

The Oregonian

Portland Police Chief Says Federal Cops Were Told They'd Get Help at ICE Protest If They Were in Danger

*By Everton Bailey
August 1, 2018*

Portland Police Chief Danielle Outlaw announced Wednesday that the bureau told the Federal Protective Service it would respond to their officers' emergency calls if their safety was at risk during a 38-day-long protest outside Portland's Immigration and Customs Enforcement Building.

The statement comes two days after the union representing ICE employees sent a letter to Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler claiming he banned local police from responding to 911 calls from federal officers during the Occupy ICE demonstrations. The union said it left employees vulnerable to threats of violence and harassment.

In a response Tuesday, Wheeler said he ordered no such policy. Outlaw said police officers responded to 41 calls for service during the encampment at the ICE building in Southwest Portland, which began June 17 and ended July 25. Portland police made no arrests, and there were no significant injuries to anyone around the camp, she said.

The demonstration was to protest the Trump administration's policy of separating migrant children from their parents at the U.S.-Mexico border. The encampment caused the ICE building to be closed for eight days because of security concerns.

Editorial: The Problem With Treating Portland Police As Mayor's Personal Army

*The Oregonian Editorial Board
July 31, 2018*

When protesters first gathered at the Immigration and Customs Enforcement office six weeks ago, Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler rushed to take a stand. Channeling the disgust that many felt about President Trump's inhumane policy of separating families entering the country illegally, Wheeler announced in a flurry of tweets that he did not want Portland Police to get involved in the conflict between protesters and ICE, a "federal agency that I believe is on the wrong track."

He wrapped up his tweets with a talk-tough soundbite, telling ICE that if they're "looking for a bailout from this mayor, they're looking in the wrong place."

But in his desire to show solidarity with protesters, who disbanded camp last week after 38 days, Wheeler appears to have mistaken "bailout" for basic responsibility.

News media organizations have reported multiple stories of harassment by some protesters directed at those who work at or live near the ICE building, including the shouting of racial slurs at an African-American federal employee and alleged threats against a woman working in her parents' food cart. The absence of police - who allegedly were called in multiple cases but did not respond - also paved the way for the right-wing Patriot Prayer group to later descend on the scene as self-appointed enforcers.

And as The Oregonian/OregonLive's Anna Sporre reported, a lawyer representing the union for ICE employees is now requesting a meeting with Wheeler to discuss how he will ensure that police respond to ICE employees' public safety requests in the future. The letter, sent by attorney Sean Riddell, warns of a possible lawsuit if the city continues to deny police services to ICE employees in violation of equal-protection guarantees in the Constitution.

As understandable as the mayor's position may have been for Ted Wheeler, the politician, it's untenable for Ted Wheeler, the police commissioner. While he is right to decry the brutal policy that triggered the protest, he also must commit to unequivocal professionalism in leading the police bureau - particularly considering the bureau has long been plagued by accusations of unprofessional conduct. Unfortunately, his stance only cements the belief that police can and do base their enforcement activity on biases and political position.

It's not a good look for Wheeler, who should recall that he's commissioner of police, not commander of his own personal army. And it's reminiscent of the very behavior that Wheeler is condemning. As Riddell told The Oregonian/OregonLive Editorial Board, "there's only one other politician who creates policy via tweet and uses his executive powers to inflict harm on his political enemies."

Tuesday afternoon, Wheeler responded, criticizing Riddell's letter as inflammatory. He wrote that police told federal officials they would respond in cases of "immediate life safety concerns."

In other words, don't expect any assistance unless all hell is breaking loose. That's an indefensible stand for someone responsible for building trust in public safety, not giving people reasons to doubt going to the police.

Wheeler must initiate a course correction, not just for the credibility of the police bureau but for his own as an elected official who understands his obligation to all Portlanders. Meeting with Riddell and the ICE union to resolve concerns would be a start. But Wheeler should also commit to investigating allegations that police failed to respond to 911 calls from employees facing harassment by protesters, as Willamette Week reported, as well as other news reports that the food cart owners similarly sought police assistance but received only a phone call.

