

## **The Oregonian**

# **Hundreds Turn out to Celebrate Late Mayor Vera Katz**

*By Lynne Terry*

*January 28, 2018*

The ceremony was simple. It was meant to be.

That's the way, her son said, she would have wanted it.

But in an hour, the memorial Sunday at the Portland Art Museum for the city's late mayor, Vera Katz, managed to flash through a lifetime of achievement. Speakers hailed her courage, tenacity, empathy and accomplishments that put a stamp on Portland's landscape and broke glass ceilings in Oregon politics.

And in photo after photo, as a young bride, campaigning for office, alongside former President Bill Clinton and waving to crowds in the Rose Parade, there she was: always beaming with those bright eyes and effervescent smile.

The memorial aimed to give Portland a chance to celebrate her, said Jesse Katz, Vera Katz' son. "People need this opportunity to say goodbye and express how important she was," he said.

Katz, who died last month at 84 of complications from kidney failure and leukemia, was a powerhouse of a politician. She became the first woman in 1977 to serve as chairwoman on the budget-writing Ways and Means Committee in the Oregon House. In 1985, she became the first female speaker of the Oregon House and the second nationwide to serve in that capacity. During her tenure as Portland mayor, a job she held for three terms, she celebrated the arts, ensured that Portland got its own Chinese garden, championed the Portland Streetcar and oversaw the building of the east side esplanade where walkers, and cyclists move daily along the river's edge.

"It was hard to find a corner of the city that was not totally transformed by Vera's leadership," said Kerry Tymchuk, executive director of the Oregon Historical Society, who introduced the four speakers.

Former state Sen. Margaret Carter, who served on the Oregon Legislature with Katz, said she would have been delighted with the ceremony.

"Vera would be happy because she loved happiness, not sadness," Carter said, who looked up and spoke as if Katz were there, observing.

"As your colleagues, we did not think you'd prevail," Carter said about Katz' election as speaker. "You hung in there girlfriend, and you did it."

The audience of hundreds of people was packed with political leaders, from Gov. Kate Brown and former Gov. John Kitzhaber to Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler and U.S. Reps. Suzanne Bonamici and Earl Blumenauer. Community, business and cultural leaders turned up. So did people who don't make the headlines, like the chauffeur who drove Katz to her dialysis appointments for 12 years and a manicurist, who made house calls to ensure Katz' nails were bright and shiny up until the end.

Katz was a champion of the little people, Jesse Katz said. She also knew how to stand up for what she wanted.

Among the four speakers was former Commissioner Mike Lindberg, who served with Katz on the City Council. He praised her leadership and achievements. But he also remembered Katz

addressing a group in a cathedral in New York City after the Sept. 11 attacks. She shared in the collective grief by recounting her family's escape from Nazi Germany and settling in New York.

Erin Hoover Barnett, who chronicled Katz' battle with cancer as a reporter for The Oregonian/OregonLive, talked about Katz' annoyance one day at having to be rushed off for a blood transfusion before an important City Council meeting. She relented to the life-saving transfusion – had she not had it she might have bled out during the meeting, Hoover Barnett said -- but she didn't miss it either, striding back into the meeting before it ended and taking charge.

That sort of thing came naturally to Katz.

But though she was tough, she was tender, too. Jesse Katz, her son, recounted his mother's trek on foot at the age of 7 with her family through the Pyrenees Mountains from France to Spain. She was only allowed to have one possession, he said, a little boy doll made of plastic and dressed in knit shorts.

"It became her security blanket as the Nazis rolled into France and as Paris, for an exiled family of Russian Jews, was fast becoming a death trap," Katz said.

At one point on the journey, her father went wild with rage, grabbed the doll and hurled it over a cliff.

His mother never forgot that painful moment, Katz said.

"The doll had left a wound that my mom carried her entire life," Katz said. "But it was a wound that also motivated and propelled her to do more, to care more, to give more."

