

The Oregonian

Portland Police Revoke Permit, Declare Riot as Protesters Clash Downtown

By Eder Campuzano

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Portland Police declared a riot Saturday after tensions between the right-wing Patriot Prayer group and local anti-fascist activists came to a head and broke out in violence.

The afternoon began with a permitted rally at Terry Schruck Federal Plaza organized by Joey Gibson, U.S. Senate candidate for Washington and leader of the right-wing, Vancouver-based group.

A counter-demonstration by masked local anti-fascist groups gathered nearby among a heavy police presence. Officers seized weapons such as utility knives, clubs and chemical sprays, detaining several protesters early on.

Portland Police made four arrests during the demonstrations, none of them connected to the events of the day.

Tusitala "Tiny" Toese, 22, and Donovan Flippo, 23, were arrested upon arriving at Terry Schruck Plaza for an alleged assault in Portland earlier in the month.

Luiz Marquez, 46, was lodged in the Multnomah County Jail on charges of theft and assault for the June 3 protest that also saw four others arrested.

And Matthew Braddock, 37, was arrested on charges of robbery and assault for an investigation that began May 31.

Things turned ugly shortly after 6 p.m., when Patriot Prayer protesters spilled into Third Avenue to begin their permitted march through the streets of Portland.

Antifascist counter-demonstrators immediately began lobbing eggs, half-empty water bottles and firecrackers at the conservative marchers, prompting federal police to fire paintballs filled with pepper spray into the crowd.

Portland police said four people were struck by the projectiles and had to be taken to the hospital. An officer was also struck and taken to the hospital.

The two groups continued heckling each other even as police intervened.

The bureau declared a riot and revoked the march permit soon after police said they witnessed several instances of assault and other criminal activity.

Portland police closed Chapman and Lownsdale squares around the same time, according to a tweet sent out by the department. They ordered rioters to clear the area and warned that non-compliance would lead to arrest.

Patriot Prayer demonstrators gathered again at Terry Schruck Plaza shortly after the order, several of them stranded as Gibson had arranged buses to shuttle supporters from a loading area in Vancouver. The first bus back to Vancouver was boarded just before 7:30 p.m.

The conservative demonstrators were irked that police did not do enough to protect them, shouting at Portland officers and black-clad anti-fascists alike as they returned to the plaza.

The Patriot Prayer rally began at 4 p.m.

Gibson's followers and anti-fascist counter-protesters alike arrived in the two blocks east of Portland City Hall hours ahead of time, heckling each other behind metal barriers set up by Federal Protective Service and Department of Homeland Security police.

The Patriot Prayer group numbered nearly 150, while the counter-demonstration boasted attendance at least twice that. Combined, the dueling protests were a fraction of an earlier march in support of immigrant children separated from their parents at the southern border.

That event tallied up to 5,000 attendees.

The conservative rally in the federal plaza was a typical affair for the Vancouver-based political figure.

Gibson said he wanted to "bring light into a city that's full of darkness," verbally bashing Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler and Oregon Gov. Kate Brown. Gibson is one of 13 candidates vying for the GOP nomination in the U.S. Senate race in Washington, according to Ballotpedia.

A group of die-hard supporters exploded in raucous cheers as Gibson delivered his speech, where he mentioned his Senate campaign only once near the end of his address.

Willamette Week

Portland Police Declare a Riot After Right-Wing Marchers Begin Beating Antifascists with Flag Poles

*By Katie Shepherd
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Homeland Security officers fired pepper balls into a crowd of leftist protesters.

For the first time in more than a year of street brawling, Portland police today deemed a march by Proud Boys and other right-wing protesters too violent to continue.

Marchers with the right-wing protest group Patriot Prayer beat antifascist protesters with wooden and PVC pipe flag poles that federal police had allowed the group to keep.

Portland police policy is to confiscate all possible weapons, and they did not allow the antifascist protesters to have flag poles. At least one protester was severely injured in the brawl and lay motionless on the ground after police broke up the altercation.

After two weeks where Portland's leftist protesters drew national attention for blockading federal immigration offices, right-wing groups led by Congressional candidate Joey Gibson returned to Portland in greater numbers than have been seen since last summer, seemingly bent on wresting back the spotlight with street violence.

Patriot Prayer attracted far more attendees than usual, including many men wearing black-and-yellow Proud Boy shirts and others dressed in costumes with helmets. They had a permit to march in downtown Portland. Many arrived from out of town via a chartered former school bus.

After several hours of being restricted to Terry Schunk Plaza by federal agents, Patriot Prayer began to march toward an intersection filled with counterprotesters dressed in Black Bloc outfits.

Police in riot gear stood by but did not move to get between the two groups.

In a nearby Starbucks, at around 5 pm, a group of uniformed PPB officers discussed their frustration dealing with repeated Patriot Prayer protests where both sides declare a desire to fight in the streets. One officer said the police should restrict the protesters to one area and "just let them fight."

That is essentially what happened as riot cops stood by and allowed Patriot Prayer and Antifa to make contact on Southwest Madison Street.

Almost instantly, the two groups began exchanging blows, throwing objects at one another and shouting—each calling the other "Nazis."

The violence subsided for a bit as police and organizers ushered Patriot Prayer down Madison.

After almost all of Patriot Prayer had cleared the area and as the commotion died down, U.S. Department of Homeland Security officers standing across a street and behind metal barricades shot pepper balls into the crowd of antifascist protesters. A spokesman for the agency said protesters had been throwing objects at the agents and "antagonizing" them.

The federal officers kept firing for several seconds as protesters on the other side of the street backed away from the area.

As soon as Patriot Prayer turned onto Southwest 2nd Avenue, Portland police informed the group that their march permit had been revoked and the group would have to remain on the sidewalk.

Patriot Prayer supporters yelled that the cops had "set them up." One man said he would no longer support the Portland Police Bureau.

Antifascist protesters followed the Patriot Prayer march on the opposite sides of downtown streets as SUVs lined with Portland police in riot gear cruised between them.

But protesters on both sides got ahead of the PPB vehicles and moved to attack one another. That's when Patriot Prayer protesters beat antifascist protesters with the flag poles. Antifascists could be seen throwing gravel and firecrackers at the right-wing marchers in the moment before they charged.

Portland police used flash bangs and pepper spray to drive the groups apart. They also declared the gathering a riot and ordered everyone to leave the area or face arrest.

Portland police did not immediately respond to requests for comment.