And finally, Wheeler should recognize and communicate that this isn't an argument over Trump's separation policy, but rather about providing basic services to members of the public fearful for their safety. In no way does that compromise Portland's status as a "sanctuary city" in which the city refrains from helping federal agencies find or deport undocumented immigrants whose only offense is entering the country illegally.

Without question, Wheeler and Chief Danielle Outlaw should show discretion in how to deploy police resources. But that should be based on factors such as urgency or severity of illegal activity - not on whether the mayor agrees with the policies of someone's employer, no matter how egregious.

We're seeing on a national scale what happens when those in power decide to stray from ideals of fairness and base policies on anger and emotion instead. Portland and Mayor Wheeler should not fall in that same trap.

Southeast Portland Tenants Mount Rent Strike

*By Elliot Njus
August 1, 2018*

Tenants at a Southeast Portland apartment complex are mounting a rent strike after they say their landlord raised rents while failing to address maintenance concerns.

Twenty-five residents of Holgate Manor, an 81-unit complex near Southeast 36th Place and Holgate Boulevard, say they won't pay rent until a series of code violations are addressed. The residents have complained of pest infestations, mold, leaks and other damage that's gone unrepaired, and a city inspector determined parts of the complex were in violation of city code.

Participating tenants, backed by the tenants rights organization Portland Tenants United, announced the rent strike outside Portland City Hall on Wednesday morning.

"We don't want to cost them monetarily," said Holgate Manor resident Sara Brassfield. "We want them to understand the cost of renting us homes that aren't 100 percent habitable, especially when they're giving us rent increases."

State Rep. Rob Nosse, a Democrat who represents the residents' district, spoke Wednesday morning in support of the strike.

"These tenants are engaging in a righteous struggle and fight," he said, adding that the owner of the complex should allow them to stay.

Willamette Week wrote about the uncertainty at the apartment community in March. The newspaper also first reported the planned rent strike on Tuesday.

Attorneys caution against withholding rent because it can backfire if tenants don't follow steps outlined in state law. It also "almost guarantees" the landlord will attempt to evict the tenant, according to the Oregon State Bar.

The residents said they'll pay into an escrow account during the strike. They hope the strike will bring their property manager to the negotiating table, but they could also end up facing an eviction in court, where they can plead their case before a judge.

In that event, the city code violations and money placed in escrow should protect them from eviction, said Margot Black, an organizer for Portland Tenants United.

The striking residents said they've have been at odds with the building's owner, Fred Kleinbub of La Jolla, California, since early this year. Shortly after he bought the complex for \$12 million in January, property managers announced plans for renovations.

Through Princeton Property Management of Portland, Kleinbub in March offered to pay residents up to \$5,500 to vacate ahead of renovation work. The company said residents could return once the work is complete at discounted rates, though the discount would last only for one year.

Residents who didn't take the payment, however, said their rents were increased 9.9 percent this year -- just under the threshold beyond which landlords must compensate tenants for relocation costs under city code.

The apartment complex, which had offered uncommonly low rates for the neighborhood, attracted a diverse community, some of whom are immigrants who don't speak English.

"Immigrants and refugees coming to our community need to be able to stay and not be pushed out," Black said.

A public relations firm that had represented Kleinbub earlier said it was no longer in touch with him and declined to provide contact information. He could not be directly reached; Princeton Property Management's phone went unanswered Wednesday morning.

Willamette Week

Portland Police Chief Says She Told Her Officers to Respond to ICE's 911 Calls If They Were Serious

*By Aaron Mesh
August 1, 2018*

The strong implication from Outlaw's statement: Police decided ICE's calls weren't worth taking seriously.

Portland Police Chief Danielle Outlaw responded tonight to allegations that her officers refused to respond to 911 calls from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents trapped by a protest blockade.

Outlaw says she told her officers "to respond to all 911 calls around the Occupy ICE protest." But she says that the Police Bureau kept its usual priorities for responding to calls—and deemed "life and safety" calls more urgent.

The strong implication from Outlaw's statement: Police decided ICE's calls weren't worth taking seriously.

Outlaw's statement is the latest response showing city officials grappling with the incendiary allegation that police didn't aid ICE agents in a city where the federal agency is unpopular.

