

The Portland Tribune

'Sewer people' spur BES to upgrade security

By Emily Burris/KOIN 6 News

June 18, 2019

Unknown people are caught on security video climbing out of a manhole in Northwest Portland twice despite dangers

Portland's Bureau of Environmental Services will make changes to part of the city's sewer system after surveillance video captured people emerging from a manhole on two different nights.

The surveillance videos from Chown Hardware caught the people popping out from underneath a manhole cover on Northwest Front Street outside their warehouse near the railyard on June 2 and June 13.

One video shows three people, the other shows five people. One of them even waves at passing cars.

David Chown, the co-owner of Chown Hardware, said the cameras were installed just a couple months ago but they think this has happened before.

"We've been in business 140 years and I never would've dreamed, we've never seen anything like that in all the time we've been in business," Chown told KOIN 6 News. "It's very crazy."

"I didn't even know it was a thing," said manager Kris Lake. "You go about your day and you don't think about people under the ground."

The manhole outside Chown Hardware goes down more than 20 feet and leads to a 60-inch pipe. This pipe carries mostly storm water but can also hold overflow sewage from heavy rain.

City officials think they now know where these people entered the sewer.

BES officials began looking for damage to the sewer system after learning of the incidents. They said the entrance to this pipe isn't visible to the public. It has some damage they're going to repair.

They also plan to upgrade the pipe's entrance next summer and said they now plan to add some extra security barriers.

It's illegal to move manholes or enter the sewer system. Anyone caught doing it faces thousands of dollars in fines and be on the hook for the cost of repairs.

Beyond that, it's dangerous, even deadly. Sewer pipes have low oxygen levels, harmful bacteria and can flood at any time.

If you see something like this, BES said the best thing to do is call their 24 hour Sewer Repair Emergencies Hotline to report it at 503-823-1700.

Audit: Affordable housing bond spending off to good start

By Elise Haas/KOIN 6 News

June 19, 2019

The audit also said there needs to be more attention paid to veterans, seniors and those with disabilities

An audit released Wednesday shows how the City of Portland is addressing the affordable housing crisis.

The city is trying to help ease the housing crisis by building more affordable units — an effort that started several years ago.

In 2016, voters gave the green light to a housing bond measure, which allowed the city to borrow more than \$250 million to invest in affordable housing. The goal was to build or buy 1,300 housing units.

According to the City Auditor's Office, the Portland Housing Bureau is off to a good start. However, there is room for improvement.

The audit says there needs to be more attention to veterans, seniors and those with disabilities. It also recommends the bureau could keep more concise records on property purchases and must develop new ways to make sure privately-owned bond projects serve the people they're intended to help.

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

Willamette Week

A Potential Challenger to Mayor Ted Wheeler Officially Registers to Fundraise for a Run

By Rachel Monahan

June 18, 2019

Ozzie González works for a construction company and is on the boards of TriMet and RACC.

Mayor Ted Wheeler has a potential new challenger: Ozzie González, who on June 11 registered a political action committee to begin fundraising for the race.

González, 41, is the director of sustainability and diversity for Howard S. Wright, a construction company.

He currently serves on the board of TriMet and as the vice chair of Regional Arts & Culture Council, an independent nonprofit that's funded with city and other public dollars, which in turn funds other arts organizations. He also serves on the boards of the Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, according to his TriMet bio.

He holds a master's in architecture from California Polytechnic University. His undergraduate degree was from Humboldt University in environmental science.

He has so far reported raising \$2,650.

The activist Teresa Raiford, who ran for Portland City Council in 2012, has publicly declared her intention to run and has registered a PAC to begin fundraising.

County Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson is considering a run, The Oregonian first reported in April, but she has not taken public steps to enter the race.

Oregon Officials Deter Portland Homeless Campers With a Million Dollars' Worth of Boulders

By Rachel Monahan

June 19, 2019

The latest spot? A thicket of rose bushes in the Goose Hollow neighborhood.

Last week, a public agency dropped boulders onto a former rose garden. Neighbors rejoiced.

As part of a campaign to keep homeless campers off Oregon Department of Transportation property, the state agency has spent more than \$1 million since 2013 on "rockscape landscaping"—in the common parlance, boulders—in at least six locations across Portland since 2013.

The latest spot? A thicket of rose bushes in the Goose Hollow neighborhood, at the intersection of Southwest Montgomery Street and 14th Avenue, where hostilities have escalated between homeowners and the houseless.

Neighbors attribute ODOT's decision to safety concerns in the area—and a potential liability risk to the department if it did nothing.

