

The Oregonian

Commissioner Fritz: Wapato Won't Work

*By Amanda Fritz
November 2, 2018*

Many Portlanders believe Wapato Jail is a simple and logical answer to our community's mental health crisis. They argue that Wapato was built with a clinical component and should be used as a residential substance abuse treatment center and mental health facility for people who would otherwise be incarcerated or living outside. Just do it, they say, it's secure and isolated away from neighborhoods.

But legal, logistical and philosophical barriers make this impossible.

Legally, zoning limits the use of this site to "heavy industrial." An exception was made to the zoning requirement for Wapato because the facility would be used as a jail, and people would not be free to come and go. But this exception would not apply to an addiction services or mental health facility. The City of Portland could theoretically change the zoning, but when council members tried to put Right 2 Dream Too on an industrial site of less than a quarter acre, our decision was overturned by the state.

Also, legal covenants, codes and restrictions governed by the Port of Portland and affect adjoining businesses prohibit using the facility for anything other than heavy industry or as a jail.

Logistically, there is no public transportation to or from Wapato. It takes three hours with a combination of buses and walking to reach the facility from downtown. There are no services nearby, meaning long commutes to doctors, grocers, restaurants, work or school. Many people who experience homelessness and/or mental illness have children. Families want to stay in their own neighborhoods, near their own schools and friends -- not in an isolated industrial area.

Perhaps most important, using a jail as a treatment center or mental health facility is inappropriate on philosophical grounds. Putting people experiencing mental illness or homelessness at Wapato could cause additional trauma. Problems at the Unity Center show that even a facility designed and built to help people experiencing mental crises can struggle to provide safe, effective care.

I worked in inpatient psychiatry at Oregon Health & Sciences University for 22 years, on units converted from the old Multnomah County Hospital. We constantly battled to overcome the barriers to building community spirit among psychiatric patients, even in a facility built as a hospital. I can't begin to imagine how staff would create a collaborative and soothing environment in a facility designed to punish people and keep them apart.

Even if all these challenges were magically addressed and Wapato could be transformed into a model treatment center and mental health facility, the county doesn't have the money to operate and maintain it -- unless many other treatment facilities and shelters were closed.

Operating Wapato would require \$5 million in additional annual revenue. Data shows that the most cost-effective approaches to solving homelessness are to prevent people from losing their housing - but if they do, to find them new housing as soon as possible.

If the city and county had an additional \$5 million, a mass shelter and treatment center would not be the best use of those dollars. Shelters are needed as a stopgap measure. They are not the best use of taxpayers' dollars to address the crisis on our streets. Discussions on Wapato rarely discuss how ongoing revenue for operations might be generated.

Jordan Schnitzer, the current Wapato owner, said, "Dream first, then get practical." But government shouldn't operate that way.

Let's learn from history. Government doesn't have the luxury of creating something without a solid plan for how to pay for it. That's why Wapato was never used as a jail in the first place. Encouraged at the time by the sheriff, voters supported building the facility. But then they voted to limit property taxes. That prevented Multnomah County from generating the revenue to operate and maintain the jail, which has sat vacant ever since.

With Wapato in private ownership, it makes even less sense to find a new public use for the jail. It's time to lay the Wapato Wish to rest, convert it into a warehouse or other industrial use and move on. Wapato is totally inappropriate for a mental health care treatment facility.

Multnomah County Commissioner Dr. Sharon Meieran is working on a systemic review and improvement plan for the county's mental health care programs. The Joint Office on Homeless Services is providing housing to thousands of Portlanders every year.

There is no magical instant solution for these needs. Let's stop pretending Wapato is it.

The Portland Tribune

New Homeless Shelter to Open on MLK by Thanksgiving

*By Zane Sparling
November 4, 2018*

Transition Projects to create 40 overnight beds in building owned by Multnomah County in November.

Portland's newest homeless shelter hopes to house up to 80 individuals by Thanksgiving.

Walnut Park Shelter will offer overnight sleeping accommodations on a reservation and referral basis to men, women and couples over the age of 18 — with a special focus on veterans, people with disabilities and those age 55 or older.