WW first reported Monday that the union representing ICE agents sent a cease-and-desist letter to Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler, demanding that he end a policy of not responding to calls for help from ICE agents. Wheeler replied that no such policy exists.

WW has since examined notes taken by an ICE contractor during a call to police, reported the account of an ICE employee who called the cops, and obtained an email from a Portland police commander to Federal Protective Services.

The records so far show a pattern: ICE employees and contractors called for assistance when they couldn't leave their building or get their trucks, and police told them that they should call back if somebody was about to get hurt.

The same week most of the calls occurred, protesters of federal immigration policy had surrounded the ICE building in Southwest Portland and the mayor told federal immigration agents not to count on city police for help.

Here's the full text of Outlaw's statement tonight:

The Portland Police Bureau is, and will always be, committed to providing the highest level of public safety response to all community members.

Members of the PPB Operations Branch were directed by me to respond to all 911 calls around the Occupy ICE protest. Sergeants were directed to be the primary responder for an initial

assessment of these calls (when feasible) to identify resources needed, given the geographic complexities of the location and the challenge of getting additional officers to the scene in a timely manner. Some responses were handled by phone or off-site and away from the protest.

Life and safety calls were of the utmost priority during this protest, as they were (and continue to be) anywhere else in the city. We also informed the Federal Protective Service that we would respond to their emergency calls for service if their safety was at risk.

During the 6-week protest, PPB responded to 41 calls for service and officers self-dispatched themselves to 18 calls. There were 16 police reports written regarding the Occupy ICE Camp and no arrests were made. There were no significant injuries to anyone around this camp. The cleanup was completed in a peaceful and effective manner. We will continue to review relative reports and calls for service to identify any actions that did not meet the expectations outlined.

Officers and their supervisors use discretion every day to ensure that we use our resources in the most effective and appropriate manner, and they did so during this protest. I am proud of the professional response to calls for service during an already tense situation, as well as the thoughtfulness that went into using our resources given our current staffing levels, while also engaging with the many property owners and businesses involved.

Portland Braces for Street Clash as Proud Boys and Antifascists Rally Their Troops for Waterfront Protests

*By Aaron Mesh and Katie Shepherd
August 1, 2018*

“We’ve always had guns at the rally. Everyone should be carrying around guns at all times.”

Washington U.S. Senate candidate Joey Gibson is hosting a right-wing rally on the Portland waterfront Aug. 4, and Gibson has suggested his supporters in the group Patriot Prayer will bring guns.

"We've always had guns at the rally," Gibson said in a video on Facebook. "Everyone should be carrying around guns at all times."

Berk Nelson, a staffer for Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler, tells WW the city cannot disregard the state's open carry law. "Unless he's on federal property, that's the only way we can actually take weapons away from anybody," Nelson says. "There's nothing police can do to take weapons away from lawful gun owners."

The last Patriot Prayer rally in downtown Portland led to a violent riot that sent five people to the hospital.

Perversely, the prospect of violence is likely to increase turnout.

A large coalition of antifascist protest groups, organizing under the name POPMOB, short for "popular mobilization," plan to confront Gibson and his far-right allies, a men's fraternity called the Proud Boys.

An ICE Employee Says Portland Police Refused To Help Him Recover His Truck From Protesters—So He Lied To Get It Back

By Katie Shepherd

August 1, 2018

"A lie is what got my truck back to me," he says.

A Portland employee of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement says he tricked local protesters into letting him get his truck off federal property, after Portland police refused to assist him.

Nick Carefelle is the first ICE employee to go on the record with allegations that Portland cops, acting under the directive of Mayor Ted Wheeler, refused to assist federal immigration agents while they were surrounded by a protest blockade.

"I felt like I was being singled out because of the situation," he tells WW, "and I wasn't being offered the same protections as somebody else that might have been calling. It definitely was a gut punch."

A cease and desist letter sent July 30 asks Wheeler to end the police bureau's policy of not responding to calls from ICE employees. Wheeler says no such policy exists.

On June 19, the third day of the protest, federal police escorted ICE employees out of their South Waterfront building. Carefelle had to leave his Toyota truck behind and call an Uber to get home.

