

The Oregonian

Portland Cracks Down on 'Zombie' House Owner Who Ignored Hundreds of Warnings

*By Gordon Friedman
August 11, 2018*

The city of Portland took steps this week to foreclose on four severely ramshackle homes that had been allowed to degrade for years. The move is intended in large part to relieve long-suffering neighbors from safety threats and eyesores.

Officials in the office of Auditor Mary Hull Caballero asked the City Council to foreclose on the homes because their owner, Norman Yee, failed for years to remedy code violations or pay tens of thousands of dollars in city liens, Marco Maciel, the city foreclosures manager, told the council.

The homes had "lengthy histories of health and safety violations, numerous police calls, negative effects on neighborhoods, and lack of responsiveness and corrective action," according to a city filing.

Axl Pine lives next door to one of Yee's properties, on Southeast 137th Avenue. Pine said the rundown house has for years attracted squatters, who he believes sold drugs because a "line of cars" made short visits to the house almost daily.

"I was literally calling the cops pretty much every night to deal with something different," said Pine, 28.

He said he has two children and at times felt he and his family were unsafe because of the people living in Yee's abandoned house.

A man who answered a phone number listed on business incorporation records filed by Yee said "beats me" when asked to explain why Yee's properties were foreclosed upon. The man then said "I have nothing to say" and hung up.

Maciel said Yee racked up more than \$67,000 in liens on the four properties. The city foreclosed on four other Yee properties earlier this year, Maciel said.

Several properties owned by Yee have in recent years been the subject of news media attention because they are in disastrous shape: abandoned, piled high with garbage, taken over by unkempt plants, and often home to squatters who frighten neighbors. Police had been called to the homes and the areas beside them dozens of times, a city filing shows.

At the property on Southeast 137th, squatters built a shed in the backyard where others also moved in, tampered with the water meter in an effort to turn on the flow and gave an inspector a forged lease agreement in an attempt to show they could live there, according to the city filing. Police were called to the property more than 150 times in seven years.

Maciel acknowledged that the city is slow to foreclose on derelict properties and that is intentional. The city's aim is to persuade property owners to pay their liens and fix their homes, Maciel said, not seize the properties as soon as the city is able.

Maciel said he tried for more than two years to persuade Yee to fix his homes before the City Council resorted to foreclosure. Hundreds of monthly statements were sent to addresses in Yee's name. Maciel even met Yee and his lawyers, he said, but Yee never righted his arrears.

The rundown state of the properties and Yee's unwillingness to do something about them "defies logic," Maciel said.

This week, a real estate agent put all four of the four homes on the market. One of them, on Northeast 22nd Avenue, is listed at \$340,000 and marketed as having "so much potential." Another, listed for \$310,000, is noted only as having "lovely location, quiet street."

Yee still owns at least a half dozen other homes in the city.

As for Pine, who lives next door to a house owned by Yee, he said it's "bullcrap" that the city can't move faster to rehabilitate blighted homes or auction them to someone who will.

Pine said there's at least been one positive change at the Yee property on 137th Avenue. A sign was staked in the front yard just this week, Pine said. It reads "for sale."

Secret Portland Memo Details Lapses in Arrest of Black Man

By Gordon Friedman

August 10, 2018

A Portland police officer who in 2015 forced to the ground and arrested a black man he mistook for a shooting suspect had not received racial bias training before the incident and omitted unflattering details about his conduct in his report of it, a confidential city memo shows.

The Portland City Council, apprised of the police department's failings in the incident, unanimously approved a \$25,000 settlement Wednesday with the man who was arrested, Anthony Allen Jr.

Portland police officers have for decades stopped, searched, arrested, shot at and killed black men at disproportionate rates and continue to do so, according to data published by the Police Bureau, city auditor reports and accounts from criminal justice reformers. Police officials have generally maintained that while there is room for improvement, outright racial profiling is extremely uncommon.

The liability incurred by police officer Colby Marrs' arrest of Allen was outlined in the confidential memo, prepared by a city attorney for the mayor, commissioners, police chief and other select high-ranking officials. The document, provided to The Oregonian/OregonLive by an employee at City Hall, encouraged the City Council to pay to settle a lawsuit brought by Allen.

The night of the arrest, Marrs was posted in Allen's Northeast Portland neighborhood as part of a police perimeter after a shooting. Officers were told the suspects were three young black men wearing hoodies.

Allen, then 21, was riding his bike home from work when stopped by officers at the perimeter, who told him to go straight home. Marrs subsequently spotted Allen, who was not wearing a hoodie, just a few houses from his home and told him to "f***ing stop." When Allen kept going, Marrs used force to handcuff and arrest him. He was jailed for most of the night.

