

The Oregonian

Editorial: City should make room for new voices without muting neighborhoods (Editorial Agenda 2019)

*By The Oregonian Editorial Board
August 4, 2019*

There's nothing controversial about the goals that Portland Commissioner Chloe Eudaly has in mind for the Office of Community and Civic Life. Eudaly and agency Director Suk Rhee aim to improve how the city engages Portlanders and increase involvement by those who haven't historically had much say in city policy. Their efforts to include renters, minorities and others in a public dialogue long dominated by mostly white homeowners in neighborhood associations are greatly needed and widely supported.

The problem is that the office seems to be taking the most controversial way to get there.

As The Oregonian/OregonLive's Gordon Friedman reported, the civic life office is proposing changes to the section of city code that defines what the office does. But in rewriting the code, Eudaly and Rhee want to strip nearly all mention of the office's existing partnership with Portland's 95 neighborhood associations, which are the city's designated organizations for overseeing issues and activities within specific geographic boundaries. The proposal would similarly take out most mentions of district coalitions and business district associations.

Gone are lengthy passages confirming the role that neighborhood associations should play in enhancing the livability, safety or economic vitality of their communities. Similarly, the rewrite includes no mention of the city's responsibility to notify and include neighborhood associations in matters of livability.

Instead, the proposal highlights the importance of involving all Portlanders, punctuated with the sentiment that "the origins of our democracy include colonialism, white supremacy, and economic exploitation." The office, the draft rewrite states, must "support civic engagement as a powerful way to expose assumptions reflecting historical origins and rebuild our government institutions and practices to be more fair, just, and in service of all Portlanders."

Whether intended or not, the new wording suggests that neighborhood associations, which have helped build Portland, are relics of a white supremacist past that have no place in a future that values diversity.

That message is neither fair nor helpful in achieving Eudaly and Rhee's worthy goal of inclusion. While they are right to focus on expanding outreach, they should appreciate that adding voices to the discussion doesn't require muting others -- the symbolic takeaway from deleting neighborhood associations from the code. And neighborhood associations, as flawed as some might be in representing all voices, provide the services, events and opportunities that connect residents in their communities with one another. These are the groups that organize disaster-response teams, work with city staffers to set up movies in the neighborhood park, advocate for stop signs at dangerous intersections, bring in guest speakers to talk about public transit, set up block watches and work for safe routes for students to get to school. You cannot create an inclusive neighborhood spirit if there's no neighborhood spirit in the first place.

The proposal only inflames fears and intensifies suspicion among neighborhoods already uncertain about how new density laws will change their communities. The city does not need to give skeptics more reasons to mistrust government or more motivation to put up a fight.

Unfortunately, some of Eudaly's past proposals in other areas, such as rental policy, have done just that. By pushing so hard on behalf of some constituents, her proposals come across as more punitive than constructive. The erasure of neighborhood associations from much of the code strikes that same tone.

And there's no reason that the civic life office can't add more community groups to the list of recognized entities while demanding higher standards from neighborhood associations as well. Some associations have already changed the way they reach out to their community, from where they hold meetings to conducting them in multiple languages. Others are eager for help in attracting more residents and revitalizing their membership – practices that the civic life office should be sharing with neighborhood groups.

Certainly, revisions are needed. This city has changed significantly in its demographic make-up over the past four decades, much of which hasn't been reflected in neighborhood association boards. It's true that many Portlanders seek civic engagement through groups that align with their social, economic or racial identities more than their neighborhood. Neighborhood groups such as Living Cully and Albina Vision, both of which have shown innovative advocacy on housing and livability issues, have proven they deserve equivalent credibility as voices of the community. And some associations have stubbornly opposed zoning changes and development that are essential to Portland's longterm livability.

Eudaly and Rhee also raise valid questions about the benefits neighborhood associations receive, such as city funding, the ability to appeal land-use decisions at no cost to themselves, and exemptions from lobbying registration requirements. While removing mention of the groups from city code doesn't automatically change those benefits, they both concede such benefits could come under additional review. That's not a bad thing. The city needs to decide what neighborhood associations should achieve, whether such perks support a public purpose and what level of funding is appropriate. That analysis should extend to other community groups working with the civic life office as well, considering that many already receive city dollars. Additionally, neighborhood association members should do their own soul-searching about opposition to development. Fighting such modest changes as adding duplexes and triplexes in single-family neighborhoods says more about preserving their own fortunes than concern for that of the neighborhood – or city -- as a whole.