In the end, others had to care for her. A year and a half ago, after Katz fell and broke a hip, three women from Tonga, Mele Eteaki, Lisa Kofe and Lea Fapuiaki, were hired as her round-the-clock caregivers. Those women were at the memorial, saluted by a hearty round of applause when Katz asked them to stand up.

She didn't like their Spam and taro, a root vegetable, Katz said.

"She sometimes bickered with them as if they were old married couples," Katz said. "Mom didn't like being dependent."

But they were patient and loyal and kept Katz comfortable, he said. They fed her macadamia nuts and combed her hair.

She rewarded them with a pile of glittery clothes that she dug out of her closet.

Somewhere in the South Pacific, there are women dressed in sequins, spangles and rhinestones, Katz said, as the audience erupted with applause and delight.

By the time the mortuary officials came, the Tongalese women had her body dressed up in a yellow shirt, with the word "Tonga" printed on the front.

Once an immigrant herself, she left this world cared for by immigrants.

Katz' small family was at the memorial: her son, her ex-husband Mel Katz, with whom she stayed close and Jesse Katz' son Max, who flew in from New Orleans. Deb Linden, daughter of Katz sister, also traveled to Portland for the memorial.

In the days or weeks or months to come, Katz will sprinkle his mother's ashes in places that she loved. Many will be in Portland, Katz said.

## **The Portland Tribune**

### **Climate Activists File Initiative to Create Portland Sales Tax**

*By Steve Law*

*January 27, 2018*

Funds raised would support solar panels, energy-efficiency projects and other efforts to lower carbon emissions.

A coalition led by environmental groups filed an initiative petition with the city of Portland on Jan. 18 to enact a sales tax on large retailers to fund projects that will decrease carbon emissions.

They call their measure the Portland Climate Action Community Benefits Initiative 2018 and are shooting for the November city ballot. The chief petitioner is Adriana Voss-Andreae, chairwoman of 350PDX, an affiliate of an international group working to avert dramatic climate change.

The measure aims to enact a new sales tax of 1 percent on retailers with more than \$1 billion in gross revenues and more than \$500,000 in Portland revenues. Retailers selling basic groceries, medicines and health care services are exempted.

Money collected would be deposited into a Portland Climate Action Community Benefit Fund, which would be disbursed for renewable energy and energy efficiency projects, with a particular focus on projects that benefit low-income people and communities of color.

Other beneficiaries of the money would include regenerative agriculture projects that sequester greenhouse gases and support local food production; job training and apprenticeships.

A Portland Climate Action Community Benefit Fund Committee would be created, made up of experts and community members, to make funding recommendations to the City Council.

The city Auditor's Office determined last Thursday that the initiative meets requirements of the Oregon Constitution. The petition was sent to the City Attorney's office, which will create a ballot title.

Then organizers must gather signatures to qualify for the ballot.

Veteran political consultant Paige Richardson is working on the campaign.

To read the measure: [www.portlandoregon.gov/auditor/article/669995](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/auditor/article/669995)

### **County Board Approves Lease for Controversial Homeless Shelter**

*By KOIN 6 News*

*January 25, 2018*

Southeast Portland residents pack Thursday meeting about proposed shelter on Foster Road.

Despite concerns from residents, the Multnomah County Commissioners passed the controversial Southeast Portland homeless shelter Thursday afternoon with a 4-1 vote.

The vote came after another community meeting was held earlier in the day. It will be on Southeast Foster Road and 61st, and is scheduled to open in the summer or fall of this year with about 100 to 120 beds.

Dozens of people signed up to testify at the commission hearing. The majority of the people at the hearing live in the neighborhood and voiced their concerns.

What many are upset about is what they feel is a lack of transparency on this process. They don't feel there's been proper engagement with the public.

"I've spoken to 50 homeowners," Michael Vevera said. "None are in favor of this shelter because you gave up the opportunity to be transparent and reach out to us. Now you want to railroad this down our throats."

Commissioner Loretta Smith agreed with that and called it "unconscionable." She also questioned whether the cost figures provided by county staff were accurate.

The common thread among those testifying was that, while something should be done to help the homeless, they don't think this shelter in this location is the answer.