He came back in the evening, after hours and off-duty, with a group of friends to retrieve his personal vehicle.

Already, ICE employees had called Portland police multiple times for assistance as they tried to leave the building. Mayor Ted Wheeler tweeted that he did not want police to be "to be engaged or sucked into a conflict."

On that June evening, Carefelle says he walked through the Occupy ICE camp that had shut down and blocked the entrances and exits around the federal building on Southwest Macadam Avenue. As he passed his truck, Carefelle snuck a peak to see if protesters had damaged it or slashed the tires. They hadn't touched it.

Then he walked down the street with his buddies and tried to formulate a plan. The exits were blocked. Already, protesters were eyeing the men suspiciously and sending people to walk drive by as they plotted, taking photos and videos.

Carefelle says he and another man both called the Portland police non-emergency line to ask for assistance recovering the truck from the lot. They pleaded with officers to come out and help them get the vehicle "in a safe and nonviolent way." He says both men were told that officers could not help them.

"We're here, we're not going to leave this vehicle to the mercy of the protesters," Carefelle says the men told police.

Minutes later, Carefelle says a group of protesters walked up to ask what the men were doing.

"I made up a story," he says. "I told them that we were there for a friend who was a Tesla employee whose vehicle was trapped in the back field and that our friend was real spooked and scared by all the stuff going on."

Carefelle remembers the protesters being sympathetic to the story.

"They had no problem with Tesla employees," he says. Two women walked him to his Toyota and showed him where to drive off the property as other protesters moved the barricades out of his way.

"A lie is what got my truck back to me," he says. "I drove past the barricades and off down the road."

Skip Scooters Are Coming Tomorrow and the Company Is Handing Out Free Helmets Until Saturday

*By Elise Herron
August 1, 2018*

The scoots start coming and they don't stop coming.

The scooters just keep coming.

Skip announced today that it will be dropping off 200 scooters in Portland starting tomorrow. In addition to Bird and Lime's existing fleets, that will put the number of scooters on Portland streets at 600.

The company will also be handing out 200 free helmets in various places around town until Saturday.

Tomorrow, Portlanders can pick up helmets at First Thursday in the Pearl from 5pm to 10 pm. On Friday morning they'll be available at various locations downtown. And on Saturday, Skip will be at Providence Park before the Timbers game from 6 pm to 10 pm.

And if the idea of wearing a helmet while scooting makes you chortle, consider Kelley Mitchum—a Dallas, Texas resident whose first Lime scoot ended after one block, when she "crashed head first on trolley tracks" and ended up in the ER with two black eyes and stitches in her forehead.

Happy scooting!

Portlanders Took 5,000 E-Scooter Rides Over the Weekend

*By Elise Herron
August 1, 2018*

That's a lot of scooting.

Last Friday, Portland streets gained 400 e-scooters. And the city responded with enthusiasm.

Over the weekend, Portland Bureau of Transportation spokesperson Dylan Rivera says, Portlanders took the zippy new transport on a total of 5,000 rides.

With a surcharge of a quarter per ride—as is outlined in the permits awarded to scooter companies Bird, Skip and Lime—City Hall has made \$1,250 so far.

If that ridership trend continues, the city stands to potentially collect upwards of \$75,000 from the three companies during the four-month pilot program.

Alternative transit advocates are lauding the new scooters, and arguing critiques of rider behavior are ill-placed.

And today, a third startup announced its Portland launch: Skip says it will place another 200 e-scooters on the streets tomorrow.

The Portland Mercury

Portland Police Chief Outlaw Responds to ICE Union's Allegations

*By Alex Zielinski
August 1, 2018*

The fallout from Portland police officers' actions—or inaction—during the 6-week Occupy ICE protest outside Southwest Portland's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) facility has sparked a response from Portland Police Chief Danielle Outlaw.

"Officers and their supervisors use discretion every day to ensure that we use our resources in the most effective and appropriate manner, and they did so during this protest," said Outlaw in a press release sent this evening.