The shelter is located at 5329 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard at the corner of Killingsworth Street in the King neighborhood. The building is owned by Multnomah County and also contains the Northeast Health Center and dental clinic.

"We haven't served people in this new neighborhood and it's likely that there will be a number of vulnerable and underserved people seeking shelter," wrote Stacy Borke, a senior programming director at Transition Projects, the nonprofit that will oversee the shelter.

"We're very excited to provide shelter and services in a new community, and engage community partners, faith communities and neighbors in addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness," she continued.

As a basic shelter, Walnut Park will not regularly serve meals or offer many services onsite besides bunk beds. Residents will have access to coffee, tea, books and board games and will have space to store their belongings during the day. Bathrooms and basic hygiene supplies will also be provided. Pets are allowed.

Once approved to sleep in the shelter, guests will be allowed to stay until they no longer need to. Exact hours of operation at Walnut Park have not yet been determined.

Officials are very confident there will be "no lining up outside the shelter" because guests must be pre-approved to sleep at Walnut Park, and no drop-in services will be offered. Reservations will be conducted over the phone at 503-280-4700 or by visiting the Transition Projects Resource Center, located at 650 N.W. Irving Street next door to Bud Clark Commons.

"These are new, additive beds," said Transition Projects Development Director Roma Peyser. "We are in the process of doing outreach."

The nonprofit says the shelter will open its doors on a seasonal basis starting in mid-November. At that time, Columbia Shelter in Southwest Portland will begin serving only men.

"There is a clear need for a seasonal, downtown men's shelter," said Borke.

Eudaly's Voter Drive Dwindles After Others Yank Support

*By Zane Sparling
November 2, 2018*

Commissioner Chloe Eudaly and about 20 to 30 workers distributed door-hangers in East Portland.

They still showed up to get the vote out — yet the East Portland effort nearly marooned Chloe Eudaly as the only commissioner to prominently support the idea that government employees can advocate for voting while on the clock.

Mayor Ted Wheeler and City Auditor Mary Hull Caballero instructed the workers they oversee to request time off for the election drive at the eleventh hour, joining previous holdouts Commissioners Amanda Fritz and Nick Fish.

In the end, only about 25 or 30 people distributed the bright yellow door-hangers during a house-to-house march on Friday, Nov. 2. A 2:30 p.m. kick-off rally at City Hall was canceled in favor of a gathering at the East Portland Community Office, 1017 N.E. 117th Ave.

In a text message statement, Eudaly thanked her staff and other government employees for taking up arms against a "vicious cycle" of low participation at the ballot box.

"Low voter turnout leads to less representation, less investment and fewer services," she said. "While the City of Portland is investing more than ever in East Portland, we still have a long way to go with civic engagement. I consider this the job of every bureau."

The Tribune tagged along with Eudaly's chief of staff, Marshall Runkel, his wife Melissa Favara and daughter Ramona Runkel as they tramped along where the sidewalk ends — Southeast 136th Avenue. Runkel reported that he passed two gentleman's clubs while walking the Powellhurst-Gilbert area — but also petted three "really nice" dogs and two "really cute" cats.

"Honestly, this was about helping neighborhoods that are struggling neighborhoods do a better job of advocating for themselves," he said.

The staffer acknowledged recent criticism from Multnomah County Republican Party Chair James Buchal, who alleged that Eudaly knew boosting ballots in blue-hued areas would help Gov. Kate Brown win re-election. (A landlord also accused Eudaly of secretly supporting City Council candidate Jo Ann Hardesty, saying she believes the duo want to enact forms of rent control.)

But in an indication of the tenuous tightrope between non-partisan advocacy and blatant electioneering, Runkel declined to elaborate on the matter.

"I'm on city time, I can't characterize one political party or another's motive, so I'm not going to do it," Runkel noted. "You can determine by science which areas of the city are least likely to vote. So we went to those areas with a reminder to vote. It's not rocket science."

He said Eudaly was a "little disappointed" that the other four on the dais yanked their support for the initiative, which took place in voting precincts 5102, 5101, 4710, 4804 and 4805.

