

The Oregonian

Multnomah GOP Challenges Legality of Eudaly's Voting Drive

*By Gordon Friedman
October 29, 2018*

The Multnomah County Republican Party said Monday it is seeking an investigation of Commissioner Chloe Eudaly's plan to allow city workers to conduct a voter turnout drive while on the job.

Eudaly last week invited city employees to join a door-knocking effort in city precincts where fewer than half of voters have cast ballots in recent elections.

"To protect the integrity of our democracy, we must recognize this plain fact and commit ourselves to action," Eudaly said in her email invite, adding that the canvassing event is "voluntary, non-partisan and content-neutral."

The low-voting precincts are predominately in East Portland, according to data provided by Eudaly's office. Those areas all went for Hillary Clinton in the 2016 election, but are much more favorable to Republican candidates than the deep-blue areas of close-in Portland neighborhoods.

In one precinct targeted for outreach by Eudaly's data -- encompassing Wilkes, the city's most northeast neighborhood -- voters chose Clinton over Trump 51 percent to 37 percent. By Portland standards, that's a good showing for Trump. In the secretary of state race that year, voters in that precinct favored Democrat Brad Avakian over Republican Dennis Richardson 45 percent to 42 percent.

James Buchal, an attorney and the local GOP chairman, filed a complaint accusing Eudaly of breaking a law barring public officials from spending money outside legal boundaries.

In his complaint submitted to the Tax Supervising & Conservation Commission, a panel that monitors compliance with local budget law, Buchal said he and nine other city taxpayers believe Eudaly's canvassing plan "constitutes malfeasance in office and willful or wanton neglect of duty."

Portland's government approves a budget each year and funds have not been set aside for Eudaly's canvassing event, putting it outside lawful spending, Buchal said.

Craig Gibbons, director of the countywide budget oversight commission, said he has received Buchal's complaint but cannot weigh in on its merits. He said the commission "has a process for responding to these letters and I am researching that process now."

Eudaly said in a statement that she is proud of the voter drive and is confident it is legal.

"We've carefully vetted this project and are confident that we're in compliance with all local and state laws," she said. "By focusing on areas with low voter turnout for the last three elections, this canvas will reach thousands of households of all political persuasions."

"We believe this activity is legal," Tracy Reeve, the city attorney, said of Eudaly's voter drive. She noted that Oregon law allows public officials to promote voting while on the job as long as they remain neutral.

For example, Oregon Secretary of State Dennis Richardson has frequently posted messages on social media and his state government website encouraging people to vote or update their registration.

Excess Land From MAX Construction Could Become Affordable Housing

*By Elliot Njus
October 29, 2018*

Leftover land from the construction of TriMet's next light rail line could become a land bank for affordable housing.

The transit agency usually has extra land left over when it opens a new line, either from buying larger-than-needed parcels for tracks and stations or for construction staging.

In the past, it's sold that land to the highest bidder, with a big chunk of the proceeds going to the federal government to pay back its contribution to the project. In the coming project, TriMet will give the Portland Housing Bureau the first shot at the property and sell it for a discount — just enough to pay back the feds.

It's an effort to head off what happened after the MAX Yellow Line opened in 2004. The rail project was designed to serve some of Portland's poorest neighborhoods, but those neighborhoods gentrified rapidly in the following years.

"On some level we're a victim of our own success," said Marshall Runkel, chief of staff for city Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, who oversees the Transportation Bureau. "The light rail was part of the story, but the market forces made it so it's no longer the poorest part of the city. How do we account for the additional pressure associated with the next light rail line?"

Portland transportation officials say they're not aware of a similar effort in another city.

The disposal of surplus land is strictly regulated for federally funded transit projects, in part because it's often acquired through eminent domain. Only recent federal legislation has made viable for that land to be sold at a discount to a local government rather than highest bidder.

The line would connect downtown Portland and Bridgeport Village in Tigard, passing through an area of Portland that contains 11,400 homes that are within reach for low- and moderate-income renters, according to a Portland State University study.

Most of those affordable homes are unregulated, however, and could disappear if the light rail line pushes property values higher and draws more high-income residents to the area.

The preliminary agreement between various government agencies involved in the project calls for TriMet to set aside room for at least 600 units of affordable housing in Portland and at least 150 in Tigard on the surplus land. Other initiatives in the works would preserve more affordable rentals near the line.

"We're looking at potential impacts while building the project, not just waiting until the end," said Leah Robbins, TriMet's director of the Southwest Corridor project, as the agency calls the line for now.

TriMet recently has started working with affordable housing nonprofits to develop some of its other surplus sites. Reach Community Development Inc. is set to build 198 affordable

apartments on a TriMet-owned site in North Portland, and the agency is preparing to sell two Southeast Portland sites to affordable housing developers.