For those who haven't been following, Outlaw's responding to a letter sent to the city by a lawyer representing ICE's union accusing Mayor Ted Wheeler for imposing a policy that banned city police officers from responding to any 911 calls coming from federal immigration officers or federal protective service officers at the ICE facility. Wheeler has already rebuffed these allegations in a letter sent yesterday.

Outlaw says that she directed all PPB officers to "respond to all 911 calls around the Occupy ICE protest" and that she "informed the Federal Protective Service that we would respond to their emergency calls for service if their safety was at risk."

PPB officers responded to a total of 41 calls for service during the 6-week Occupy ICE campout, according to Outlaw.

"We will continue to review relative reports and calls for service to identify any actions that did not meet the expectations outlined," says Outlaw. "I am proud of the professional response to calls for service during an already tense situation, as well as the thoughtfulness that went into using our resources given our current staffing levels."

Reddit's Pro-Trump Contingent Wants To Put Mayor Wheeler in Jail

*By Kelly Kenoyer
August 1, 2018*

Mayor Ted Wheeler has been busy fending off Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials (and non-officials) this week. First, the federal agency's union sent him a cease and

desist letter, claiming he had banned Portland police from responding to calls for service from ICE agents working during the recent Occupy ICE protest.

Then Wheeler's office responded, calling the accusations "inaccurate and inflammatory." The Oregonian's bizarrely conservative editorial board called him out for using the police department as his "own personal army."

The exchange has garnered national attention, with Fox News jumping to ICE's defense.

And now: Trumpies from across the country are demanding that Wheeler be put in jail. Internet Trumpies, at least.

It began when someone shared an article from the conservative blog the Daily Caller on Reddit. Specifically, the Reddit user posted a story about the back-and-forth between Wheeler and ICE on the subreddit /r/The_Donald, a cesspool of islamophobia, mindless nationalism, and white supremacy masquerading as a fan page for the president. "PUT HIM IN JAIL!" the post declares. More than 3,000 users voted in support of this demand.

Trump and his backers, of course, are known for their loathing of "sanctuary cities" like Portland that discourage city employees from upholding federal immigration laws or assisting federal immigration officers. Trump's administration even once considered arresting any mayor upholding sanctuary city rules.

One Reddit commenter who claims to be a Portland police officer wrote "That fucker needs the US Marshalls [sic] to come visit him and have his ass hauled off."

Other commenters showed incredible misunderstandings about the situation here in town, asking each other if their supreme leader could call Federal police to defend ICE—even though Federal police came to defend ICE here weeks ago.

The vitriol has made Wheeler come across as a radical progressive on the national stage—clashing with the image local lefties have of him. Often criticized for not being far enough left, especially when he's asking for more police officers or keeping Portland in the controversial Joint Terrorism Task Force, he might catch a break from leftists after being lambasted by right-wingers and Faux News.

A New Zoning Change Has Been Delayed—But Housing Advocates May Love It

*By Kelly Kenoyer
August 1, 2018*

Portland just keeps getting more crowded, with ballooning rents pushing low-income people to the periphery or out of the city entirely. And unless the city makes substantial changes, the situation is likely to get worse, with more than 100,000 people expected to move to Portland by 2035. Zoning laws, which favor single-family dwellings over density, are a big reason why we're in our current state. For years, housing advocates have been pushing for a project that would legalize duplexes, triplexes, and four-plexes in single-family zones, and felt progress was being made. However, they were shocked a few weeks ago when Mayor Ted Wheeler candidly told the Portland Tribune that the city council's vote on the project would be delayed by several months. "I'm in no rush," he said.

The delayed Residential Infill Project (with the unfortunate acronym RIP) is meant to incrementally increase density in Portland's most desirable neighborhoods—those that are close to major centers or near public transit. Housing advocates believe it's an important step to increasing population density in low-density neighborhoods. Every moment without RIP, they say, is a wasted opportunity during which more old homes will be demolished and replaced with pricey McMansions—a one-to-one replacement that only encourages gentrification without increasing the city's housing stock.