Marrs never questioned Allen about the shooting, a decision that calls into question why Marrs insisted on stopping him to begin with, the memo states. Police officers are required to note in their reports if they use profanity on a suspect. But Marrs omitted that information in his write-up.

The city memo says Marrs said in a deposition that he had zero training on racial profiling by Portland police against black men. It said the city risked being found "negligent" at trial in failing to train officers to avoid racially-biased policing.

The Police Bureau has since 2009 had a strategy to stop racial profiling, pledging among other things to teach officers about race relations in policing. Dan Handelman of Portland Cop Watch, a police reform advocacy group, said high-rank officers have undergone anti-bias training but not all patrol officers have.

Police spokesman Sgt. Chris Burley said he could not explain on short notice why Marrs, who has worked for the department since 2012, had not been trained how not to profile people. Burley said the department has offered an equity class since 2016 and all officers attended a training this year that "discussed implicit bias." The department takes accusations of racial bias seriously, he said, and police rules direct officers not to discriminate.

The department will not say whether Marrs was disciplined, Burley said.

Daryl Turner, president of the city police union, said "lapses in training" have occurred depending on course availability and whether the curriculum "was agreeable" to each police chief. Larry O'Dea was chief at the time of Allen's arrest. Burley said the new chief, Danielle Outlaw, has been proactive in assuring police officers receive anti-bias training.

"There is no room for any kind of bias in the work that we do," Turner said.

Allen's attorney, Ashlee Albies, said his case is "a specific example, a zoom in on a data point" in a larger pattern of racial profiling of black men by Portland police officers.

"The data shows that there is this trend of stopping African American men in this city at a disproportionate rate to their white counterparts," Albies said.

The memo describes the city's take on how Portlanders perceive police in unusually frank language.

"This case presents a conflict between two contrasting points of view. The first is that young black men are the targets of racially biased policing, in danger of being hurt if not killed by excessive police force, and that police officers have an obligation to be polite at all times and respond to aggression and non-compliance with de-escalation techniques," the memo states.

It goes on: "The second point of view is that officers respond to suspects based on race-neutral factors related to crime, that profanity can be effective in gaining compliance when regular commands are not followed, that refusing to cooperate with law enforcement is suspicious, and that the inconvenience of being questioned regarding a crime that you were not involved with is reasonable, in light of the law enforcement mission of arresting dangerous criminals."

Mayor Ted Wheeler called the settlement appropriate in light of the facts. He noted that neither he nor Outlaw were in their current roles when the arrest occurred.

Only Commissioner Amanda Fritz addressed Allen's well-being. "I hope that we have learned from what happened in this incident. ... I hope Mr. Allen is doing fine," Fritz said.

Though Allen has agreed not to take the city to court over his claims of racial profiling, he has already prevailed once in court in a case related to his altercation with Marrs. After his arrest, prosecutors charged Allen with interfering with a police officer. A six-member jury acquitted him.

Brent Weisberg, a spokesman for Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill, said the decision to charge Allen "was appropriate and in line with office policy." Weisberg said Underhill "respects the jury's decision" to acquit.

Anti-ICE Protesters No Longer Camping at Portland City Hall

*By Jim Ryan
August 10, 2018*

Protesters calling for an end of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency are no longer gathered at Portland City Hall, having disbanded their camp outside the downtown hub.

A Portland police spokeswoman said a 24-hour notice was posted Thursday morning and that protesters — who set up a small camp outside City Hall on Sunday night — moved on their own. The decision to clear out the protesters was unrelated to an arrest of a man believed to be associated with the group, she said.

William B. Pierce was arrested Thursday on suspicion of hitting a man in the face with a PVC pipe, according to police and court records. The alleged incident came after a dispute "regarding sidewalk accessibility in front of Portland City Hall near the protest group," police said in a news release.

Pierce, 33, faces second-degree assault and unlawful use of a weapon allegations, records show. He's being held in the Multnomah County Detention Center on \$255,000 bail, according to records.

Protesters had previously occupied land surrounding the federal agency's headquarters in Southwest Portland for five weeks over June and July. That encampment was broken up by Portland police July 25.

Demonstrations in Portland and across the U.S. began amid nationwide outrage over President Donald Trump's "zero tolerance" immigration policy.

Work crews spent the morning cleaning spray paint from the columns and walls outside Portland City Hall.

As part of this strategy, the administration refers asylum seekers for criminal prosecution and houses them in facilities including prisons and separates children from their parents.

The Portland Tribune

PSU study: More Needed to Understand, Solve Homeless Crisis

*By Jim Redden
August 10, 2018*

Portland State University analysis finds no one knows the fully extent and cost of the homeless and affordable housing crisis.

Regional leaders working to reduce homelessness do not fully understand the depth of the problem or the full cost of addressing it, according to a new study released Friday by Oregon Harbor of Hope.