But that's why it's so critical for Portlanders to find the common ground on which to build real solutions and protect it from unnecessary hits like the proposed code change. There's plenty of time to rework it before going to Council. Eudaly and Rhee should reach out to the longtime volunteers who have powered neighborhood associations for so long to help make that happen.

The Portland Tribune

Downtown fountain repair project finishes for \$4 million

*By Zane Sparling
August 05, 2019*

Water once again flows from Portland's Open Space Sequence, designed by architect Lawrence Halprin.

A confluence of city funds and donated dollars has restored the gentle babble of downtown Portland's famed four-fountain quartet.

City and nonprofit officials put the final touches on the city's Open Space Sequence — comprising Keller Fountain Park, Pettygrove Park, Lovejoy Fountain Park, and the Source Fountain — during a parade and ribbon-cutting ceremony on Tuesday, July 30.

The series of linked plazas and water features are more than urban scenery. According to the Halprin Landscape Conservancy, it's a piece of Portland history worth preserving.

"You get a big ah-hah when you see all the fountains running," said Karen Whitman, the nonprofit's executive director. "But at night, at Keller, you'd also see the drama of the lights."

Designed by acclaimed architect Lawrence Halprin and his firm in the 1960s, Whitman describes the fountains and reflecting pools as becoming little more than barren springs in recent years, due to deferred maintenance and budget cuts.

"There was just more and more degradation," she said. "With some extra attention and ongoing care, we'll never go back to the days when it looked so horrible."

The total cost of the project was \$3.85 million, with \$2.15 million supplied by a unique variant of the local improvement district, which only collected funds on a voluntary basis. The remainder, \$1.7 million, came from City Hall.

Whitman says a driving force for the repairs was local developer John Russell, who owns the "black box" 19-story high-rise at 200 S.W. Market St.

The major restoration work that began in July, 2018 included fixes to underground utilities, drainage, wiring and pumps — one of which supplies 13,000 gallons per minute to the Keller Fountain — as well as new plantings, scrubbing off graffiti, sealing joints, paving, accessibility and security improvements and shoring up concrete walls.

While some Portlanders may not have noticed the Cascade Mountain Range and Columbia River motif, the Open Space Sequence truly is meant to be experienced in order. Start at the Source Fountain, at Southwest Lincoln Street and 1st Avenue, then trek north on the pedestrian trail to Lovejoy Fountain and Pettygrove Park. The sequence ends across the street from the Keller Auditorium at 4th Avenue and Clay Street.

"It's just been hidden," said Whitman, but "there is a sequence."

Willamette Week

Portland Police Chief Foresees Violence at Next Right-Wing Protest

*By Aaron Mesh
August 2, 2019*

Chief Danielle Outlaw says rhetoric around the "End Domestic Terrorism" rally shows "criminal intentions."

Portland Police Chief Danielle Outlaw says she's concerned by the violent rhetoric surrounding a planned right-wing demonstration this month.

"There is concern about the criminal intentions being expressed in the publicly available forums," Outlaw said in a statement today, "which suggest some attendees plan to engage in violence."

It's not certain which protesters Outlaw is referring to. But the Facebook page for the Aug. 17 right-wing protest, called "End Domestic Terrorism," has attracted a stream of death threats in the comments.

The planned rally has no city permit, police say. Like several recent protests, its chief aim is to call for a crackdown on its political opposites: Portland-based antifascists. The protest organizer, a Florida-based talk-radio host named Joe Biggs, wants antifa designated a domestic terrorist group.

"Ted Wheeler has failed miserably," the event announcement says. "He has allowed these domestic terrorists to commit acts of violence against the people of the United States."

Anger and frustration on the far right has grown since June 29, when conservative journalist Andy Ngo was assaulted by masked protesters in downtown Portland.

Antifascist groups, including organizers called Popular Mobilization, or Pop Mob, have announced a counter-demonstration on Aug. 17.

Outlaw says police are preparing for violence.

"We are taking this into account and developing an appropriate plan with adequate resources to prepare for this eventuality," Outlaw says in today's statement. "We will be putting out more information in various formats leading up to and during the event in order to keep the public informed of the expectations and the situation. We will also be doing outreach to provide information to local businesses, residents, and visitors so they will know what to expect and the likely areas to be impacted."

Earlier this week, Portland Police Association President Daryl Turner called for arresting anyone who marches in the streets without a permit.

