

The Oregonian

ICE Union Asks Portland Mayor For Police Protection

By Anna Sporre

July 30, 2018

The union that represents employees of Immigration and Customs Enforcement on Monday called on Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler to immediately provide law enforcement services to ICE employees.

Attorney Sean Riddell, legal representative for the National Immigration and Customs Enforcement Council, sent a letter to the mayor's office Monday requesting a meeting with Wheeler to discuss the hands-off approach Portland police took to the OccupyICEPDX protest.

Demonstrators held a 38-day-long occupation at the facility beginning June 17 in protest to President Donald Trump's immigration policies.

Riddell wrote in the letter that Wheeler's decision created "a zone of terror and lawlessness" and resulted in threats of physical violence and harassment toward ICE employees.

The letter, which was emailed to Wheeler's chief of staff around 7:30 a.m. Monday, said the union would like to avoid federal litigation, but is "prepared to protect our membership and their families."

"The Council and I assert that your current policy forbidding Portland law enforcement agencies from assisting employees of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency ("ICE") who request law enforcement assistance while at or away from work is a violation of the United States Constitution's Equal Protection Clause," Riddell wrote.

The letter went on to reference the 14th Amendment, which guarantees citizens equal protection of the laws.

"Your policy of not providing police services to employees of ICE creates a class of people based upon their source of income," the letter read.

[Read the full letter here.](#)

A spokesperson for Wheeler on Monday afternoon said the mayor's legal counsel was reviewing the letter and had no further comment.

On June 20, [Wheeler tweeted](#) that he did not want Portland police involved in a conflict between protesters and ICE, adding that he believes the agency is on the wrong track.

Portland police were involved in the final clearing of the encampment on Wednesday after Wheeler called on occupiers to disband two days prior.

Last week, [the Oregonian/OregonLive reported](#) that federal officers at the ICE facility were on the receiving end of hateful and racially-charged language from protesters during the weeks-long occupation.

"We learned a long time ago as a people that it's not appropriate to spit on a vet because we don't agree with the war he or she served in," Riddell said Monday afternoon. "This is analogous and equally unacceptable."

The Portland Tribune

City Hall Update: Council OKs Rental Registration Program

*By Jim Redden
July 31, 2018*

Plus, Freeman Tank development decision appealed and Wheeler increases media access at City Hall.

The City Council voted to require all landlords in Portland to register their rental properties with the city on Wednesday.

The council approved the Residential Renter Registration Program introduced by Mayor Ted Wheeler on a 4-0 vote with Commissioner Nick Fish absent. According to Wheeler, the information collected through the new program will allow the council to make better decisions regarding renter protections and similar issues in the future.

No landlords testified against the program. Most other major cities on the West Coast already have similar programs. Landlords will be expected to register their properties by April 15, 2019, but will not pay any costs or face penalties during the program's first year.

Freeman Tank development decision appealed

The Multnomah Neighborhood Association has voted to appeal the city's decision to allow Renaissance Homes to build three homes on property that includes an unused water tank near Southwest 42nd Avenue and Freeman Street.

The association voted July 24 that the residential lots are not perfectly rectangular, as required by development rules. The association also wants the developer to pay the city-required Local Transportation Infrastructure Charge on the property instead of the future obligation allowed in the Bureau of Development Service's decision.

The project has been controversial since 2013, when the Portland Water Bureau sold the property with little public notice. A hearing on the appeal must be scheduled within a month.

Wheeler increases media access at City Hall

Mayor Ted Wheeler announced Tuesday that he is opening an office in City Hall for "credentialed media" and will begin holding regular news conferences on the last Friday of every month.

The mayor's office says the moves are "initial steps" to increase transparency of city government.

Wheeler also said that he plans to spend more time engaging with the public outside of City Hall during a recent meeting with Portland Tribune editors and reporters.

Worker Shortage Delays Building Projects

*By Jim Redden
July 31, 2018*

Public, private construction employees can't keep up with demand of unprecedented building boom.

Local builders and their government regulators are so busy these days, they are unable to keep up with all the demands on them.

"It's a problem on both sides, and I'm afraid it's going to get worse before it gets better," says Justin Wood, first vice president of Fish Construction NW, a local homebuilder.