"ODOT, in our opinion, came in at the right time to deeming this area as a safety risk to all (campers and volunteers) and chose to boulder the area," says Tiffany Hammer, an area property owner who also sought the city and county's assistance.

Hammer and her neighbors planted 90 rose bushes to discourage people who were camping on ODOT property, as first reported by KGW-TV. She says she'll move 60 of those bushes back to the property in September to beautify the boulders.

ODOT records show the agency spent \$4 million in the past two years alone on homeless camp cleanups, so deterring campers with rocks may save the agency money. But the key reason for the boulders is highway safety, says ODOT spokesman Don Hamilton.

"Boulders are our most effective method for keeping illegal campers out of areas marked no trespassing," Hamilton tells WW. "These areas, especially areas adjacent to major highways, are dangerous. Illegal campers have been struck and, in a few cases, killed while trying to cross an interstate highway. And in about 2010, a car spun off the road and killed a sleeping camper along I-405."

The agency is not the only one trying to deter homeless campers. In two notable cases, concrete flower planters were erected, seemingly to deter sleeping under both ends of the Morrison Bridge. Those planters received some scornful media attention, but the Portland Bureau of Transportation says it's never received a complaint about the planters and they can be placed on the sidewalk legally by owners. It's not clear who did so.

Hammer also has a new location in mind to plant rose bushes: Collins Circle, a roundabout in Goose Hollow on PBOT property.

The Daily Journal of Commerce

Portland eco-roofs standard presenting challenges

By Chuck Slothower

June 18, 2019

In the early returns for Portland's eco-roofs standard, following the rule is the exception.

Of four Central City projects subject to the city's eco-roofs rules since the standard took effect in July 2018, only one has met the standard. One was approved by the Portland Design Commission with a much smaller eco-roof atop the podium, and requests for significant modifications of the rule are being made for two others.

In baseball, hitting 1-for-4 is about league average. In city planning, it could be an early warning sign that the rule is either infeasible, or that the city is unwilling or unable to enforce it via the design review process.

"I think it's a concern for the city," said Benjamin Nielsen, a senior planner for the Bureau of Development Services. "Developers are having a hard time with some of the requirements of the standard, particularly when solar panels are involved."

So far, the only project to meet the city's eco-roofs standard comes from the city of Portland and three partners. The seven-story Fourth and Montgomery project, also known as the Jasmine Block, is under construction in south downtown with an eco-roof that meets the city's rules. The project will provide space for the city, Portland State University, Oregon Health & Science University and Portland Community College. SRG Partnership designed the building, and Mayer/Reed is the landscape architect. The roof includes solar panels.

The eco-roofs standard took effect last summer as part of the Central City 2035 Plan. Incorporated into Title 33 of city code, the standard requires eco-roofs on new Central City buildings of 20,000 square feet of net area or more within certain zoning.

Eco-roofs are intended to convey several benefits. They reduce urban heat islands, manage stormwater, improve air quality and provide habitat for birds, pollinators and plants.

To meet the standard, at least 60 percent of the roof area must be devoted to eco-roof features, as defined by the Bureau of Environmental Services. The remainder may be occupied by mechanical equipment, solar panels, wind turbines and other items.

Portland's eco-roofs standard was modeled after Toronto's, said Mindy Brooks, a city planner with the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability.

Portland's standard has roots in an earlier, voluntary program. Developers could earn bonus height in exchange for eco-roofs. The Central City 2035 Plan rolled back that bonus, among others, in favor of concentrating on affordable housing incentives. Eco-roofs were made mandatory.

The trend of project teams requesting modifications for eco-roofs bears watching, Brooks said.

"I think we need to continue to monitor it and see how it goes," she said. "We've had a couple of very unique (projects) be the first ones out of the gate. So it'll be important to monitor and see how it proceeds."

Architects and developers have approached the standard in different ways.

At Block 216, the Design Commission agreed to a modification that places the eco-roof atop only the terraced podium, and not the 35-story tower. The Block 216 eco-roof will cover only 33 percent of the roof area, far below the 60 percent minimum.

GBD Architects is designing the project. Before the Design Commission, architects from GBD argued the wind forces at the tower's 460-foot height would make an eco-roof unworkable and perhaps unsafe, with the potential for soils and plants to be blown afar. Two design commissioners said an exception to the eco-roof standard may be necessary for towers.

GBD did not respond to interview requests.

City officials are researching how eco-roofs can be built atop towers. The bureaus of Planning and Sustainability, Development Services and Environmental Services are looking into how high winds affect tower eco-roofs, and will issue guidance to future project teams.