Runkel said the Office of Civic & Community Life has adopted voter turnout as a metric to measure a neighborhood's health and well-being. He hopes the drive will continue during the next city-wide election, but says Eudaly's office wants to be in the background of that effort because the Commissioner will be up for reelection.

For Eudaly's Constituent Relations Specialist Josiah Barber, the event was a nice opportunity to be paid to be out of the office. He visited the area near Southeast 102nd Avenue and Knight Street

"It was a great day. I was happy to be out and encouraging people to vote," Barber said. "We had great weather. I was happy for that."

Willamette Week

Skip Takes E-Scooters Off Portland Streets, Blames Rain

*By Elise Herron
November 2, 2018*

The company says it will continue to "be responsive to the weather."

E-scooter company Skip has pulled its scooters off Portland streets. The company says that's because rain has made road conditions dangerous.

A spokesperson for Skip, Katie Florez, tells WW, "Skip tries to be responsive to weather and conditions. As a consideration to the community, because of the rain, they've pulled their fleet from the streets of Portland."

Florez says there's no immediate plans to re-deploy scooters, and that the company will continue to "be responsive to weather."

Other companies, KOIN first reported, are taking less cautious approaches.

Bird told KOIN that it is working on an updated scooter model—which will "provide a more reliable and stable ride across a variety of ground surfaces"—to deploy in U.S. cities soon.

A spokesperson for Lime, Katherine Mackinnon, tells WW in an email, "Lime hasn't removed scooters in Portland to date because of bad weather."

In inclement weather, Mackinnon says Lime's approach is to educate on safe riding and update products when necessary.

Mayor Ted Wheeler, Auditor and Two Portland Commissioners Won't Let City Workers Join "Get Out the Vote" Effort on Public Time

*By Rachel Monahan
November 2, 2018*

Commissioner Chloe Eudaly hired a campaign contributor to design the fliers being hung on doorknobs tonight.

Mayor Ted Wheeler and City Auditor Mary Hull Caballero have ordered the city workers they oversee not to participate in City Commissioner Chloe Eudaly's "get out the vote" effort while they're on the city clock.

They join City Commissioner Nick Fish and Amanda Fritz, both of whom opted for a more careful approach to Eudaly's innovative initiative by requiring workers to take vacation time to participate.

Eudaly's office estimated as of Wednesday afternoon that 20 volunteers had signed up to go door-to-door. Eudaly will rally city workers today at 2:30, and workers will leave from there to canvass.

Public employees are prohibited from advocating for or against measures or initiatives when they're working, but Eudaly's effort is nonpartisan, designed to inform voters. The call for city workers to canvass on the public dime has nonetheless raised questions about its impact.

As part of the effort, Eudaly hired an outside designer to come up with fliers.

That designer is one of her campaign contributors.

Designer Kate Bingaman-Burt was paid \$500. Bigaman-Burt donated \$250 to Eudaly's campaign.

Eudaly's chief of staff, Marshall Runkel, says Eudaly, the former owner of independent bookstore Reading Frenzy, was part of Portland's design community before being elected office has prided herself on the design both of her campaign mailers and office designs.

"The commissioner was very active in the design community and has many friends and supporters in the design community," he says.

Separately, Eudaly's office spent another \$1,000 to have 5,000 copies printed.

This isn't the first campaign contributor to get work from Eudaly, who hired another donor, Jen Wick, to do the logo redesign for the Office of Neighborhood Involvement, which is now the Office of Community & Civic Life. (She's still under contract with Eudaly's office, but not with the bureau.)

The Portland Business Journal

Portland Transportation Data Startup Lands \$2.6M

By Malia Spencer

November 2, 2018

Portland startup Knock Software, makers of the Ride Report app and associated tools, has raised a healthy sum from investors.

The company added \$2.6 million to its coffers, giving it a total of \$3.3 million collected since it launched in 2013. The lead investor on the latest round of funding is San Francisco-based fund Homebrew.

Also involved in the round were Oakland, Calif.-based Better Ventures and San Francisco-based Urban Innovation Fund.