"There are no social services, there are no food banks or kitchens, there are no medical services, there are no mental health services, there are no substance abuse services and there is no police precinct at this location," one woman told the commissioners. "It is bound to fail those it is intended to serve."

But homeowner Amber Kelly said, "I understand my neighbors' concerns about family, but these folks are my family. They are already our neighbors and part of our neighborhood."

The county said the facility will have bathrooms, a kitchen and provide housing and job services in the building for people staying there. It will also be pet-friendly.

Organizers said this shelter is necessary because the homeless population is already large in that area. Commissioners were told if they didn't move forward now they would have lost the location.

While the neighborhood may not like the location, advocates for the shelter said it's far better than letting people die on the streets.

KOIN 6 News is a news partner of the Portland Tribune. You can read their version at [www.koin.com/news/civic-affairs/se-foster-residents-homeless-shelter-bound-to-fail/939087469](http://www.koin.com/news/civic-affairs/se-foster-residents-homeless-shelter-bound-to-fail/939087469).

## **Willamette Week**

### **Who's Who of Oregon Politics Gathers to Celebrate the Life of Former Mayor Vera Katz**

*By Nigel Jaquiss  
January 28, 2018*

**The late three-term mayor presided over the creation of much of modern Portland.**

A standing-room-only crowd of about 700 people celebrated the life of former Mayor Vera Katz at the Portland Art Museum on Sunday.

Katz, the first woman to serve as Speaker of the Oregon House of Representatives and Portland's mayor from 1993 to 2005, died of leukemia Dec. 11. She was 84.

Among the numerous current elected officials who came to pay their respects on Sunday were Gov. Kate Brown, Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum, U.S. Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.), Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler, City Commissioners Amanda Fritz and Nick Fish, County Commissioner Loretta Smith and state Sens. Betsy Johnson (D-Scappoose) and Lew Frederick (D-Portland).

Numerous former officials, including ex-Gov. John Kitzhaber, Secretaries of State Phil Keisling and Bill Bradbury, Portland Mayors Bud Clark and Sam Adams, City Commissioner Jim Francesconi, County Chair Diane Linn, also attended. So did prominent real-estate developers: John Russell, who chaired the Portland Development Commission under Katz and Doug Oblatz, who was heavily involved developing the Portland Streetcar on Katz's watch.

Kerry Tymchuk, the executive director of the Oregon Historical Society, emceed the event.

A video montage of how Portland's cityscape changed as a result of Katz's leadership played on a giant screen. Among the project's Katz spearheaded: the Eastbank Esplanade, the Pearl District, South Waterfront, the Lan Cu Chinese Garden, the Portland Streetcar, OHSU's massive expansion and a revamped Providence Park.

Speaking after the ceremony, Francesconi, who served with Katz for two terms, remarked on the extraordinary changes Katz oversaw.

"As a council, we didn't always get along," Francesconi says. "But looking back, we got a lot done under her leadership—and I think it was because she had a vision of where she wanted the city to go."

The ceremony itself was simple: Tymchuk introduced four speakers, each who addressed a discrete part of Katz's life.

Former state Sen. Margaret Carter (D-Portland) spoke as a longtime legislative colleague. Carter described the intense competition that resulted in Katz first being elected speaker in 1984. The final result came at 3 am, after a gang of male politicians had done everything they could to elect one of their own.

Carter said Katz took the opposition in stride and accepted the honor with an agenda already prepared for the upcoming session.

"She was gracious to the boys," said Carter, who added that, as a leader, Katz was extraordinarily well prepared and a great listener.

"She was the best mentor a person could have," Carter said.

Lindberg, a former city commissioner who served with Katz from 1993 to 1997, attributed her success as mayor to a fierce work ethic, mastery of essential details and an ability to generate widespread support for her ideas.

"She had charm and charisma, but she understood that the title of mayor didn't get things done," Lindberg said. "It was the ability to mobilize the community."

Erin Hoover Barnett, now at Oregon Health & Science University, covered the early stages of Katz's 18-year battle with various forms of cancer as a reporter at The Oregonian.