It may just be a matter of more complex engineering, Brooks said.

"We did some quick research and did not find wind shear at high altitudes being a problem for eco-roofs," Brooks said. "At high altitudes, engineering becomes more complex, just as anything does at that altitude."

Brooks said the city wants to get it right before issuing any guidance.

"We heard what (the architects) said and we want to make sure whatever guidance we provide is appropriate," she said.

Bora Architects is proposing an entirely different solution at Lincoln High School. The project team proposes to meet the standard at ground level, with plantings. The standard would be met with 63,600 square feet of landscaped areas.

At a May design advice meeting, Bora Architects principal Christopher Linn said ground cover performs better as a heat and carbon sink, and requires less maintenance, than an eco-roof.

"I think we have a proposal that better meets the intent of the guidelines than putting planting on the roof," Linn told the Design Commission. He did not respond to interview requests from the DJC.

Some commissioners said they were amenable to the proposed ground-cover solution.

"I'm OK on the (green roof) modification," Commissioner Sam Rodriguez said. "I believe it is meeting the intent to some extent."

Brooks, in an interview, said Bora's approach "could be appropriate" if it goes beyond the minimum standard, and fulfills the stormwater-management and heat-reduction functions.

The team proposing the five-story PAE Living Building at Southwest First Avenue and Pine Street is also seeking a modification to the eco-roofs standard. ZGF Architects is pursuing Living Building Challenge certification, which requires 75 percent roof coverage by solar panels.

"Eco-roof beneath the panels would not be viable, as the required strategy to maximize on-site production necessitates a flat array of panels, without spacing: thus the eco-roof would not get adequate light or rainfall," ZGF wrote in its application for a modification.

The Historic Landmarks Commission is set to review the PAE Living Building on Monday. The requested modification on the agenda is simply stated: "To not provide the required eco-roof."

OPB

Portland Political Candidates Must Disclose Funding Sources, Court Rules

By Meerah Powell
June 18, 2019

The Multnomah County Circuit Court last week upheld parts of a measure approved by voters, requiring political candidates to disclose the largest sources of their campaign funding.

Specifically, candidates must “prominently disclose” their five largest campaign funding sources in political advertisements.

The court also upheld that people must register as political committees if they spend more than \$750 in an election cycle and that employers who allow payroll deductions for any purpose must also allow deductions for campaign contributions.

Deborah Scroggins, Portland’s city elections officer, said the city is still figuring out how to implement the changes and that the upcoming 2020 elections will act as a test run.

“We want to see what happens first, what kind of rules and procedures will be necessary in various situations before we set up this whole infrastructure to do that,” Scroggins said.

She also said her office is limited by staffing.

“We also have limited capacity and there wasn’t funding passed with this charter change petition, so just keeping these things in mind, we’re going to uphold this the best we can to the voters’ will,” Scroggins said.

Notably, the court struck down campaign finance limits on both contributions and expenditures, citing them as unconstitutional according to the Oregon Constitution.

The Oregon Supreme Court may be reconsidering that decision, with oral arguments scheduled for Nov. 1.

With Alberta Commons, Portland Sees A Chance To Do Redevelopment Right

By Erica Morrison
June 19, 2019

The corner of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Alberta Street in Northeast Portland is getting new life after decades as an empty lot as the long-awaited and controversial Alberta Commons project finally opens its doors.

Northeast Portland is the city’s historically black corridor, but one redevelopment project after another has left the black population as just that — history.

“I’m real excited about being able to serve my community, right here,” said Theotis Cason, a journeyman meat cutter and butcher for 40 years who finally has his own shop. He’s in a dusty office chair surrounded by white sheetrock walls, exposed wires and paint-stained concrete floors.

“This will be my first brand new spot ever, and I wanna put my taste on it and just let it shine for the community,” the Northeast Portland native said.

After years of renting spaces and pouring money to patch up other people’s properties, Cason designed Cason’s Fine Meats from the ground up.

He walks around the shop pointing to the future home of the deep freezer, the case for prepared foods and the wrap-around counter. His 4-year-old grandson, Messiah, swirls around on a scooter.

Cason said he wants to pass the meat cutting trade and the shop on to his family. He has a nephew in an apprenticeship that he said will join him at the shop along with his young grandchildren.

Cason’s Fine Meats and two other black-owned small businesses were awarded prominent storefronts at Alberta Commons.