Ride Report (the company is known by the name of its app) offers a free app used by bicycle riders to track routes and mileage. Since 2016, Portland riders have made 400,000 bike trips totaling more than 1.2 million miles.

The company also offers a paid data planning platform that municipalities use for long term transportation infrastructure planning. Data for that product comes from the bicycle app as well as other data sources cities have.

For example, Ride Report has worked helped Portland's Transportation Bureau track usage of the Better Naito seasonal bike route. The city of Portland has a five-year contract with the company and has so far paid Ride Report \$25,000 for two different project deliverables, said PBOT spokesman Dylan Rivera.

The company is also set to contribute to the Portland's Central City in Motion plan that's before the City Council later this month. The city intends to study Ride Report data as it tracks travel patterns around new downtown bike infrastructure.

The company further makes a free tool that cities can use to track compliance of dockless scooters and bike sharing. It's thus helping municipalities juggle multiple agreements as they track usage and compliance.

"The scooter compliance tool is such a huge need, we are giving it away for free," said Ride Report CEO William Henderson.

The idea is that once a city starts using the free tools, it's easier to sell the longer-term paid planning tool. Twelve of the 20 cities that use Ride Report's tools are paying customers.

Ride Report will use the money to hire more software developers and build a customer success team as it pushes its products into more cities. It expects to double its six-employee workforce.

Ride Report is Homebrew's first Portland investment. Henderson expects to help introduce those and its other investors who are new to the Rose City to other local enterprises.

"There are a lot of startups in Portland that are values driven," which aligns with the new-to-the-area investors' Henderson said, which aligns with Homebrew and some of the angel investors' theses.

Henderson added that the data fed to cities is carefully anonymized so that it can't be reverse engineered back to identifying riders.

“Cities need to leverage data but they don’t need to surveil people or expose their data to an (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) request,” he said. “I think about what effect that has on the overall transit system,” and if it will make people uncomfortable when using public or alternative transit.

OPB

Hateful But Not A Hate Crime

*By Ericka Cruz Guevarra and Conrad Wilson
November 1, 2018*

Hassania heard the footsteps one late summer evening in downtown Portland.

She was on her way home from work. Hassania, a Muslim woman from Morocco, wore a hijab, as she does every day, and bright-colored clothing bejeweled at the wrists. The hem of her kaftan hovered just barely off the ground.

The footsteps grew closer. Then she saw him — an older white man with gray hair and glasses ran at Hassania from behind and then got in her face, blocking her way. He stood just inches from her.

“Too close to my body,” Hassania said.

The man raised his middle finger at her, then spat at her feet.

She gasped and shouted a sarcastic remark about his impoliteness. The man ran off.

As the noise of his footsteps receded, she asked herself one question over and over:

“Why? Why? Just why?” Hassania said. “Maybe because I’m a Muslim, African woman?”

Hassania came to the United States this July to share the work she’s doing teaching Moroccan girls from the countryside about leadership skills and gender equality issues. The image of America she had formed in her mind while studying U.S. history in books and classes 5,700 miles away — an America where racism is a thing of the past, where everyone, regardless of background, is welcome if they’re willing to contribute to society — began to unravel.

Once safely home, she called friends to ask for advice. One told her to take off her hijab. She couldn’t fathom that.

“No, don’t say that to me,” she remembered telling the friend. “Please, this is my identity, this is me. This is not easy to take it off.”

Another friend advised her to call the Portland Police Bureau. That friend told her to report the incident as a hate crime.

She tried.

Some hate crimes are so heinous there’s no debate about whether they should be prosecuted. In the last week alone, 13 people in two states were shot to death in high-profile acts that have either been charged — or are being investigated — as hate crimes.

Within hours of last week’s horrific attack on a Pittsburgh synagogue, federal prosecutors charged the shooter with multiple hate crimes: obstruction of the exercise of religious beliefs resulting in death and obstruction of religious beliefs resulting in injury to a police officer.

In Kentucky, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell called for the death penalty for the man accused of targeting and shooting two African-Americans last week at a grocery store in his home state.

“If these are not hate crimes,” McConnell said, “I don’t know what a hate crime is.”