In Hoover Barnett's telling, Katz treated her life-threatening condition as an inconvenient distraction from work, smiling through waves of debilitating treatment, chronic discomfort and

increasingly grim prognoses. She outwardly soldiered on, rarely letting people see how serious were the challenges she faced.

"She was an intensively private person," Hoover Barnett said.

Jesse Katz, the former mayor's only child, recalled that when Katz first ran for the Legislature in 1972, *The Oregonian* branded her a "militant housewife," and endorsed her opponent.

"We need more militant housewives," said Katz, a Pulitzer-Prize-winning former reporter at the *Los Angeles Times*.

He told of his mother's longtime love for baseball. Listening to Brooklyn Dodgers games on the radio helped her learn English after her family fled Europe ahead of the Nazis and landed in New York.

In the last year of her life, Katz said, his mother, limited by the ravages of cancer, years of dialysis and a broken hip, became house-bound. She took great solace from a YouTube video of Neil Diamond singing "Sweet Caroline" to Boston Red Sox fans in the week after the Boston Marathon bombing in 2013.

The image of a grieving city and its rabid fans engaging with Diamond in a live performance of the longtime Red Sox theme music cheered her.

Katz says that's how he'll remember her: "My mom smiling, her heart filled by a song."

For Portlanders, the neighborhoods and structures that Katz did so much to build will provide plenty of other reminders.

When Katz was in eighth grade, the printed program distributed at her service said, a teacher asked her class to write did what they wanted on their tombstones.

Katz's choice: "She made a difference."

## **The Portland Mercury**

### **A New Self-Managed Homeless Village Just Sprang Up in Northeast Portland**

*By Thacher Schmid*  
*January 28, 2018*

#### **The "Village of Hope" Sits on City-Owned Land, and Is the First Such Community to Emerge Under Mayor Ted Wheeler**

Portland's newest houseless village popped up this morning on city-owned land in a far-flung, woodsy corner of Northeast Portland's Wilkes Neighborhood.

At 10 am, a group of a dozen volunteers, led by veteran homeless activists Lisa Lake and Steve Kimes, began setting up wooden platforms and communal spaces at in groves of cottonwoods along the Columbia River Slough near Northeast Airport Way and Mason.

The new community—dubbed the "Village of Hope"—is similar to self-managed homeless villages like Right 2 Dream Too and Hazelnut Grove, which sprang up against the wishes of city officials. But this is the first protest encampment to emerge under Mayor Ted Wheeler, and

appears to be the first located so far from downtown (it sits near NE Marine Drive between 170th and 181st).

Village of Hope also may be the first major protest homeless encampment located on land owned by Portland Parks and Recreation. Its ten tents now sit on a property called the Big Four Corners Natural Area, which contains the slough's meandering waters, deer, coyotes, river otter, and 175 bird species.

"Let's prove how stabilization, for not a lot of money, can work wonders," Lake said at a January 16 planning meeting for the camp.

The creation of the new homeless village comes as city and county officials dump millions of dollars into creating new homeless shelters around town, and into creating deeply affordable housing. In a statement, organizers noted that city and county officials "are making progress, but many people continue to fall between the cracks. Their shelter development processes have engendered intense neighborhood conflicts and come with huge price tags."

It's unclear how the city will respond to the clandestine encampment. Mayor Wheeler's deputy chief of staff, Michael Cox, told the Mercury he needed to look into the situation before commenting.

Village of Hope consists of ten tents on raised wooden platforms, plus three communal areas (a kitchen area, a "community center" and a "Chill Zone"), a dumpster, and a portapotty. Organizers have said three on-site managers will sleep there tonight. The numbers will grow to ten within the week, and could ultimately reach 30.

For the village's houseless managers—Robert Aquino, Kerry Wheeler, and John Boggs (known as "Thumper"),—the key to the Village of Hope is relative stability and security.

"This camp is like everything to me right now," Kerry Wheeler said. "I just need a place to be, and I can't be alone — it's scary out here."