"It's a simple formula: have enough police officers present on August 17th to protect peaceful first amendment activities," Turner said. "If laws are broken, if it turns violent, officers should be empowered with the resources to enforce the laws and keep the peace. We've all grown weary of excuses."

Mayor Ted Wheeler Would Support a 2020 Ballot Measure to Fund Homeless Services

By Rachel Monahan

August 4, 2019

He indicates he'd prioritize it over a transportation measure.

Mayor Ted Wheeler, who campaigned four years ago for office on a pledge to have a shelter bed for anyone without a place to live, said this week the results of the 2019 count of people sleeping outside did not mean Portland needed more homeless shelters.

Instead, Wheeler said the city needed more homeless services—and said he supports funding them with a tax measure placed on the 2020 ballot.

The count of homeless people in Multnomah County showed an increase in people on the streets but a decline in homeless people in the county overall, including those in shelter.

"It does not call out shelter space as being a particular problem," the mayor said in response to a question from WW at a media availability on Thursday.

Wheeler argued the city should continue its progress toward providing the mental health, drug addiction and other services to go with affordable housing the city and region are investing in.

His reaction isn't exactly a surprise. Since at least October of 2017, Wheeler has dropped his focus on hitting new benchmarks for shelter beds (he has said the county and city have hit the increases he was talking about during the campaign). Instead, he supports a broad investment in strategies to address homelessness, including more resources for the services that accompany that housing.

Notably, Wheeler on Thursday said he believes that Portland voters still view homelessness as the city's top priority, and he supports going to the ballot to obtain more resources for homeless services—and added that he would choose such a measure over the transportation proposal that regional government Metro is expected to put on the ballot in 2020.

There's no clear plan yet on what funding source voters would be asked to approve.

Here's part of the exchange from questions Chair Deborah Kafoury and Mayor Wheeler answered on Thursday.

WW: Do you support going to the ballot in 2020 to provide funding for more services?

Kafoury: "We're not going to be able to solve the chronic issues that people are suffering from unless we have additional support. We've gone to the state legislature to ask for support. We're working with our congressional delegation to get more support. And we will ultimately talking with the voters in our community about having more support."

Wheeler: "First of all, I agree with the chair....While I would love for the federal government and the state government to fully support us in our desires to have a robust mental health and addiction delivery system in our community, the reality is we have to lead here. And so I'm in alignment with the county in their efforts to secure those additional resources....The public repeatedly says to me and to the chair and through our surveys that the homelessness crisis is the number one issue in this community. Full stop. And so they have an expectation that we're going to address it. And to address it we need the tools and the resources to get it done."

WW: You think the homelessness crisis is number one over traffic and congestion?

Wheeler: "Yes, yes, I do."

WW: Does this should mean it should be the priority over the Metro transportation measure?

Wheeler: "They're both important. But I can tell you the number-one issue in Portland right now is the homelessness crisis.

"Now remember, elected officials—we work in multiple spaces simultaneously, so that doesn't mean we take our foot off the accelerator on one issue so we can put it on the other. We are working on multiple issues simultaneously."

The Portland Mercury

Portland Police Brace For August 17 Proud Boys Rally

By Alex Zielinski

August 2, 2019

The Portland Police Bureau (PPB) is gearing up for a predictably volatile August 17 visit by the Proud Boys—a national alt-right organization rooted in male chauvinism and white nationalism.

In a press alert sent Friday morning, PPB said that no organization that plans on rallying that day (anti-fascist group PopMob has also scheduled a counter-protest) has applied for an official permit to hold an event in downtown Portland.

But, PPB writes: "Based on publicly-available information, the Bureau is concerned events on August 17 may involve persons interested in participating in criminal activity."

In the past, alt-right rallies in downtown Portland have been organized by our local arm of right-wing extremists, Patriot Prayer. But this upcoming event is hosted by Joe Biggs, a Florida-based member of the Proud Boys, who boasts a loyal fanbase of right-wing provocateurs.

Biggs is a former contributor to InfoWars, Alex Jones' right-wing conspiracy website, and has made appearances at several Proud Boy protests in the past. He's framed this event as a response to violence that broke out during Portland's last clash between the alt-right and anti-fascist (antifa) groups on June 29.

"We want to put an end to domestic terrorism," reads Biggs' Facebook event page. "We have had enough. It's time to just say, no. [Mayor] Ted Wheeler and PPB put out a statement saying they will START doing their jobs(when did they stop?). Well then we are going to put that statement to the test."