If voters approve funding for the \$2.6 billion to \$2.9 billion rail line, likely in a 2020 ballot measure, and if the federal government agrees to fund the remainder of the project, it could open in 2027.

By that time, however, speculation could push land prices much higher than they are today. That's why agencies are eager to secure land early, before construction gets underway.

The surplus land is one part of a broader affordable housing strategy that in part calls for a new urban renewal district encompassing hundreds of acres in Southwest Portland to help pay for it.

Urban renewal districts issue debt to pay for projects within its boundaries, then pay it back with property taxes primarily resulting from new development.

Depending on the size of the urban renewal district, it could make available between \$47 million and \$119 million to spend in the district. Some would go toward the light rail line itself, but at least 45 percent — \$21 million to \$54 million — would go toward housing projects.

The effort could also use money from Metro's proposed \$652.8 million affordable housing bond, if it's approved by voters next week.

The multi-pronged plan the agencies have developed could create up to 2,300 affordable homes in Portland and Tigard, a number still far short of actual need, which a recent city report pegs at 4,100.

The Portland Tribune

City Hall Watch: As Shootings Rise, Police Beef Up Manpower, Reviews

*By Jim Redden
October 30, 2018*

Plus, the City Council supports movie, TV productions and a stormwater management project is planned for Columbia Slough

In response to an increase in shootings, the Portland Police Bureau has transferred six more officers and six detectives to the Tactical Operations Division.

As first reported by The Oregonian, the bureau also is starting to hold twice-a-month shooting reviews with division leaders and supervisors from the U.S. Attorneys Office, the Multnomah County District Attorney's Office, Multnomah County Sheriff's Office, the county's parole and probation office, and neighboring police agencies.

The changes are happening as shootings have escalated in recent weeks and African-American community leaders are calling for a truce between rival gangs.

Council supports movie, TV productions

The City Council passed a resolution to strengthen and streamline the city's role in movies and TV shows that are filmed in Portland on Oct. 25.

The resolution directs the existing Portland Film Office to transition to a self-funded and fee-supported office and to create a "universal permit" to replace the current system that requires separate permits from different city bureaus.

Mayor Ted Wheeler appointed Commissioner Nick Fish as the first council liaison to the office in September.

According to the resolution, with over 180 productions filming in Portland every year, the industry provides thousands of jobs and contributes nearly \$200 million into the local economy.

Stormwater management planned for Columbia Slough

The Bureau of Environmental Services is designing a stormwater management project in the Portsmouth neighborhood as part of an agreement with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

The goal is to stop stormwater from carrying pollution from the streets in the area into the Columbia Slough when it rains, which currently happens. The preliminary design includes about 23 green street planters and more than 15 underground stormwater facilities.

BES will erect and staff a large tent next to Northgate Park on North Fessenden Street from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, Nov. 3, to provide neighbors with more information and to answer questions. To learn more, go to <https://tinyurl.com/y9722loq>.

Republicans Charge Eudaly Vote Drive is Illegal

*By Jim Redden
October 30, 2018*

Multnomah County Republican Party calls for investigation into what it calls 'illegal uses of City funds' for this Friday's get-out-the-vote event.

The Multnomah County Republican Party has filed a complaint about the get-out-the-vote drive organized by Commissioner Chloe Eudaly with city employees on public time scheduled for this Friday.

The party chapter requested the Multnomah County Tax Supervising and Conservation Commission to investigate what it calls "illegal uses of City funds associated with Councilwoman Chloe Eudaly's announced plan to direct City workers to canvass door-to-door on November 2, 2018, to encourage voters to cast ballots."

Although city funds will support the event, Eudaly's office says the door-to-door canvassing will be non-partisan and targeted at parts of town where voter turnout has been historically low.

Eudaly's office says, "Our office is grateful for the additional attention to the importance of voting that the complaint has generated and we are confident that the effort complies with the spirit and letter of the law."

Commission executive director Craig Gibbons says, "We will investigate as required by the statute and report publicly on the investigation. I do not have a time line yet."

Portland City Attorney says the drive is legal, despite the use of public funds.

"We believe this activity is legal. State law prohibits the use of any City resources to advocate for or against any candidate or measure. As you know, the City "Get Out the Vote" effort is

nonpartisan and is directed solely to increasing voter participation in precincts with historically low turnout rates," says City Attorney Tracy Reeves.

But Republican County Chair James Buchal says the drive is illegal and intended to re-elect Democratic Oregon Gov. Kate Brown over Republican state Rep. Kate Buehler.

"This is a transparently partisan misuse of City funds to aid Kate Brown's losing campaign, but it is also plainly illegal," says Buchal, citing a state law that makes it unlawful for any public official to "expend any moneys in excess of the amounts provided by law, or for any other or different purpose than provided by law."