RIP incentivizes building more housing units instead of bigger ones, while capping the size of these new units to 2,500 square feet for a single-family home—much less than the currently allowed size of 6,750 square feet. It also legalizes and encourages multi-unit housing, and it's flexible: Developments can be four-plexes, a duplex with a backyard Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU), or a house renovated to become several apartments.

This potential for increased density is why advocates were so angry to hear that Wheeler delayed a city council vote on RIP. Some even created memes about Wheeler's "I'm in no rush" comment, furious that his views on the city's housing crisis appeared so lackadaisical. But as it turned out, Wheeler wasn't dragging his feet—instead, the policy was slowed down by an extended period of review by the Planning and Sustainability Commission (PSC), which delayed the city council vote.

"The way [information was released] made a lot of people think it was the mayor slowing this down—but nope, it's the process itself," says Joe Zehnder, a city planner working on RIP. He says PSC is digging deep into the project—which is why they're still reviewing it long after PSC was scheduled to vote on the proposal in June. The PSC is now expected to finish with RIP sometime in September, at which point city staff will need to write the policy into code before it can go before council. And while the process may be taking much longer than expected, city officials believe the changes being made by PSC should have housing advocates cheering.

A few of the major changes from PSC include expanding RIP to areas east of 82nd, legalizing four-plexes on all lots, and implementing a tiered system of extra square footage that will be given to developers who build more units: 2,500 for single units, 3,000 for two units, and 3,500 for three or four units on a 5,000 square foot lot. Another addition is a significant square foot bonus for lots with at least one affordable unit—currently that's the only RIP policy related to affordability.

These ideas didn't come out of thin air—housing advocacy groups lobbied for the tiered system. "There were a couple of times where people specifically mentioned [housing advocacy group] Portland for Everyone in comments they made during discussions," says Andrés Oswill, a member of PSC. Portland for Everyone shared its RIP goals—like expanding the project to cover nearly the entire city—with supporters, and many of those concepts became talking points for the PSC, Oswill says. "It's easier to take input that is very specific," he adds.

However, there are those who oppose the project, especially neighborhood associations like those in Laurelhurst and Eastmoreland, which argue that RIP could ruin their neighborhood's "character" and reduce street parking—even though, according to early estimates, the project may only end up creating 1,713 new housing units within the next 20 years. (These estimates don't include four-plexes or extra development space for additional units—provisions only recently added to the plan—so it remains unclear whether those changes will further tempt developers to pursue RIP projects.)

Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, a staunch RIP supporter, doesn't believe RIP will lead to overcrowded Portland neighborhoods.

“The more historic neighborhoods are actually less dense than ever, because those big old homes previously housed larger families and multi-generational households,” she says. “So this idea that everyone is going to be rubbing elbows in Eastmoreland if we let them build more ADUs and duplexes is dubious.”

Others argue that the project could hurt low-income renters.

“RIP just tries to incentivize, but refuses to mandate affordable housing,” says Meg Hanson, a member of the Portland Coalition for Historic Resources. “There is no housing crisis, there is only an affordable housing crisis,” she says, pointing to vacancies in new luxury apartment developments. Hanson argues that RIP will incentivize the demolition of small, older rental homes because they’re the “low-hanging fruit for development.” Replacing inexpensive housing with expensive housing—even if there are more units per lot—just displaces poor renters, she says. She’d rather keep all the older rental homes in Portland because they’re naturally more affordable.

Portland State University land-use planning professor Marisa Zapata agrees that RIP, as currently written, won’t necessarily assist low-income renters.

“You’re not helping someone under median family income,” she says.

That said, Zapata still believes RIP is worth pursuing, because it could create more housing choices and slow the pace of rent increases in the overall market. While she agrees the project could potentially displace a few individuals, she doubts the problem will be systemic. Besides, Zapata says, Portland’s options are limited, especially since so much of the land is zoned for single-family housing.

She says the solution to displacement is for the city to focus on better renter protections, instead of saving specific rentals.

“I think all neighborhoods should be in [RIP], but renter protections should also be in the policy, like right to return,” she says, referring to a policy that would give renters the chance to rent a unit on the same lot for the same price after the property is redeveloped. An even better result, she says, would be the city “buying you one of the triplexes” if you’re displaced.

