

The Oregonian

Portland to Spend Bond Money to Build Affordable Housing at Former Strip Club Site

*By Jessica Floum
December 14, 2017*

Portland will use proceeds from the city's \$258 million housing bond to build affordable apartments on a Southeast Portland property formerly home to a strip club.

Mayor Ted Wheeler announced Thursday his plans to use proceeds from the bond to build 200 to 300 affordable apartments on Southeast Powell Boulevard at Southeast 30th Avenue.

Although voters approved the bond in November 2016, this is the city's first planned expenditure to build new housing using that money.

"Projects like this make good on the faith Portlanders placed in us when they approved the historic housing bond," Wheeler said in a statement to The Oregonian/OregonLive.

Wheeler's notice was also his first major housing announcement after he ousted former Housing Bureau Director Kurt Creager last week.

The mayor and housing officials were considering using bond funds for the project as early as August, when the city purchased the 50,000-square foot property where the Safari Showclub operated.

The mayor drew criticism last summer for dragging his feet on increasing affordable housing while city officials, housing advocates, community leaders and developers met at his request to set up specific guidelines for spending the bond.

Ballot language requires that the bond be used to build or preserve 1,300 homes affordable to those who make 60 percent or less of the area median income. It also promises that 600 of the apartments will be affordable to those who make 30 percent or less of the area median income and requires that half of the units have two bedrooms or more to accommodate families.

The City Council approved additional spending criteria in October. They require housing officials to look for opportunities to increase affordable housing for people of color, families with children and those experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless when considering uses for bond money.

Interim Housing Bureau Director Shannon Callahan said in statement that she plans to work with the bureau's Bond Oversight Committee and the community to plan the new development.

Building affordable housing in the Creston-Kenilworth area near Cleveland High School means more people will have access to good education, transportation, green spaces and economic opportunity, she said.

"We're pleased to build our first housing bond project in such a dynamic area," Callahan said in the statement.

Portland Will Not Investigate Sexual Harassment Allegations Against Former Mayor Sam Adams

*By Jessica Floum
December 14, 2017*

Portland will not investigate allegations that former Mayor Sam Adams made sexually inappropriate comments and frequent attempts at drunk driving when he was mayor because the alleged conduct took place too long ago and Adams is no longer a city employee.

That information was disclosed in emails from the city attorney's office obtained by The Oregonian/OregonLive last week.

Adams' former executive assistant, Cevero Gonzalez, emailed Portland's commissioners on Nov. 2 alleging that the former mayor asked him uncomfortable questions such as when the last time he "got laid" was, what positions he preferred during sex and questions about male body parts.

Adams denied the allegations in a November text to The Oregonian/OregonLive and said that he would "gladly participate" in an investigation.

But Portland City Attorney Tracy Reeve told Gonzalez in a Nov. 9 email obtained by The Oregonian/OregonLive that too much time has passed for the city to investigate the allegations. The Portland Mercury first reported the city's decision to not investigate.

"Mr. Adams is no longer affiliated with the city," Reeve wrote in the email to Gonzalez. "Given this, and given the passage of time, it appears unlikely that there is any legal avenue now open to the city to address the concerns you raise."

In her email, Reeve invited Gonzalez to meet with city attorneys to discuss his concerns and what actions he hopes the city will take.

"We want to make sure we are fully apprised of both your concerns and any thoughts or recommendations you may (have) for the city going forward," Reeve wrote.

Gonzalez declined to meet with city attorneys, asserting that by not further investigating the city chose to "reaffirm a response that victims of abuse are all too often provided: there is nothing more to be done."

"While I appreciate your offer to meet to discuss my concerns in greater detail, I have little confidence that any substantive, meaningful or necessary conversations will occur unless an outside party investigates this matter further," Gonzalez wrote to the city attorney.