"With rising problems of disorder and decay, even the City Council has not been so foolish as to budget scarce tax funds for marching City workers door-to-door to collect Democratic ballots," said Buchal. "That makes the use of funds illegal, and the law will make Councilwoman Eudaly personally liable for these expenditures."

The Oregon Secretary of State's Office has declined to investigate complaints against the event because it has not already happened. The commission oversees spending by governments in the county.

The complaint follows accusations by Portland landlord that Eudaly is using city employees to help Jo Ann Hardesty be elected to the City Council because they both support rent control. Hardesty, an activist and small business owner, is running against Multnomah County Commissioner Loretta Smith, who supports "renter protections."

Eudaly's office denies the accusation, saying they only want to encourage more Portlanders to vote.

Eudaly invited all city employees to participate in a get-out-the-vote drive during working hours on Friday. In an Oct. 23 email, Eudaly said the door-to-door canvassing will not be illegal because the employees will only be encouraging people to vote, not supporting or opposing any measures of candidates.

"This will be a voluntary, non-partisan and content-neutral event, with the sole mission of increasing voter participation where turnout has historically been low," Eudaly said in the email. The canvassing is scheduled to start with rally outside City Hall at 2:30 p.m. on Nov. 2 and conclude at 5 p.m.

But Kathryn King, who has owned rental property in Portland for 22 years, says voters in low turnout areas are more likely to support rent control. Hardesty, a well known activist, has endorsed rent control during her council campaign. Her opponent, Multnomah County Commissioner Loretta Smith, says she supports "renter protections."

Eudaly has also endorsed Hardesty in the race.

"Eudaly and Hardesty both support rent control. Eudaly has endorsed Hardesty. She has an interest in the race. I pay taxes in Portland and don't want my tax money going to influence the election," says King, who also owns a real estate office. She is planning to file a complaint with the Oregon Secretary of State's Office, and has emailed people she knows encouraging them to do the same thing.

Marshall Runkel, Eudaly's chief of staff, says the get-out-the-vote drive has no other motive. He notes that Smith did well in some low turnout parts of town that would be canvassed.

"There is no evidence to suggest that this effort is designed to help any particular candidate or cause because its only intended outcome is to encourage people to vote in areas where turnout has been lower than average in previous elections," says Runkel.

The get-out-the-vote drive was first reported by Willamette Week. It is controversial in City Hall. Commissioner Nick Fish does not want any employees in bureaus he oversees to be paid by the city for participating in it. At his direction, the interim director of Portland Parks & Recreation has told its employees they need to use vacation time to participate in it.

Eudaly's office and the Multnomah County Tax Supervising and Conservation Commission did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Willamette Week

Portland Activists Call for a Boycott of The Oregonian's Local Advertisers After Opinion Column Hails Joey Gibson

By Rachel Monahan

October 29, 2018

Backlash grows after a columnist writes favorably about the Vancouver, Wash.-based leader of the right-wing extremist group Patriot Prayer.

Portland activists pledged to boycott local businesses that advertise in The Oregonian after the paper published a Sunday opinion column headlined "The misunderstood Joey Gibson," writing favorably about the Vancouver, Wash.-based leader of the right-wing extremist group Patriot Prayer.

The left-wing activist group Portland's Resistance is demanding columnist Elizabeth Hovde be fired, and the paper "issue a front-page apology to our community for their callousness and carelessness in publishing the 'The misunderstood Joey Gibson' opinion piece."

The backlash from activists is part of a larger outcry from Portlanders against the opinion column, which described Gibson—who has led right-wing protesters into Portland for two years to brawl with antifascists—as a peaceful, spiritual figure. Multnomah County Chairwoman Deborah Kafoury took to social media to denounce The Oregonian for running the column. Mayor Ted Wheeler also joined in, more carefully.

Among those endorsing the idea that Hovde should be fired: the mayor's political consultant Jake Weigler, who linked to a change.org petition that lists the local advertisers to boycott.

"I thought this was exceptionally poor judgment both in terms of the content and in terms of the timing," Weigler tells WW. "At a time when we need to be elevating the dialogue, I thought this failed in every way."

Oregonian Editorial page Editor Laura Gunderson admitted fault today in choosing the headline to Sunday's column—and also over its timing. (It was printed the morning after an anti-Semitic gunman killed 11 people in a Pittsburgh synagogue.)

"It would have benefited, in hindsight, with more context from Gibson's Portland protests," she wrote in a statement to local media. "We wrote the headline, not Hovde, and it missed the mark. We also regret the timing of the column, which was edited on the Friday before the shootings in Pittsburgh."