The Bureau of Development Services is on track to issue a record level of permits this year. But as construction activity has accelerated in recent years, BDS has been hampered by a shortage of employees. Despite having more employees than ever, dozens of critical positions are currently vacant, including permit processors, plan reviewers, and residential and commercial building inspectors. The same is true in other construction-related city bureaus that must also review and approve permit applications, including the Portland Bureau of Transportation and the Portland Water Bureau.

In fact, a majority of the city's permit review teams did not meet their self-imposed goals of holding their first meetings on all projects with developers in June, the most recent month for which such statistics are available. Goals were not completely met in 59 of the 102 categories documented in the report. The number of reviews where the deadlines were missed ranged from just one to 118.

"The bureau has been challenged to meet its service level goals while striving to provide the best customer service," reads a recent BDS overview report.

City leaders have long admitted that BDS is frequently slow in issuing and tracking permits. The city council has funded a Portland Online Permitting System that is currently being designed and implemented in hopes of increasing efficiency. More recently, Mayor Ted Wheeler told the Portland Tribune editorial board on July 13 that he is considering taking over BDS and a number of other construction-related bureaus to make them work more closely together.

Interviews with builders, bureau officials and others in the construction industry reveal such steps are unlikely to solve all of the problems, however. Many of the delays are caused by a severe lack of qualified workers. And, as Wood admits, similar problems also plague the private sector. Construction firms like his are having trouble hiring enough workers for their projects. So are the architectural and engineering firms they frequently hire to file and follow up on the permit applications.

As a result, Wood says, when a permit application needed to be revised in the past, his architects and engineers would only two to four days to comply.

"Now it's two to four weeks, and that causes other delays in the process," Wood says.

City, builders need more help

According to Wood and others, building companies and construction-related city agencies lost employees during the Great Recession, which officially started in late 2007 and ended in mid-2009, even though the effects dragged on for much longer. Because construction practically came to a halt during and after the height of the downturn, the lack of qualified workers wasn't very noticeable at first.

But Wood says the workers didn't come back as the economy recovered, and relatively few new ones have taken their place. Adding to the problem, many of the experienced workers who stayed are leaving the workforce as they reach retirement age.

"The last two or three years have been really bad, now that we're back to building at full capacity," Wood says.

The shortfall is continuing even though industry and government officials have repeatedly pointed out that many good-paying jobs are unfilled. Although community colleges and trade organizations have launched or expanded training programs, not many young people are taking advantage of them.

"You can offer all the courses you want, but you can't make people take them," says Wood, who notes that also means construction-related city bureaus are even having trouble hiring new inspectors to sign off on the numerous steps that projects must complete.

The issue surfaced at the most recent meeting of the appointed Development Review Advisory Committee, which advises BDS on development-related issues. Wood chairs the committee, which includes developers, neighborhood representatives, construction-related bureau officials and others. Because the agenda was light, BDS Director Rebecca Esau suggested the group hold a roundtable discussion on issues of concern to them. It quickly turned to the shortage of qualified workers.

"Even commercial builders said they are having trouble filling positions," Wood says.

Strains show as construction booms

The problem is amplified by the pace of construction in Portland. The city is on track to issue 13,059 building permits this year — a 43 percent increase from the 9,103 issued in 2012. According to BDS, that is an unprecedented workload level, both for its employees and those of its partner agencies.

The projects have been happening in almost all parts of town. Just in terms of housing, in recent years, more than 500 new units have been approved in St. Johns, over 700 have been approved for the Con-Way project in Northwest Portland, and over 4,300 have been approved in the Lloyd District. Many new apartment buildings have also been built throughout Southeast, North and Northeast Portland, all of which required permit approvals.

As expected, the inspections required for all the permitting has increased along with them. According to BDS, a total of 183,709 inspections are expected to be conducted this year, a 37 percent increase over the 134,391 conducted in 2012.

A number of high-profile projects are taking a different kind of toll. Employees with city construction-related bureaus have also been assigned to help with the preliminary work in the early stages of projects of citywide interest. They range from the numerous Portland Public Schools renovation projects to the expansion of Providence Park and the pending redevelopment of the Broadway Corridor, which includes the U.S. Post Office distribution facility at the west end of the Broadway Bridge bought last year by Prosper Portland, formerly known as the Portland Development Commission.