But the judicial system isn’t always so clear-cut, and people who lash out in hateful ways aren’t always criminals according to the law.

Under Oregon law, a hate crime occurs when a person or group damages property, does something threatening or subjects another person to offensive physical contact “because of the person’s perception of the other’s race, color, religion, sexual orientation, disability or national origin.”

It’s a very specific legal definition, one that police, sheriffs and district attorneys say often falls short of satisfying people who have experienced hateful behavior.

“It is really difficult to provide the solution a community member is looking for and is asking for,” said officer Natasha Haunsperger, who works in the Portland Police Bureau’s community engagement office. “It’s such a major disconnect in what we can do versus perception once you’re a victim of a hate crime.”

That’s because law enforcement officials must have enough probable cause to determine an alleged perpetrator intentionally threatened or assaulted someone because of a victim’s race, color, religion, national origin or sexual orientation. Unless they occur in conjunction with a crime, derogatory statements about a person’s race or religion, while hostile, aren’t unlawful.

In fact, they’re protected by the First Amendment.

“You are allowed to use hurtful, awful, disgusting words; you’re allowed to say that under our Constitution,” said Deschutes County District Attorney John Hummel. “You’re not allowed to threaten somebody, put someone in fear of imminent physical violence.”

Hassania called Portland Police a day after she was accosted.

The officer she spoke with wouldn’t take a police report because, Hassania later recalled, he said what had happened to her was not a crime.

If the police arrested everyone in Portland who offended someone, the officer added, police would have to arrest everyone in Portland. Under the law, he explained, there was nothing they could do.

Hassania, who asked to be identified by just her first name to protect her from further abuse, said the officer she spoke with made her feel like an idiot.

“My dream of America became nightmare of America,” she said.

Hassania wasn’t alone when she called the police. Seemab Hussaini, who chairs Oregon’s chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, was with her when she made the call and was appalled at what he overheard. On Aug. 24, the day after Hassania called the police, CAIR-Oregon publicly denounced the Portland Police Bureau’s response.

“These are statements that marginalize affected communities, remove power or any hope of being recognized for victimhood,” Hussaini said.

That tension between what people — particularly people of color — expect when they call the police for help and what law enforcement officers can legally prosecute under the law plays out time and time again in communities across the Northwest and around the country.

Within many communities of color, skepticism toward law enforcement is rooted in historic precedent. And now, with a spike in reported hate crimes since the election of President Donald Trump and a spate of attacks fueled by hate, there's more pressure for law enforcement to get it right. If they don't, critics say, hate festers and the people police have sworn to protect end up feeling even less safe.

Documenting Hate To Address Hate

Hassania's call to the police would have been handled differently just a few hours south in Eugene, where city officials have taken a different approach to hate.

There, she would have had the option to report what happened to her to the city's Office of Human Rights and Neighborhood Involvement even if the police decided there was no crime to investigate. Information about the incident would then also be collected by the Eugene Police Department and reviewed by city officials and police, who meet quarterly to make sure each complaint about hateful behavior is correctly labeled. Those results are put into an annual report analyzed by the city's Human Rights Commission.

So far, all that additional information and analysis haven't led to specific policy changes in Eugene. But just keeping track is important, city leaders say.

"It allows us to give them something that's more actionable than showing the empathy of understanding how they feel about something and explaining to them it doesn't necessarily rise to a criminal level," said Lt. David Natt, who heads up bias crimes and documentation for the Eugene Police Department. "We still get the opportunity in the community to recognize that we've had this event."

Eugene residents say that process gives law enforcement a clearer sense of what's happening in their communities. That's important because hate and bias crimes tend to be underreported nationwide.

Eugene's unique system of documenting hate and bias incidents has a magnifying effect: The city has the largest number of documented hate crimes in the state.

The number of hate crimes reported in Oregon nearly doubled from 2015 to 2016 — a jump from 66 to 104. Portland — Oregon's largest city — had 10 hate crimes reported in 2016, according to data voluntarily reported to the FBI. Eugene had 38.