The Big Four Corners Natural Area is surrounded by warehouses and industry, but honeycombed with paths, wetlands and meandering forks of the slough. Aquino, Thumper, and Wheeler may know its paths and secrets as well as anyone.

"I actually camped right over there," Aquino said, pointing to a spot in the woods, "about 200 yards from here."

Part of the problem Village of Hope intends to remedy is the constant displacement of houseless camps. Aquino said he's been forced to move 20 times in the last two months. Wheeler said she's had to relocate eight times within the same period.

"I've been swept by all of them," Wheeler said, "the rangers, the cops and Rapid Response."

"Lance would follow a chipmunk trail to find you," Aquino said, referring to Lance Hamel, owner of Rapid Response Bioclean, a city subcontractor that often cleans up debris in the area. Under Mayor Wheeler, campsite sweeps and "clean-ups" have ramped up to record levels

An organized village like Village of Hope doesn't have much precedent in an area so far removed from services, but homeless advocates insist their latest project won't be injecting a homeless population into a new area. Kimes says houseless Portlanders are already staying near Big Four Corners. He believes the Village of Hope will actually protect the local ecology by providing structure and regular cleaning.

Village of Hope will operate under a code of conduct similar to that of Right 2 Dream Too or Dignity Village: no drug or alcohol use on site, no violence or fighting, no stealing. Sunday's build featured blue cupcakes, burritos, and the feel of an Amish barn raising — but more covert.

It was similar, in fact, to another encampment Lake attempted to create in 2016. In May of that year, Lake and other advocates swooped onto a piece of city-owned land near Lents Town Center to set up a camp that was to serve as a sanctuary for homeless domestic violence survivors. The group stuck it out on the site for a number of days, but left when Mayor Charlie Hales' office vowed to find them another city-owned plot for the camp. That never happened.

Lake says she's learned her lesson. If the city attempts to push Village of Hope residents out, they'll dig deeper.

"We will be chill if the city is chill," Lake said. If official forces show up to clear the new encampment, she says, organizers will bring supporters out in force.

The Village of Hope's "Opening" event is 11 a.m. Monday at 17001 NE Airport Way.

## **After a Heated Hearing, the County is Moving Forward with a Homeless Shelter on SE Foster**

*By Dirk VanderHart*

*January 25, 2018*

Even in a city that's basically a Thunderdome of homeowners battling any change that approaches their neighborhood, today's meeting of the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners was bruising.

In a 4-1 vote, the board approved a 10-year lease for a long-term homeless shelter at 6144 SE Foster. As envisioned by the county's Joint Office of Homeless Services (JOHS), the shelter will house between 100 and 120 people who'll get beds at the center via referral (and so won't be lining up outside, officials say). The shelter's currently slated to open this fall, and would focus on women, people with disabilities, people over 55, and veterans. Before doors open, the sales pitch goes, the county will develop a stakeholder committee to address neighbors' concerns.

The board's approval came as JOHS urged swift action on the lease, saying that the former grocery store wouldn't be available for long. But it didn't come without notable strife between County Commissioner Loretta Smith and other board members and county officials.

Smith got applause from the shelter skeptics filling the chamber when she lit into JOHS Director Marc Jolin early on in the hearing, questioning why the lease was being signed roughly a month after the possibility of a shelter was made public.

"You had these conversations in August and you made a conscious decision not to [address the community until December]," she told Jolin. "You have to make sure that people feel comfortable before you tell them, 'We're going to put this in your neighborhood.'"

Smith called the public process "disingenuous" and said the suggestion that officials spend \$2 million to renovate the leased space was "unconscionable."

She wasn't remotely done. Over the course of the hearing, Smith would question whether the county was rushing the process to avoid an impending zoning change on the property that would affect how many people could sleep there (Jolin acknowledged it was a factor), and railed against an assistant county attorney whom she suggested had purposefully been vague about the true cost



of the deal. Further, she suggested that Commissioner Sharon Meieran hadn't bothered to read the terms of the proposed lease, and more generally intimated that the rest of the board wasn't fulfilling its duties under the county charter.