Time spent helping to prepare for those projects is time that cannot be spent processing existing permits. Similar future projects include redevelopment of 18 acres owned by OMSI around its visitor center and the expansion of Adidas Campus in North Portland. Along with Portland Public Schools, public institutions are planning nearly \$2.3 billion worth of development projects over the next few years, including OHSU, TriMet and the Port of Portland.

There is no easy solution. Even the online permitting system that has already been funded is not expected to be fully operation for another year, at the soonest.

Homer Williams: Harbor of Hope 'Has to Happen'

By Velena Jones

July 31, 2018

Developer says homeless navigation shelter will open even though it is already \$500,000 over budget.

Too important not to succeed.

That's what Homer Williams, a well-known local developer, thinks of his Harbor of Hope project, an endeavor aimed at changing Portland's homeless problem, three years after the city declared it an emergency. But if it eventually succeeds — like Williams plans — that means the project has to overcome being \$500,000 over budget just over a month after it started.

The homeless navigation center project on a city-owned parcel along Southwest Naito Parkway was announced in February. Columbia Sportswear CEO Tim Boyle donated \$1.5 million for it.

Lisa Marandas, the Deputy Director of Harbor of Hope, told The Oregonian that the group has already spent in the \$600,000 range cleaning up a site in the Pearl, under the Broadway Bridge, for the 120-bed, 24/7 navigation center that will provide the homeless multiple services, including medical care and drug rehabilitation. The group originally estimated the cost to be \$100,000.

"There may be some cost issues, but there is no question that the project is going to go ahead," Williams said. "We are confident that it is moving ahead — full-steam ahead."

Williams said the extra funds will come from donors.

"This is so important that it has to happen," he said. "This problem is not going away; it's only going to accelerate. Whether it is a million in a half or two million or whatever it is, we need to take it and we need to engage it."

The city, which is providing the site and permitting for the transitional shelter, is hoping Williams' pilot program succeeds.

Berk Nelson, a senior adviser to Mayor Ted Wheeler, said Harbor of Hope, or something similar, is something they hope will be beneficial to Portland.

"This is a pilot project that we would like to spread throughout the city," Nelson said. "We know that the first time going through we need to make sure that is actually feasible."

"This is the first time that there has been a public-and-private partnership to try to help the humanitarian crisis that is houselessness, (which) is going on throughout the entire country. We are trying to set an example that works."

Willamette Week

Portland Police Refused to Respond When ICE Agents Called 911 During Protest, Letter Says

*By Katie Shepherd
July 30, 2018*

In cease and desist letter, federal agents say Portland mayor violated the the U.S. Constitution by barring police from responding to the feds' calls for help.

The union that represents U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers says on at least two occasions last month two federal ICE employees called the Portland police while being harassed by protesters—but cops did not show up, because the Portland mayor had ordered them not to intervene.

Members of the union, called the National ICE Council, sent Mayor Ted Wheeler a cease and desist letter today demanding he require Portland police to assist federal agents if called upon.

The letter, filed this morning by the union on behalf of employees working in Portland's ICE office, says that Wheeler's decision to order Portland police not to assist federal agents was a violation of the U.S. Constitution. Specifically, it cites the 14th Amendment, which says the government cannot deny any person equal protection under the law.

"Your current policy forbidding Portland law enforcement agencies from assisting employees of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency who request law enforcement assistance while at or away from work is a violation of the United States Constitution's Equal Protection Clause," the letter says.

ICE is a scorned agency in Portland, especially in the wake of a White House policy of separating immigrant families at the U.S. border. A protest camp blockaded and harried the Portland ICE office for more than a month. The camp was abandoned and swept by police on July 25.

But the letter places a new legal demand on Wheeler. It says that if he does not allow Portland police to assist federal immigration agents from here on out, the ICE union will take him to court.

"We understand that you have a difference of opinion with the current President of the United States, and some of his policies, but we fail to see why targeting the employees of ICE and leaving them vulnerable to violence, harassment and even death furthers a legitimate government interest," their lawyer, Sean Riddell, says in the letter. "Your policy has created a zone of terror and lawlessness."