Reeve told The Oregonian/OregonLive in an email Thursday that the conduct Gonzalez alleged would have violated city rules in place at the time and the accusations would have been investigated had they "been reported." Reeve noted that Gonzalez received training on the city's anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies, "including his ability to make reports outside his own office if he didn't feel comfortable reporting to his supervisor."

Gonzalez told the city attorney in an email that he did report the behavior to his supervisors, Tom Miller and Jennifer Yocom, but they dismissed his concerns. Miller said in November that Gonzalez never told him about inappropriate behavior. Yocom could not be reached for comment Thursday evening.

Gonzales told the city attorney that he was "shocked and saddened" that his statement had gotten out to the public.

He said the email that he wrote to eight top city officials' public email addresses was "intended solely for review by city of Portland staff." Public employees' emails are public records unless there is a specific provision in the law, such as for records containing private medical information, that allows them to be kept confidential.

When pressed about his knowledge of public records laws as a long-time city employee, Gonzalez conceded that he mostly wanted another opportunity to share his story publicly.

Willamette Week

Former OPB Newscaster Spencer Raymond Will Not Run for City Council

By Rachel Monahan

December 14, 2017

Raymond, who has a slim resume, entered a race dominated by three women of color, all with experience in public service. His brief run set off a debate over race and representation.

Former Oregon Public Broadcasting newscaster Spencer Raymond ended his run for City Council as awkwardly as he began it.

Raymond, who was running against three women of color and was attacked for doing so, has pulled away from the controversy, citing identity politics.

"Unfortunately, this election has been overshadowed by the issue of identity," says Raymond in a statement emailed by his campaign.

Raymond's run was notable for his slim resume and his choice to run against the women who have at least some experience in public service. No woman of color has ever served on City Council, and advocates have argued it's time.

Also notable for a journalist running for office: Raymond, who also co-owns a westside bar, never sought to speak to the press, and yet he nonetheless cited a lack of an ability to convey his ideas to the larger city as a reason not to run.

"I am disappointed that I was not able to communicate my ideas for this city in the current media and political environment," he says in the statement.

"I want to make it clear that I did not enter this election to run against specific individuals or groups. I entered in an earnest attempt to make Portland a better place for everyone. I am a small business owner, an outdoor enthusiast, an engaged citizen, and a Portlander who wants to make a difference."

Rest of the statement below:

"Having consulted my family, friends, as well as advisers across the city, I believe this is not the right time for me to run for office. I can't thank my supporters enough for their efforts and hard work.

"I intend to engage with various civic groups in the coming months and years and hope to become actively involved in shaping the city's future. I want Portland to prosper and reach its full potential as a city that welcomes all and leaves no one behind."

Portland Mayor Announces His First Project Using Housing Bond, on Site of Former Strip Club

By Rachel Monahan

December 14, 2017

Former Safari Club site was purchased with Airbnb (and other short-term rental) tax dollars.

A Southeast Powell Boulevard strip club bought with short-term rental monies will be the site of the first new housing built with the \$258 million Portland housing bond.

The former Safari Club site was purchased in September with tax dollars collected from short-term rentals. And the Portland Housing Bureau plans to develop the 50,000-square-foot site.

"The bond gives us the resources to build and preserve an additional 1,300 units of affordable housing in Portland," said Mayor Wheeler. "Our strategic framework focuses on creating housing opportunities for families and individuals impacted by racism, housing discrimination, homelessness, and displacement."

The bond will be used to build or preserve 1,300 units of affordable housing.

Wheeler delayed any purchases with bond funds after City Commissioner Dan Saltzman approved the purchase of the Ellington Apartments last year—the first effort to preserve affordable housing with bond money.

Advocates raised a cry about the Ellington purchase because they hadn't got a say, and former PHB director Margaret Vliet objected because of past mismanagement of the affordable housing on the site.

After a 10-month delay on further expenditures, City Council approved a framework for making such purchases in October. But in July, the housing bureau moved forward on purchasing possible land for development.