"Read the charter," said Smith, who currently is named in a lawsuit accusing her of running afoul of the charter. "We're responsible for the money piece. Because of our values individually we all do care about homelessness and people being on the streets, but our first job is the money."

Smith's concerns over cash were partly to do with the fact that the county plans to spend money (along with the city) to fix up a building it doesn't own, but also hinged on taxes. Since any building the county occupies is not subject to property taxes, Smith was concerned that tax abatement would result in a windfall for the property owner, who is already reaping between \$13,390 and \$16,322 per month from the county over the course of the lease [PDF]. Assessor's records show the owners of the building paid \$27,517 in property taxes last year (not all of that would be exempt, since part of the building is occupied by a 7-Eleven).

Smith hectored Assistant County Attorney Jed Tomkins on how much the building owner would save over the course of the lease. When he couldn't answer, she requested a vote be pushed back two weeks. No other commissioner seconded her motion. (For what it's worth, the lease passed by the board today suggests that the tax savings to the property owner figured into the monthly rent, saying: "The total compensation paid by Tenant under this Lease has been established to reflect the savings of below market rent resulting from the exemption from taxation.")

That's not to say the rest of the board wholly disagreed with Smith.

"From what I've heard I do feel like the process here is not what it should have been," Meieran said at one point. "When we come down to making some of the really difficult decisions, it's a matter of, sometimes, triage."

Smith has been a critic of the county's strategies around homelessness in the past. In 2016, she railed against the decision to house 200 people in a rundown county building at 122nd and Glisan. And she still resents the fact that County Chair Deborah Kafoury refused to create a shelter in the county's unused Wapato jail facility (now sold).

As to the rest of the hearing: If you've tracked literally any other conversation about a new homeless shelter in Portland recently, you already know the arguments Foster-Powell and Mt. Scott-Arleta residents and others voiced.

Over hours of testimony today, opponents said the shelter was at too prominent an intersection, too near a school, and too far from services. They said the building where the shelter is proposed doesn't have an adequate HVAC system. They talked about the drug use that would choke their alleys. They demanded the lease be pushed back so they could prove the building was less than ideal for a shelter.

Others strongly supported the shelter—including residents of the neighborhood who said they'd move the shelter closer to their own homes if they could.

Lost in the arguments, for the most part: Every building is less than ideal for a shelter, and it's really hard to find properties that even sort of work. As Jolin noted this morning, the county needs to find sites in "the right geographic areas," and buildings that meet zoning requirements, are near transit, have reasonable costs, and are vacant.

"It is truly a challenging process," he said. "The Foster site has emerged from this process as a good option for a year-round permanent shelter."

# The Daily Journal of Commerce

## Equation Changes for Lloyd District Tower

By Chuck Slothower

January 25, 2018

Beneath a canvas tent illuminated by strings of light bulbs, nonprofit advocates, lenders and elected officials gathered on a chilly January day to break ground on Portland's largest affordable apartment building in decades.

The building on Block 45, in the Lloyd District, will tower 12 stories, offering 240 rent-restricted units in a fast-developing neighborhood.

Amid rhetorical pats on the back and ceremonial shoveling, the event gave Mayor Ted Wheeler the chance to showcase a project that will offer far more affordable units, and for a lower investment of city taxpayer dollars, than other high-profile projects that have attracted media scrutiny.

Home Forward's Lloyd District project was originally conceived as a roughly equal mix of market-rate and affordable units. But when the public agency's development staffers took a close look at the numbers, they changed their strategy. All 240 apartments would be affordable, primarily using low-income tax credits.

"It's an amazing change that we're very excited about," said Shannon Callahan, interim director of the Portland Housing Bureau.

The change in scheme comes as financing for affordable housing projects faces a number of hurdles, including declining values of tax credits and scant federal support. As Wheeler embarks on spending the city's \$258.4 million housing bond, he's under pressure to build as many units as possible. The City Council has set a goal to build 1,300 affordable housing units by 2029.