The Portland State University capstone study found that no one knows for sure how many people are homeless or on the verge of becoming homeless in metropolitan area. Nor does anyone know the full cost of serving the homeless, including helping them transition from the streets into permanent housing.

"We wanted a fresh look at the homeless problem, and the capstone team report offers some real insight. We realize that the problem is bigger than we thought. We don't have a handle on the true number of homeless, or just how much this is costing the city and its taxpayers," says Don Mazziotti, executive director of Oregon Harbor of Hope, a nonprofit organization founded by developer Homer Williams that is working to open a homeless navigation center in the Pearl District.

The Joint office of Homeless Services, which is funded by Portland and Multnomah County, disputes some of the findings. It released detailed spending on program, saying that it knows "exactly how much it costs to help the tens of thousands of people our partners serve every year."

"Our outcomes make clear that those investments are helping record numbers of people — nearly 30,000, up from roughly 20,000 three years prior — leave the streets for housing, stay housed if they're on the brink of homelessness, or find a safer place to sleep in our shelters," the statement said.

The 62-page study is titled "An Analysis of Homelessness & Affordable Housing, Multnomah County, 2018." It was conducted students in the PSU School of Business as one of the university's capstone graduation projects.

Among other things, the study found:

- The Portland area's affordable housing and homelessness crisis was decades in the making, and government or market forces alone cannot solve it.
- Multnomah County is short 29,000 units of housing affordable to households earning 50 percent or less of the area's median family income. That number is growing, as are the number of people who will need that housing in the future.
- The semi-annual Point-in-Time Housing and Homelessness surveys consistently undercount the number of homeless, leaving out those who are doubling up with family or friends or who were incarcerated or hospitalized on the night of the street count.
- The cost of homelessness is unknown when accounting for the full range of services. Other communities have estimated costs between \$10,000 and \$150,000 per person, per year.

- Public-private partnerships are best positioned to offer solutions to construction of affordable units, but more can be done to reduce hurdles.

"Understanding the extent and nature of these problems is important for aligning efforts and cultivating the resources needed to address these issues on a much larger scale," the study says.

The homeless services office says it knows the semi-annual Point-in-Time surveys are not an accurate measure of homelessness.

"The PIT is an important tool, but it's just one of the data sources we draw on to help people rebuild their lives. It's essentially just a snapshot. It doesn't tell us how many people enter or leave homelessness over the course of a year, or why people enter or leave homelessness," the statement says.

According to the PSU study, "bold action is required if we are to have a meaningful impact." That requires collaboration between government, developers, concerned citizens, non-profit service providers, and faith leaders to deliver innovative and effective solutions.

Among the recommendations is a shift toward more home sharing. A recent survey by the Trulia real estate company counted more than 42,000 unused bedrooms in the Portland area. These rooms could enable homeowners to 'age in place' by renting them to those in need. A public-private partnership is needed to connect willing homeowners with those in need.

Portland and Multnomah County have prioritized the homeless and affordable housing crisis in recent years. The City Council has declared and extended a housing state of emergency every year since 2015. It has also partnered with the Multnomah County Commission to create the Joint Office of Homeless Services to increase funding for prevention, shelter and transitional program. The office spent \$58 million for such services in 2017 alone, according to the study.

The council has also significantly boosted funding for affordable housing projects. Among other things, it has increased the share of urban renewal funds dedicated to them from 30 to 45 percent. Portland voters also approved a \$258.4 million affordable housing bond at the November 2016 general election that the council is now spending.

Despite that, much more needs to be done, the study says. People continue moving to the Portland area, driving up housing costs. Communities of color and older citizens without sufficient incomes are especially vulnerable to displacement. There are not enough mental health services to help those affected by years of deinstitutionalization. And economic trends such as automation could eliminate many low-skill jobs in the future.

To better respond, government needs to partner with the private sector and others to fully understand the scope of the current and future situation, and to create and fund innovative solutions.

"Government alone cannot solve these complex problems. Rather, it will require leadership from the private sector, nonprofit organizations, academic institutions, and the government to develop a multi-billion public-private partnership to close the existing 29,000 unit housing gap, ensure a future supply of affordable housing keeps pace with demand, and to provide services for those who need support to remain housed. Bold action is required if we expect to have meaningful impact. Oregon Harbor of Hope can play a key role by helping to orchestrate these efforts," the study says.

You can read the study [here](#).

Protester Assaults Man Near City Hall

*By Jim Redden
August 9, 2018*

Other protesters are told to obey sidewalk access policies to avoid future confrontations.

A protester reportedly assaulted an apparent passerby outside City Hall on Thursday.

William B. Pierce, 33, was lodged in the Multnomah County Jail on a charge of assault in the second degree. The name of the victim was not immediately released.