City officials said the Safari Club site met the criteria for the bond because it was in an area at risk of gentrification but also close to amenities such as parks and transportation.

"We're pleased to build our first housing bond project in such a dynamic area," said Shannon Callahan, Interim Director of the Portland Housing Bureau in the statement. "We look forward to working with the Bond Oversight Committee and the community on the development plans."

The Portland Mercury

The City Won't Investigate Misconduct Claims Against Former Mayor Sam Adams, Attorney Says

By Dirk VanderHart

December 14, 2017

As the #metoo movement rages on, the City of Portland will not conduct an investigation into allegations that former Mayor Sam Adams subjected his former assistant to inappropriate conduct.

City Attorney Tracy Reeve told the Mercury on Wednesday that claims by former mayoral aide Cevero Gonzalez appeared to be "time-barred" from any action on the city's part. And given that Gonzalez declined an invitation to come speak with city officials, Reeve says his claims will not be looked into further.

"We did reach out to Mr. Gonzales and ask if he would be willing to speak with us," Reeve said. "We wanted to make sure that we were fully informed. We wanted to make sure we weren't missing anything that might not be time-barred."

Gonzalez "responded he was declining coming in," Reeve said. "What he suggested instead is that the city should hire an outside investigator."

The city has no plans to do so, and Reeve did not contact Adams about the accusations.

In a six-page memo to city officials in early November, Gonzalez alleged a pattern of sexual harassment and extremely unprofessional conduct on the part of Adams, who served as mayor from 2009 to the end of 2012.

Among his allegations: that Adams repeatedly quizzed Gonzalez on his sex life, forced Gonzalez to scout bathhouses and gay bars for Adams' trips out of town, and required Gonzalez to drive him around drunk. (Here's the full statement.)

Adams, who has denied the allegations, had been out of office for nearly five years when they came to light, and Reeve says officials were fairly certain early on that the city had no recourse, were Gonzalez's accusations proven true.

"I had written back to him and said, 'Gosh I don't know that there's anything legally we can do, given the timelines,'" Reeve said. She added that city rules would have prohibited the conduct Gonzalez says occurred, and that "unfortunately Mr. Gonzalez did not avail himself under existing rights that he had."

Of course, not pursuing formal sanctions has been a consistent theme of many stories of workplace harassment that have emerged around the country in recent months. In his statement, Gonzalez alleged he'd brought concerns to multiple members of Adams' staff, only to be rebuffed. Willamette Week first reported on Gonzalez's memo.

Reeve said the city might still take limited action in light of the claims. She noted that the city's HR rules around harassment have been strengthened since Adams left office, and said the city has been looking into what additional training needs to be in place.

"Certainly both this specific situation and the current climate are making us realize that even though there are legal rights in place... people are clearly still facing this kind of behavior in the workplace," Reeve said.

As for Adams, he recently saw a major change. Earlier this month, he announced he's stepping down as director of the World Resources Institute, where he'd worked since 2015. The organization has said the departure has nothing to do with Gonzalez's allegations.

Adams told the Oregonian the decision was "a natural inflection point in terms of the work flow."

The Daily Journal of Commerce

Maximum Portland Building Construction Price Set

*By Kent Hohlfeld
December 14, 2017*

The Portland City Council on Wednesday accepted an amendment to the construction contract for the renovation of the Portland Building. The amendment sets a maximum price of \$147.35 million for Howard S. Wright Construction Co.'s portion of work on the project. The council approved the amendment with a 4-0 vote.

“Now we have a (price) that can't be exceeded, which guarantees the city risks on the hard construction costs,” Portland Chief Administrative Officer Tom Rinehart said. “We are also on track for LEED gold certification.”

The amendment means Howard S. Wright will be responsible for any cost overruns beyond \$147.35 million. The total price tag for the project was set by the City Council in 2015.

“The project is on budget with the total holding at \$195 million,” said Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler said.