PopMob, meanwhile, is planning an event called "The Spectacle," where they've asked Portlanders to "come out with the biggest, weirdest, most spectacular costumes, performances, and other fun activities" in hopes of out-weirding the Proud Boys. "Let's show them we won't let them scare us into hiding our true selves," reads PopMob's event page.

Both events will take place at the Tom McCall Waterfront Plaza.

PPB is preparing for the worst.

"There is concern about the criminal intentions being expressed in the publicly available forums which suggest some attendees plan to engage in violence," says PPB Chief Danielle Outlaw in the press release. "We are taking this into account and developing an appropriate plan with adequate resources to prepare for this eventuality.... We will also be doing outreach to provide information to local businesses, residents, and visitors so they will know what to expect and the likely areas to be impacted."

The Skanner

Wheeler Appoints Tom Peavey Interim Director For The Mayor's Office of Youth Violence Prevention

August 2, 2019

Mayor Ted Wheeler's office on Friday announced the appointment Tom Peavey as interim director of the mayor's Office of Youth Violence Prevention, replacing Antoinette Edwards, who retired at the end of July after 10 years with the city.

Peavey most recently served as policy manager for the OYVP, which works with the Mayor, the police and other city bureaus, the county, state and federal services as well as businesses, schools and the faith community to help reduce violence and to offer support for victims of violence.

Peavey has worked with the OYVP since 2006. Prior to that he worked for the Portland Police Bureau for 31 years (1973-2004), serving as a four-year member of the Mounted Patrol Unit as well as on Portland's first Neighborhood Response Team pilot program.

He has also served as the secretary for the agency's Community Peace Collaborative Public Forum since the forum's creation in 2014.

Peavey will serve as interim director while the mayor's office completes the process of finding a full-time replacement for Edwards.

OPB

Man Shot And Killed By Portland Police Was PSU Student Lane Martin

By Amelia Templeton

August 2, 2019

UPDATE (Aug. 2, 12:31 p.m. PT) — The Portland Police Bureau has released the name of the man who was shot and killed by police in East Portland late Tuesday.

The police bureau says 31-year-old Lane Christopher Martin was killed after he displayed a weapon that witnesses described as similar to an ax or hatchet.

Starting last year, Martin was a student at Portland State University in the School of Art and Design, and was hired for a work-study position at the school.

Previously, he studied art and design at Portland Community College and at two community colleges in California.

Michelle Illuminato, an associate professor, taught Martin sculpture and got to know him well through his work-study. She was planning to work with him again this fall.

Illuminato said Martin liked fixing things and looked for ways to make her department run more smoothly.

"He was a hard worker, smiled easily, extremely kind and always helpful," she said. "We all will miss him at PSU."

Witnesses have told The Oregonian/OregonLive that Martin appeared to be in a mental health crisis at the time he was shot by police.

He died on July 30, one day before his birthday.

The police bureau said officers with its Enhanced Crisis Intervention Team had responded to the scene.

The Oregon State Medical Examiner determined Martin died from gunshot wounds.

In selfies posted to his Facebook profile, Martin often wore sunglasses or a cap, sporting a light beard and a shy smile.

He sold a number of his paintings online. His personal website features his art: detailed portraits of pets and richly painted abstract works with mandalas and roses.

In a personal statement he posted on the site, he described using art to explore his struggles with substance abuse.

“My addictions took me down a dark and painful path, one in which the only ways out were death or incarceration,” he wrote.

He said time he’d spent in a Nevada prison and tried to use it to become a better person and a better artist, collecting yarn and art materials, and knitting and selling beanies.

“For me art is a way of life, it’s a hustle, it’s something that I live and breathe every day,” Martin wrote. “My hope is that as I continue to paint and create art, I can inspire others to use art as a vehicle to help overcome their obstacles and make it through the painful experiences that life has to offer.”

Court records also appear to reflect Martin’s struggles with addiction — and periods of stability.

In 2014, Martin pleaded guilty to a felony assault attempt after slashing at a friend’s throat with a box cutter, apparently out of the blue. That year, he also pleaded guilty to one count of heroin possession in Jackson County.

Following that incident, Martin was participating in treatment programs for addiction, according to court records. He has had no other recent arrests.

All three officers who used force during the incident are on paid administrative leave pending an investigation.

Portland police have now used deadly force five times this year, resulting in four deaths.