According to police, at 10:24 a.m. on Aug. 9, Central Precinct officers responded to Southwest 4th Avenue near City Hall, located at 1221 Southwest 4th Avenue, on the report of an assault. As officers were responding to the area, the 9-1-1 caller said he had been struck in the face by a man with a pipe.

The caller said he was waiting for responding officers in his vehicle near the intersection of Southwest 4th Avenue and Southwest Madison Street. When officers arrived at the scene, they located a man with an injury to his face. Emergency medical personnel arrived and provided him emergency medical aid and transported him by ambulance to an area hospital for treatment of what was believed to be a non-life-threatening injury.

During the investigation, officers learned the victim and a man got into a verbal argument regarding sidewalk accessibility in front of City Hall near a group of protesters. People have been gathering there in recent days to protest ICE family separation policies and police brutality.

The argument continued as the victim went to his truck, which was parked nearby. The victim said that the man struck him in the face with a pole at a red light as he was leaving .

Based on initial information, officers believed the suspect was associated with the protesters. A description of the suspect was provided to officers patrolling in Central Precinct.

While in the area of Southwest 4th Avenue and West Burnside Street, an officer located a man that matched the suspect's description, who was in possession of a pole that was believed to have been used in the assault. He was arrested without incident and the pole was seized as evidence.

Police say that in an attempt to reduce the likelihood of future confrontations and to address sidewalk accessibility issues, officers contacted the group gathered on the west sidewalk near Portland City Hall and provided them with a "Warning — Improper Sidewalk Use," as allowed under city rules. Officers also informed the group that any items that were left would be collected by a contracted cleaning service. Items of obvious utility and value that are left behind would be collected, stored and available for pick-up for a period of 30 days.

Anyone seeking to reclaim their property should contact Pacific Patrol Services at 503-595-3440.

Willamette Week

Seven Top Portland Bureaucrat Posts Will Be Filled in the Next Six Months

*By Rachel Monahan
August 10, 2018*

There's a backlog to fill the director jobs at bureaus, after interim directors have served for as long as eight months.

There are so many top bureaucrat spots to fill at Portland City Hall that they can't all be replaced at the same time.

The city's Bureau of Human Resources, who has new leadership as of last December, has laid out a plan for filling positions over the next six months. Some of them, including the Portland Housing Bureau and Office of Equity and Human Rights, have been run by interim leaders for as long as eight months already.

Below is the list, in order of when the selection process is projected to be completed, along with the commissioner who will oversee the bureau, beginning in September. New bureau assignments were doled out by Mayor Ted Wheeler on Wednesday.

One wrinkle to the plan is that City Commissioner Nick Fish, who was recently given the assignment of Parks and Recreation, wants a faster recruitment.

"Right now Parks is in good hands," says Fish. "But we're going to go through a national search to settle on the new leader, and right now Parks is at the bottom of the list. It may make sense to see if we can move it up a little bit."

The schedule includes:

- City Budget Office (overseen by Mayor Ted Wheeler), process complete by mid-to-late November.
- Office of Equity and Human Rights (moving to Commissioner Amanda Fritz), late November.
- Portland Housing Bureau (Wheeler), early December.
- Portland Bureau of Transportation (moving to Commissioner Chloe Eudaly), late December.
- Bureau of Planning & Sustainability Director (Wheeler), late December.
- Emergency Management Director (moving to Commissioner Dan Saltzman, and then new commissioner elected in November), late January.
- Portland Parks and Recreation (moving to Commissioner Fish), late February

The Portland Mercury

Police Ask Protesters to Leave City Hall Sidewalk After Assault

By Alex Zielinski

August 9, 2018

Portland police have asked protesters to leave the sidewalk in front of City Hall after someone was hit in the face with a pole.

Here's the connection: According to Portland Police Bureau (PPB), a man got into an argument with a male protester this afternoon because the protest group (self-identified as Occupy ICE PDX 2) was occupying too much space on the sidewalk. When the man left and walked to his truck parked nearby, the protester allegedly hit him in the face with a pole. He was taken to the hospital with a head wound.

PPB officers identified the suspect as 33-year-old William Pierce, and arrested him on second-degree assault charges. Not long after, officers gave the remaining protesters a warning for "improper sidewalk use," and asked them to leave.

Protesters have been camped out in front of Portland City Hall since Sunday, August 5, and have already had a number of tense interactions with police and city hall's security guards. It appears that, on the heels of Saturday's violent alt-right protest, the original focus of the Occupy ICE protest has shifted from immigration to police brutality. Yesterday, two people were arrested inside city hall for refusing to leave the building after protesting during a city council meeting. It's unknown if the two arrested were associated with the sidewalk group.