The \$47.65 million not devoted to construction is being set aside to cover items such as project management, specialty consultants, telecommunications leases and utilities and owner-controlled contingencies for unforeseen conditions.

With the amendment signed, Howard S. Wright can tackle the major construction phase.

“Basically they own the building now,” said Jen Clodius, senior management analyst and public affairs officer for the Office of Management and Finance. “We are running ahead of schedule.”

Project completion is scheduled by the end of 2020.

The Portland Business Journal

City Will Build First Bond-Backed Affordable Housing at Former Strip Club Site

*By Jon Bell
December 14, 2017*

The city's plans to build affordable housing on the site of a former strip club are moving forward in in Southeast Portland.

In a release today, Mayor Ted Wheeler said the project will bring up to 300 units of affordable housing to the property at 3000 S.E. Powell Blvd. The city purchased the site, the former home of the Safari Club, for \$3.7 million in September. Funding for the deal came in part from taxes that the city levies on short-term rentals like Airbnb.

The new affordable housing project will be the first to be supported by the \$258.4 million affordable housing bond approved by voters last year.

“The bond gives us the resources to build and preserve an additional 1,300 units of affordable housing in Portland,” Wheeler said. “Our strategic framework focuses on creating housing

opportunities for families and individuals impacted by racism, housing discrimination, homelessness, and displacement.”

According to the release, the property "provides good access to education, transportation, economic opportunity, green spaces, and other community amenities. It has also been identified as at risk for gentrification and displacement."

Design work on the project will begin shortly, while construction will likely kick off in early 2019.

The Portland Housing Bureau is currently researching other proposals for bond backed projects and is looking for land and existing buildings to acquire for additional housing projects.

The Skanner

Teressa Raiford Running for City Mayor 2020

*By Melanie Sevcenko
December 14, 2017*

Portland activist and organizer of Don't Shoot PDX, Teressa Raiford, told The Skanner she plans to run for city mayor in 2020.

While she's yet to make a formal announcement, Raiford said she plans to make it official in the coming weeks. She's already launched a campaign Facebook page and a website.

"I've run for office before, though I used the platform to plant value from voiceless people in my community," she said.

Raiford ran to unseat Loretta Smith as county commissioner in 2014, but was unsuccessful. She also ran for city council in 2012, but lost to Amanda Fritz.

Activism

Four years earlier, in September 2010, Raiford's nephew was shot outside an Old Town nightclub. With a surge of gang-related gun violence in the years that followed, she launched the social justice organization Don't Shoot PDX in 2014.

She has been active at numerous protests and public forums in recent years, and has taken a vocally critical stance against City Hall. Last summer, she filed a \$500,000 lawsuit against the City of Portland for her 2015 arrest during a Black Lives Matter demonstration.

"Since my nephew's death I've tried to work with countless leaders in our community that are responsible for public safety, education, housing and jobs to end trends of poverty and mass incarceration," Raiford told The Skanner. "It's been disgusting to see how quick people who speak about equity shut out the voices of the most marginalized members of our community."

Run for Mayor 2020

Raiford added that while she's happy to serve her community as an organizer, she believes she can get more done from the mayor's seat, whose current occupier Raiford is particularly frustrated with.

"(Mayor) Ted (Wheeler) has let me and others down in such a tremendous way," said Raiford, pointing to what she sees as a failure to address police accountability and public safety.

"It's time for change in Portland that comes from the un-vetted will of the people."

If her plans for running sound preemptive, there's a reason, said Raiford. "I announced early because Ted has made comments recently that Portland needs a two-term mayor and I agree with him."

According to Raiford, she'll be announcing a platform based on a two-term goal and intends to form strategic partnerships with political allies she'll be working to get elected in May 2018, including Felicia Williams for city council and Don't Shoot PDX president Maria Garcia for Multnomah County commissioner.

Raiford said she is supporting both women in their campaigns.