Investing In The Community

The city looked for black-owned established businesses that would bring foot traffic for the shopping center, which is anchored by a Nature’s Grocers and owned by Majestic Realty Company. Prosper Portland, the city’s economic development agency, rents 5,000 square feet from Majestic and charges tenants less than what they might pay on the open market. The small businesses also have unconventionally long 10-year leases, part of the city’s effort to reclaim space for black-owned businesses in a quickly gentrifying neighborhood.

“It’s the middle of Dream Street ... we are creating a district that is all-inclusive,” said Cole Reed, co-owner of greenHAUS Boutique and Gallery, which sits at the corner of NE Summer Street at Alberta Commons. “... it’s an homage to what was here. And that’s a big thing.”

“The first word that comes to me is longevity. I look at it as an opportunity for maturity for my business,” Jamal Lane, owner of the Champions Barbershop at Alberta Commons, said. This is one of his two two barbershop locations. He also owns the Champions Barbering Institute.

Lane grew up in Northeast Portland and has seen the changes over the years. He said that many of the staples still exist on MLK: a grocery store, auto supply store and a barbershop.

“But there weren’t any breweries or anything like that,” he said reminiscing about growing up in the neighborhood during the 1990s.

“‘The K’ was that common strip,” he said. “If you were going to meet anybody, if you were going to go do anything, ‘I’m about to hit ‘The K.’”

This is Lane’s third business on MLK. He grew up on this street and plans to always have a presence here.

“I think that there’s a narrative out there that we are getting pushed out or the word ‘they,’” he said. “‘They’ takin’ over or buying up everything.”

By “they” he means developers and the white people who typically benefit from projects like this.

“... Being here on this block shows that we can still be successful right here in our own neighborhoods,” Lane said.

Making Amends

Leaders of Prosper Portland know they're seen as the bad guy by Portlanders who remember the communities that were pushed out through urban renewal and, later, gentrification.

"I think the major obstacle throughout all of this is the continued lack of trust between the black community and Prosper Portland and the city," said Kimberly Branam, the executive director of Prosper Portland. "There's been a lot of missteps."

Prosper Portland, formerly the Portland Development Commission, was behind redevelopment efforts in North and Northeast Portland that, over generations, displaced tens of thousands of black families and wiped out an entire community of black-owned businesses.

Branam sees projects like Alberta Commons as a way to help right those wrongs.

"We're trying to behave differently and not use different words, but actually to create different kinds of opportunities and to show up and really make sure that we are supporting people who could benefit from increased economic opportunities," Branam said.

A Redeveloped Redevelopment

In 2013, city leaders announced a multimillion-dollar project to bring Trader Joe's to the vacant lot where the old Walnut Park Theater once stood.

The decision drew outrage from people community who saw it as the latest installment of displacing black folks in the Albina neighborhood.

Some black activists and community leaders felt betrayed and left out of the conversation.

"All the advocacy that happened during and after was really about what it means to have black people be a part of the decision-making process and really be seen as experts of their lives and their communities," said Joy Alise Davis, director of the Portland African American Leadership Forum. During the Trader Joe's debate, PAALF, wrote the city expressing their frustration and distrust of their development decisions.

Trader Joe's pulled out of the deal. And Prosper Portland rethought the project.

Portland officials sat down with neighbors and activists to create a community benefits agreement that would become a new standard for their development projects throughout the city. The CBA for Alberta Commons included requirements such as dedicated retail spaces for business owners who might otherwise be priced out, artwork curated by local artists and workforce opportunities for diverse contractors and workers.

Similar models are being used at city-backed redevelopment in Lents at Lents Commons on Southeast 92nd Avenue, and downtown at SW 10th Avenue and Yamhill Street. The other two projects also look to support people of color and people with longterm ties to the communities they're in.

Branam said these projects focus on communities of color because of the negative impact many public institutions have made through processes that amplified the impact of redlining, essentially barring blacks and other marginalized groups from settling in an area by preventing them from getting bank loans.

"I think there were already disparate impacts, so I believe that it's critical that we take a look at what it's going to take to meet equal outcomes. And sometimes that means that you have to take different approaches," Branam said.

A Fresh Start

There's a saying you hear in gentrifying parts of Portland: Black Lives Matter signs have replaced black people. At Alberta Commons, black-owned businesses will serve what are now predominantly white neighborhoods.

“So if you've got a sign in your window, bring your wallet,” said Cole Reed of greenHAUS.

She wants white consumers to think harder about how they spend their money.

“How many products do you have in your home that were built or designed by brown people?” she said. “I want you to be real and look at yourself and invest in your community because we are apart of your community because it is our community.”

All the shops at Alberta Commons open the weekend of June 21. A grand opening celebration is July 20.