by 2028 as part of the Joint Office of Homeless Services. Supportive housing pairs housing units with intensive services to enable residents to stay in their homes.

Portland officials said supportive housing is the best way to get homeless people off of the streets for good.

"We can show other communities up and down the West Coast how to actually make progress on this seemingly intractable issue," Mayor Ted Wheeler said.

Commissioner Chloe Eudaly said supportive housing could be expanded. "This is only a next step, and not a solution, to the need for supportive housing," she said.

Multnomah County, which also contributes to the Joint Office of Homeless Services, was expected to approve a similar resolution at Thursday's Board of County Commissioner's meeting.

**OPB**

## **Portland, Major League Baseball Renew Flirtation**

*By Rob Manning*

*October 19, 2017*

The eyes of sports fans across the country are fixed on Major League Baseball playoffs, the heart of the professional and college football schedule, and the start of the NBA season. Portland is relevant in only one of those sports, but there is interest in another.

Major League Baseball appears to be renewing its on-again, off-again interest in Oregon's largest city, based on a report from Baseball America suggesting a possible major realignment of the league and confirmation that a Portland ownership group has formed to run a team.

Baseball America's story suggests MLB could expand by two teams — one in Portland, one in Montreal — as part of a shift away from the traditional American and National leagues and toward a regional alignment like the NBA.

Such a move would reduce travel time and costs for the league and could include a reduction in games from 162 to 156, according to Baseball America. A Portland team would play in the West Division, along with the Arizona Diamondbacks, Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim, Los Angeles Dodgers, Oakland Athletics, San Diego Padres, San Francisco Giants and Seattle Mariners.

The Baseball America story adds to the intrigue begun by MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred, who said last month that “Portland is a possibility” and that “a team in the west would need to be a part of” potential expansion plans.

But Manfred didn't suggest that expansion was happening anytime soon. In his comments to reporters, he emphasized that there are more pressing issues to resolve first.

“[O]ngoing stadium issues in Oakland and Tampa Bay will need to be resolved before baseball considers expansion,” Manfred said.

The Portland area is home to the Hillsboro Hops, a short-season single “A” minor league team, affiliated with the Arizona Diamondbacks. The region also supports the Portland Pickles, a “collegiate wood bat team” that plays in Southeast Portland's Lents Park.

There are multiple obstacles to Portland acquiring a major league team. Upfront costs could run in the hundreds of millions of dollars, not to mention the complexity of siting and building a ballpark. Some also question whether there is the corporate support and fan interest to fill a stadium, day after day, over the long MLB season.

The office of Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler opened the door to a possible MLB team, but not if the league expects Portlanders to make a big financial commitment.

“Portland is a great sports town and a great baseball town. We would be an ideal fit for Major League Baseball. Portland is a growing city, and is now part of the nation's #22 media market. While Major League Baseball will find a lot to love about our community, what they won't find is a grab bag of public giveaways. The good news is that a dedicated ownership team with a quality stadium plan can make this work without subjecting our city to a harmful bidding war.”  
— Michael Cox, spokesman for Mayor Ted Wheeler

Portland has flirted with Major League Baseball before. The Rose City was in the running to receive the relocating Montreal Expos, before the team wound up in Washington, D.C., to become the Washington Nationals in 2004. The Oregon Legislature had approved \$150 million



in 2003 to help build a ballpark — a mechanism that remains on the books today if landing a team became a strong possibility again.

The subject of Major League Baseball resurfaced in 2008 when the minor league Portland Beavers were forced out of Oregon as the city's downtown sports arena was renovated to be "soccer-only" for the Portland Timbers. In recent years, "MLB to Portland" efforts have quieted as the city embraced professional soccer through its support of the Timbers and the Portland Thorns women's team. Both teams have been very successful: the Timbers won the MLS Cup in 2015, and the Thorns won NWSL titles in 2013 and again this year.