Eugene's own numbers for last year, which include both incidents and actual crimes, are even higher, at 139. According to the most recent data, vandalism replaced intimidation as the most common hate crime charge, and race remains the leading motivating factor. Reports of vandalism involved swastikas; racist, homophobic and transphobic slurs; and white nationalist recruitment material.

The data also shows African-Americans are significantly overrepresented as victims of hate and bias crimes. Of the 31 reported race-related hate crimes, 25 were committed against African-Americans.

"Those reporting mechanisms have helped," said Eric Richardson, president of the Eugene chapter of the NAACP. "It's a way for us to see what the problems are."

By documenting hate, he said, you address hate.

Eugene's approach casts a wider net because it documents bias incidents on top of hate crimes. Hussaini, with CAIR-Oregon, said that would be helpful in Portland, where only hate crimes — those incidents that appear to meet the legal definition of a hate crime — are tracked.

“Track the culture,” Hussaini said. “Track the culture behind what causes a hate crime to occur. They can be circumvented, stopped if they are found early.”

Portland Considers Another Approach To Hate

Recently, the Portland Police Bureau invited officers from Eugene to exchange information about how they document hate. They met with Natt, the Eugene lieutenant who heads the city’s bias unit, and a representative from Eugene’s Human Rights and Neighborhood Involvement division.

In August, following that meeting, PPB launched a public database of potential bias and hate crime statistics.

But the data doesn’t include incidents such as Hassania’s. Rather, the data only illustrates incidents that officers have deemed a crime, meaning they took the initial step of officially documenting what happened. In launching the new public tool, PPB said it hopes to “increase transparency and encourage the community to report instances of possible bias and hate crimes to the PPB, regardless of the nature or type of incident.”

Portland police say when it comes to documenting more bias incidents, they need help from the community. In fact, the city already has a foundation for a system like the one that exists in Eugene.

Portland Detective Jeff Sharp, who investigates bias crimes, said the bureau is hoping to work with Portland United Against Hate, a partnership of community organizations, neighborhood associations and the city. Portland City Council awarded \$40,000 to PUAH in 2017 for a pilot project to collect, track and analyze hate incidents.

Findings from the program’s first year show that hate crimes go unreported in Portland because of an expectation of inaction when a victim reports: People don’t call the police because they don’t think the police will do anything. Organizers also found that the process for reporting hate crimes needs to take into account a victim’s trauma and, above all, avoid exacerbating it.

There’s also the Police Bureau’s Muslim Advisory Council, which is made up of leaders in the Muslim community. Its members meet every month with officers. Those interactions help the community feel heard, said Laila Hajoo, president of the Islamic Social Services of Oregon State, a Portland-based nonprofit.

“A lot of the refugees that come here are terrified to bring up issues with authorities because they are afraid of deportation, or because it’s going to make their life more miserable,” Hajoo said. “If they can confide in us, then we have an opportunity to discuss this at the council” — and police officers can engage.

While the bureau is making strides, it still falls short of a system for tracking incidents such as Hassania’s. And from Hassania’s perspective, the reality is that talking about hate isn’t as powerful as documenting it.

“Now, I felt like, ‘No, I have to protect myself,’” she said.

It took Hassania weeks to process what happened to her. She missed several days of work because she was afraid to go outside. She even attended the Portland Police Bureau’s “WomenStrength” self-defense workshops.

More than a month after the incident, Hassania attended a seminar titled “Islamophobia Workshop: Strategies for Survival” at a mosque in Beaverton. She was eager to hear other people’s experiences with hate and reflections on why they occurred. Among the attendees were

Destinee Mangum and Walia Mohamed, the two girls who prosecutors say were targeted aboard a MAX train in 2017, just before a white man stabbed three people, killing two. Mohamed wore a hijab at the time of the attack, just as Hassania does.

Hassania stood and faced the two girls. “I want to thank you so much for being here,” she told them.

Then, she retold the events of that late summer evening on her way home from work to those in attendance at the seminar. She turned to the dozen or so people in the room, and posed a question: “Who will protect me if the police didn’t protect me?”

What Hassania wanted — and still wants — is for someone from the city of Portland, anyone, to say that what happened to her matters in the eyes of law enforcement.