She adds that Portland needs to be braver about pursuing projects that will help renters and low-income homeowners stay in place.

“Build the affordable unit. And if the developer doesn’t want to do it, they pay a fee so the city can do it,” she says.

While the PSC isn’t including specific renter protections, they could come into play once RIP goes before city council. Eudaly wants to create a kind of city-backed loan to help low-income homeowners build ADUs—the little apartments people put in their backyards, garages, and attics. “That could deliver the benefits of RIP significantly further down the income spectrum,” she says, noting that the program could be paired with assisting homeowners with outstanding code violations. As for renters, “[I am] all ears as far as tenant protections and anti-displacement measures go,” she says.

Whatever the solution, advocates say that increasing density is the best option for Portland’s future, unless we want to become little more than a tourist destination or “a playground for the rich,” as Mayor Wheeler says.

“Does [Portland] want to consume more farmland and protected forestland?” Zapata asks. “If you don’t want to do that, you have to fill in and grow up.”

Tenants Withhold Rent Until New Landlord Improves Living Conditions

*By Alex Zielinski
August 1, 2018*

On Monday, at least 21 residents of a Southeast Portland apartment complex pledged to withhold rent until their new landlord repaired their moldy, rodent-infested homes.

Now, Portland housing advocates and at least one state legislator have voiced their support of the Holgate Manor apartments rent strike, and are using the moment to demand local and state-level policy changes to improve tenant protections.

"Stop making excuses, stop dragging your heels," said Margot Black, spokesperson for Portland Tenants United (PTU), at a Wednesday press conference. "We demand you offer qualified support to tenants, like those at Holgate Manor, until their landlord starts treating them like a community, not a commodity."

Holgate Manor residents aren't just protesting their poor living conditions. In April, Holgate residents learned that their apartment complex had been sold to a landlord named Fred Kleinbub, and new renovations would require all tenants relocate. Those who wanted to return would have to reapply through their new property management company, Princeton Property Management, and prove that they could pay hundreds more in rent. Holgate Manor residents—many of which have lived there for decades—were given \$5,200 to move. Some renters took Princeton up on the offer. But 47 of the 82 apartments in the complex remain occupied, and many say the relocation money isn't enough to help them find a new home. Some elderly tenants fear a stressful move—especially one that tears them away from a community of support—could kill them.

In an April 2 press conference, Holgate Manor tenants asked Kleinbub for a moratorium on rent increases and the removal of "vermin, pests and mold." But, according to tenant Sara Brassfield, neither of those requests have been fulfilled. A city building inspection—which discovered several code violations—hasn't prompted Kleinbub to improve the apartments, and tenant rents have since increased several hundred dollars. Kleinbub has not responded to any of their requests. Meanwhile, construction on Holgate Manor has begun.

"How is this legal? It's certainly not humane," Brassfield said at the press conference. "We refuse to pay while mold is making us sick. We refuse to pay as construction noise and debris turn our community into a war zone. We refuse to pay while Princeton continues to treat myself and my neighbors as a lesser class human being. We refuse to be put to the curb like an old couch."

Brassfield has joined at least 20 other tenants in vowing to withhold rent this month. Instead of paying Princeton, tenants have dropped their rent checks into an escrow account managed by a lawyer, to be used if a court case results in renters having to pay August rent. While she hopes this issue can be resolved outside of court, Brassfield said the city and Kleinbub have given Holgate Manor residents few other options.

"There's nowhere to go but eviction court at this point," Brassfield said. "They've pushed us to the edge."

Housing advocates with PTU say these kind of issues could be avoided with an office of landlord-tenant affairs. Creating such an office was one of Mayor Ted Wheeler's campaign

promises. While Wheeler has tacked on a "Renter Services Office" to the Portland Housing Bureau, it remains unstaffed, and relies on outside nonprofits to help connect tenants to legal aid.

At the moment, Black said, it is "literally no one's job to make sure landlords follow the law and are held accountable when they don't."

Oregon Representative Rob Nosse joined PTU's press conference to support the tenant strike.

"I hope that the rent strike will force policymakers like myself to do the right thing and...pass laws so this stops happening to our community," Nosse said. "We have the money to purchase these apartments from the owner...I hope we'll figure out a way to do that."