The city's record has given ammunition to critics. Wheeler's November announcement that the city had awarded \$6 million to Framework, a high-profile, technologically advanced and expensive timber tower in the Pearl District, to subsidize 60 affordable apartments drew media attention for offering a muted bang for the buck.

In contrast, the city is providing less to the Lloyd District project – \$5.6 million – yet it will produce four times as many affordable units. As Wheeler and others have noted, the Home Forward project at 1010 N.E. Grand Ave. will be Portland's largest single-building affordable housing development in 50 years.

At the Lloyd District ground-breaking event, Wheeler said the Block 45 project leverages the city's contribution at 1,317 percent, with a per-unit subsidy of \$23,333.

"Is there anybody here who has gotten a better rate of return on investment than that? No," Wheeler said.

The city also donated the land, valued at about \$3 million. Multnomah County is providing \$5 million and Home Forward is spending \$11.6 million in reserves.

Wheeler called Home Forward's decision to make each of the 240 apartments affordable a "bold change in course." Home Forward, the public housing authority for Multnomah County, is also involved in Framework along with developer Project^.

So what changed?

“What changed was the environment changed in terms of the housing emergency that we have here,” said Jonathan Trutt, Home Forward’s director of development and community revitalization.

Balancing affordable and market-rate apartment units in a given development is complicated, Trutt said. Market-rate units bring higher rents, but are built without tax credits.

“It’s this sliding scale series of trade-offs,” Trutt said.

The Block 45 project will ascend to 12 stories, providing 88 studios, 109 one-bedroom units and 43 two-bedroom units available to families making no more than 60 percent of the Portland area’s median income. Some of the apartments will be set aside for survivors of domestic violence. The building is projected to open in 2019, and the affordability requirement will stretch for 99 years.

The project is designed by LEVER Architecture and LRS Architects. A joint venture of O’Neill Construction Group and Walsh Construction Co. is building it.

The “lion’s share” of financing for the Block 45 project comes from low-income tax credits, Home Forward spokesman Tim Collier said.

Those tax credits have recently fallen in value in part due to the new federal tax law signed by President Trump. By lowering corporate tax rates, the law reduces the demand for tax credits.

“It’s a little topsy-turvy because of all the changes in the tax code,” Trutt said. “Low-income housing tax credit is a key financing source.”

The price per credit fluctuates with the economy and tax structure, Trutt said.

“It goes up and it goes down,” he said. “It tends to be most volatile, and it is volatile now when there’s uncertainty. It’s not a great time to have one of your key financing tools be less robust.”

Demand remains strong for low-income housing. The Albert, a 72-apartment North Portland building that includes 18 affordable units, has a waiting list of seven people for one-bedroom apartments, and another five for two-bedroom apartments, manager Yelena Ivashentsev said.

The Housing Bureau is racing to catch up. In addition to pushing Block 45 forward, the bureau in September purchased the site of the Safari Showclub, at 3000 S.E. Powell Blvd., for \$3.72 million. Following demolition, construction is expected to produce 100 to 300 affordable housing units.

In February 2017, the bureau bought the Ellington Apartments in Northeast Portland for \$47 million, preserving 260 units, including 44 affordable ones.

Wheeler, in recent remarks to the Housing Advisory Commission, likened preserving units to “treading water.” The city must prioritize building new housing, he said.

Wheeler in December replaced Housing Bureau Director Kurt Creager with Callahan, a former policy adviser to Commissioner Dan Saltzman. The shake-up came after years of complaints that the Housing Bureau placed a low priority on unit production.

In 2015, the Housing Bureau loaned \$2.4 million to Hacienda Community Development Corp. to build a new office for the nonprofit organization. The project included no housing.

The Block 45 project appears to be an attempt to make up for lost ground. The tower will rise amid a flurry of private development in the Lloyd District, from the Hotel Eastlund and Hassalo on Eighth to the Hyatt Regency hotel near the Oregon Convention Center and the proposed Oregon Square superblock project.

The affordable apartments will ensure the working class maintains a foothold in the neighborhood, advocates said.