The police bureau deferred any comment on the dispute to the mayor's office. The mayor's spokeswoman, Sophia June, says legal counsel is reviewing the letter.

The people seeking relief in the letter are a local immigration agent and a representative from the federal agency's national office speaking on behalf of the union.

A local ICE officer, who spoke to WW only on the condition of anonymity, says two agency employees called Portland police on June 19 when they were blocked from leaving the building in their vehicles. One of those employees told Portland police that protesters followed his truck to pick up his daughter from summer camp and harassed him in the parking lot.

He also says protesters showed up at his Portland apartment building a few hours later. Again, he called police, but says no officer responded.

"This area became like a wild west," the local immigration officer tells WW.

Chris Crane, president of the national union, says the situation at the ICE building in Portland spiraled out of control because police would not assist federal agents.

"Every person in law enforcement knows there are few things as dangerous or as unpredictable than an angry mob," Craine says. "No one could have responded quickly enough to protect our employees who were trapped inside this building. All of this because the Mayor of Portland has a beef with the president of the United States."

Wheeler opposes President Donald Trump's immigration policies, which he called "un-American" shortly after the Occupy ICE camp sprang up outside of the federal building.

Trump administration officials have threatened in speeches and interviews to criminally prosecute mayors like Wheeler, who support local sanctuary laws and policies that sometimes shield undocumented immigrants from deportation.

Protesters surrounded the ICE building beginning on June 17, after news reports about the federal family separation policy. The protesters briefly shut down the ICE building by blocking the entrances and exits, harassing employees as they arrived and attempted to leave. The occupation inspired similar protests nationwide.

Most of the camp remained peaceful. It broke down last week, after Wheeler sent a notice to protesters telling them he planned to sweep the camp because it was unsafe and he feared violence from far-right activists.

In their cease and desist letter, the ICE agents say that Portland police put federal employees in danger.

"We ask that you end your policy of not responding to calls for police services from ICE employees immediately," the ICE union pleads in the letter to the mayor. "We would like to avoid federal litigation, but we are prepared to protect our membership and their families."

OPB

Attorney: Portland Police Ignored Help Requests From Employees At ICE Building

By Amelia Templeton

July 30, 2018

The National Immigration and Customs Enforcement Council, the union that represents federal immigration workers, has sent Portland's mayor a cease and desist letter.

The dispute started with Mayor Ted Wheeler instructing Portland Police not to intervene in a protest that lasted for more than a month and shut down the Immigration and Customs Enforcement office in Portland for two weeks.

"Our membership has been subjected to threats of physical violence and harassment since you announced your policy," lawyer Sean Riddell wrote on behalf of the union. Willamette Week first reported the letter.

Riddell said federal workers asked the city for help dealing with protesters on at least five occasions and were denied assistance.

Those requests included at least one 911 call, two calls from the Federal Protective Service to the Portland Police Bureau and two emails to the Portland Police Bureau requesting assistance.

In the cease and desist letter, Riddell said that Wheeler's policy "created a class of people based upon their source of income," and that by not dispatching police to help, the city violated the ICE employees' constitutional right to equal protection, guaranteed by the 14th Amendment.

The workers are seeking a face-to-face meeting with Wheeler and an end to any policy that bars police from assisting ICE employees.

"We learned a long time ago that it was unacceptable to spit on veterans because you disagree with the war they fought on. This is equally as unacceptable," Riddell said.

The mayor's office did not immediately respond to a question regarding whether any policy limiting assistance to the ICE facility is still in place.

In a series of tweets in which he explained his initial decision, Wheeler called the protesters outside the facility peaceful, expressed his opposition to President Trump's family separation policy and noted that ICE officials had discussed arresting the leaders of sanctuary cities such as Portland.

"If they are looking for a bailout from this mayor, they are looking in the wrong place," Wheeler wrote.

Last week, as the number of protesters dwindled, Wheeler changed his approach. He asked protesters to end their occupation of an alley adjacent to the site and sent Portland officers to notify protesters they were trespassing and faced arrest if they did not leave.