But Gunderson also argued that editorial pages need to be places to air unpopular viewpoints.

"Increasingly, I hear from readers who are angry when they read opinions that differ from their own, whether in a letter to the editor, op-ed or a local or nationally syndicated column," she said in the statement. "But our community prides itself on its civic involvement and a key element of that is civic discourse."

Hovde's column offered a sympathetic and selective look at a recent Patriot Prayer rally on the campus of Washington State University Vancouver. "Everyone I talked to...agreed that the rally itself was tame and respectful," Hovde wrote.

She described Gibson as sounding "like a modern-day prophet" in response to one question. At another point, she described him as not living up to the violent hype surrounding him.

"Gibson didn't look like the harasser and violent bully I've been reading about, even if he attracts white nationalists and violent counter-protesters," she wrote. "I'll keep watching, but I think he's far more unique in this region: Gibson has unpopular thoughts about freedom, guns, abortion and spirituality, and he voices them on a public stage."

Gibson has explicitly said that part of his objective in leading protests is to infuriate left-wing protesters in Portland so that they will show up to fight him and supporters. That tactic was disarmed last week when Washington State University Vancouver allowed students to stay home and professors to cancel classes.

The column was not well received even by some of The Oregonian's own reporters, who have written on the violence that Patriot Prayer has brought to the streets of Portland. They included Oregonian reporter Shane Dixon Kavanaugh, who has covered Patriot Prayer protests and Tweeted: "Pretty surreal to see the publication you work for (unwittingly??) gaslight its readers in the Sunday paper."

Two former Oregonian columnists, one of whom still works for the paper, also weighed in saying they would not have written about Gibson or elevated his cause.

If the journalists' choice to openly criticize the column was unusual, so too was Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury's tweet criticizing the paper for being "complicit" in stoking "violence and hatred." Kafoury is known as a careful politician, and the denunciation was striking.

Kafoury went further when she was challenged that her initial criticism was too mild: You're right. I was being too polite. It's one thing to offer a balanced position that I may not agree with, it's quite another thing to give credibility to hate and violence.

Mayor Ted Wheeler chimed in today. "There is no place for hate, extremism, and violence in Portland or anywhere," he wrote on Twitter. "Hard to find common ground with groups who embrace all three. There is no misunderstanding."

The column's timing, coming the day after the synagogue slayings in Pittsburgh, helped create the fury. Portland's Resistance referenced that poor timing in its call for a boycott.

"Today, in the aftermath of nationwide violence including pipe bombs mailed to political leaders, African Americans murdered while grocery shopping, and the slaughter of Jews in their place of worship, Oregon's daily newspaper opted to publish an op-ed piece in defense of a white nationalist who has been inciting similar violence in our community, including the stabbing on a MAX train last year which resulted in two deaths," Portland's Resistance posted on their Facebook page just after 11 pm Sunday. "This is unconscionable, unethical, and dangerous behavior."

The advertisers on the list range from corporate giant Fred Meyer, to local nonprofits including the Portland Opera, to smaller shops such as the fabric store The Whole 9 Yards. The public transportation agency Trimet is also on the list.

Multnomah County Republicans File Formal Complaint on Portland City Commissioner's Get Out the Vote Effort

*By Rachel Monahan
October 29, 2018*

Commissioner Chloe Eudaly will rally city workers and send them out to canvass neighborhoods that have traditionally had low turnout.

The Multnomah County Republican Party today filed a formal complaint asking for an investigation of Portland Commissioner Chloe Eudaly's new initiative to send city workers out on the taxpayer dime to encourage people to vote.

It's against the law for public employees to campaign for or against a candidate or measure, but not against the law for public employees to encourage people to vote, as Eudaly says she will do.

The initiative, first reported last week by WW, has raised questions—in part because who turns out to vote and where can affect the outcome of an election.

The Republicans, who filed the first formal request for an investigation about the initiative today with the Multnomah County Tax Conservation Commission, say Eudaly is playing politics.

"This is a transparently partisan misuse of City funds to aid Kate Brown's losing campaign, " says county party chair James Buchal in a statement.

But the complaint takes issue with the initiative on more technical grounds: "As far as we know, door-to-door political activity of this nature is not within the job descriptions of the employees involved, and there have been no funds in the City budget allocated for this purpose," write Buchal and nine other Portland taxpayers in the letter dated October 29.

Eudaly's staff say they have taken steps to ensure the effort is nonpartisan and within the law, including taking information for fliers from the secretary of state's office and using "an objective metric—voter participation from previous elections" to determine which voter precincts will be targeted.

"Our city attorneys looked at the political activities statute and confirmed that this GOTV effort is legal because this is a neutral information-sharing initiative," says Eudaly staffer Winta Yohannes.