“This city, and this neighborhood, belong to them as much as it belongs to any of us,” Home Forward Executive Director Michael Buonocore said. “And the 240 apartments that will be built here will help us make sure that that continues to be true.”

## **OPB**

# **Hundreds Celebrate Former Portland Mayor Vera Katz's Life**

*By Amelia Templeton*

*January 28, 2018*

Hundreds of Oregonians gathered at the Portland Art Museum Sunday afternoon to remember late Portland Mayor Vera Katz.

The memorial celebrated Katz’s political accomplishments, her tenacity, and her extraordinary personal story.

Katz was an immigrant.

Born in Dusseldorf, Germany to a Russian Jewish family, she fled the Nazi occupation of Europe when she was 7 years old, crossing the Pyrenees mountains on foot.

Her story is a reminder of “the value of an immigration policy that recognizes the humanity and the promise of the tired and the poor, yearning to be free,” said Kerry Tymchuck, President of the Oregon Historical Society.

New York and later Portland became her adopted homes. Katz perfected her English listening to Brooklyn Dodgers baseball games on the radio, and idolized Jackie Robinson.

Robert F. Kennedy’s presidential campaign inspired her to get involved in politics.

Katz’s son Jesse shared stories from his mother’s early years as an activist. She once banged pots and pans outside the Benson Hotel to protest the Portland City Club’s policy excluding women.

“Some of you who may remember her first campaign in 1972 will recall that she did not receive the endorsement of the Oregonian, which had branded her a “militant housewife,” Katz said.

“We need more of them,” he added.

In 1985, Katz rose to be the first female speaker of the Oregon House. Former state senator Margaret Carter recalled staying up all night, trying to convince her colleagues to cast their votes for Katz.

“I said, Vera, don’t let nobody go to the bathroom until this count is over,” Carter said.

In the end, Katz prevailed in the vote.

Carter’s conclusion: “Never, never, underestimate a woman.”

Katz is best remembered for her three deeply influential terms as Portland mayor, from 1992 to 2004.

Her influence shaped the city with projects like the Eastbank Esplanade, the development of the Pearl District and the South Waterfront, and the Lan Su Chinese Garden. She was also a passionate advocate for funding public works of art.

In the mayor's office, she had a reputation as a tireless, detail-oriented worker.

"At night she would read every letter sent by every citizen, and every report sent by every bureau," remembered former city commissioner Mike Lindberg.

She demanded the same relentless schedule from her staff, and would tease people who left the office at 5:00 p.m.

"She understood as few leaders did that authority and the title of mayor really didn't get things done. The power was in engaging the community to support your vision," Lindberg said.

In her final term in office, Katz survived breast cancer. In 2004, she developed cancer of the reproductive system. She lived with complications from the cancer and its treatment for many years.

At the memorial, Katz's friends and family revealed poignant details about the final years of her life.

In May 2016, Katz broke her hip. Then, last December, Katz was diagnosed with acute leukemia.

"Rather than mount an unwinnable fight, she chose to stop dialysis, to die on her own term with her loved ones around her, with dignity," said Erin Hoover-Barnett, a former Oregonian reporter who profiled Katz during her earlier battles with cancer.

In her final year, Katz relied on a team of three women from Polynesia who served as her in-home caregivers around the clock.

Katz struggled with her loss of autonomy, but also bonded with the women, giving them piles of her old outfits to send back to their families. Katz was known as a flashy dresser.

"There are women in Polynesia now, strutting around with sequins and spangles and rhinestones," said Jesse Katz.

Katz's memorial drew Oregon's political elite, including Gov. Kate Brown, Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum, and Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler.

But the people her son chose to thank publicly during the celebration were his mother's three caregivers.

He shared that on the day Katz died, the three women dressed her in a tiny yellow shirt that had a tribal design and the word Tonga printed on it.

"They laughed about how it had fallen to three sturdy Mormon women from thousands of miles across the South Pacific to figure out how to make life easier for the former mayor, who herself had crossed an ocean in search of a brighter future," her son said.