Cameron Herrington with Living Cully suggested the city establish a policy allowing tenants an opportunity to purchase their rental property before it's put on the market. If a tenant can't afford to buy the property, Herrington said they could ask advocacy groups like PTU or Living Cully for financial aid. While the change wouldn't help Holgate Manor tenants, it could keep future renters from having to relocate at their landlord's whim.

"The next one of these buildings [like Holgate Manor] is right around the corner," Herrington said. "It's time we call on city council to take action on this front."

The Skanner

Immigration Agents' Union Slams Portland Mayor Over Protest

August 1, 2018

The union representing employees of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement urged the mayor of Portland, Oregon, to end his ban on city police helping ICE workers who have faced hostility from pro-immigrant activists.

Sean Riddell, the union's attorney, asked Mayor Ted Wheeler for a meeting about the hands-off policy and threatened legal action if things do not change.

"Your policy has created a zone of terror and lawlessness," Riddell said in a letter Monday.

It stems from a recent protest outside an ICE facility in Portland that was mostly peaceful. Activists opposed to President Donald Trump's policy of separating immigrant families at the U.S.-Mexico border set up camp in mid-June and stayed around the clock for nearly 40 days.

Wheeler, a Trump critic in a state that instituted the first statewide sanctuary protections for immigrants in the country illegally, said in a series of tweets at the start of the protest that ICE would not get help from city officers if the agency wants to evict protesters.

Riddell said he understands that the mayor disagrees with Trump's 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," the union attorney said.

The mayor's office told The Oregonian/OregonLive that Wheeler's legal counsel was reviewing the letter and had no further comment.

Wheeler's chief of staff, Michael Cox, did not immediately return a message from The Associated Press.

The mayor backtracked to a degree as the occupation stretched from days to weeks to more than a month. On July 23, he warned protesters to disband before they were removed by police. The occupation ended peacefully the following day.

The letter emailed to the mayor's chief of staff Monday said the ICE union would like to avoid federal litigation but is "prepared to protect our membership and their families."

It references the 14th Amendment, which guarantees citizens equal protection under the law.

Portland is no stranger to protests, especially following Trump's election, and police often move quickly to disperse clashes between rowdy and violent groups.

Videos of skirmishes between right-wing activists and self-described anti-fascists drew national attention last month. Police made four arrests June 3 in and around downtown parks, which have become gathering places for dissent in this liberal city already known for near-weekly protests.

Another gathering of right-wing activists and a counterprotest are scheduled for Saturday.

OPB

Portland Mayor Says Police Did Respond To 911 Calls Regarding ICE Protest

*By Amelia Templeton
August 1, 2018*

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler is disputing a claim that the city's police did not respond to requests federal workers made for help during a five week long protest outside an Immigration and Customs Enforcement office building.

The claims were made by Sean Riddell, an attorney for the union representing federal workers at the ICE facility.

In a cease-and-desist letter, Riddell alleged that the mayor's decision not to order Portland Police to remove protesters from the federal facility created a zone of lawlessness and constituted an unconstitutional policy of refusing to provide police protection to ICE workers on the basis of their employment.

In a letter, Wheeler called the union's allegations "inaccurate and inflammatory."^{[[[[[SEP]]]]} He said the city does not have a policy of ignoring calls for police service from ICE employees.

"Portland Police did respond to various calls for service placed by FPS and ICE employees when there were imminent life safety threats," Wheeler wrote.

Wheeler said that in conversations with city attorneys, Riddell failed to cite any specific examples of 911 calls placed by ICE workers that police didn't respond to.

During the protest, the Portland Police Bureau provided OPB with a log of calls it had received regarding the encampment.

That log indicates that Portland Police opened investigations into at least three incidents.

On June 21, police received a complaint that a woman in a motorized wheelchair had been assaulted by protesters.

On June 21, police received a complaint that protesters had thrown items at a vehicle that drove through the protests flying a confederate flag.

And on June 27, protesters reportedly threatened a person's daughter.

Wheeler requested that Riddell provide further information to support the union's assertions.