

The Oregonian

Man who sent Instagram threats to burn down Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler's home sentenced to 14 months in prison

*By Maxine Bernstein
September 18, 2019*

Kermit Tyler Poulson, who sent threats via Instagram that he would burn down Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler's house if he didn't fire a police officer involved in a fatal shooting, was sentenced Wednesday to one year and two months in prison.

"It was wrong. I shouldn't have done that," Poulson, 40, told a judge. "It will never be repeated."

Poulson said he was drunk and not on his medication at the time and didn't intend to cause any harm.

Prosecutors have said Wheeler's wife first noticed the comments from Poulson, using the Instagram profile "riot_cop_7," on Wheeler's Instagram account. Portland police and the FBI were alerted.

Poulson said he wanted the mayor to fire Portland police Sgt. Garry Britt, one of two officers involved in the fatal police shooting of Patrick Kimmons last September, according to prosecutors.

On the mayor's Instagram page on Oct. 9, 2018, Poulson wrote, "Ever had a Molotov cocktail thrown threw (sic) your bedroom window at 4 am?"

This summer, Poulson pleaded guilty to one count of transmitting threatening communications with intent to extort following his arrest in Montana in January. He has remained in custody since his arrest.

In the days leading up to the social media post, Poulson also had sent threats in direct messages to the mayor's Instagram account. Prosecutors called the messages obscene and "laden with profanity. "

Among the direct threats he wrote, "You'll end up in a carpet bag. Keep your rat mouth shut or you're dead" and "You're being green lighted by multiple gangs... That means you are now a target. No longer safe to ride your bike. The gang putting out the green light have killed multiple cops," according to a sentencing memo from prosecutors.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Paul Maloney urged a two-year sentence for Poulson, the maximum term for the crime.

"Defendant's messages were calculated to extort a thing of value (the officer's job) under the threat of damage to the Mayor's home and office," Maloney wrote in a sentencing memo.

The mayor wasn't present at the sentencing hearing and didn't provide a victim statement to the court.

Defense lawyer Bear Wilner-Nugent argued that Poulson be sentenced to the time he's already served. He cited Poulson's "gravely troubled mental and neurological health history," his bipolar disorder and alcoholism as mitigating factors.

Wilner-Nugent urged the judge to recognize that Poulson didn't mean harm.

"Mr. Poulson cannot stop talking, and says anything that comes into his head," Wilner-Nugent said. Poulson cannot control what he says, his lawyer added.

U.S. District Judge Michael H. Simon said he believed that a two-year sentence would be too long but time served wouldn't be sufficient.

"You horribly frightened some people. You can't do that," Simon said. "Just making the threats causes tremendous harm."

Poulson will face one year of supervised release following prison. While on supervision, the judge ordered that Poulson undergo alcohol and substance abuse treatment, face up to 12 urinalysis tests a month and not use or possess any controlled substances or psychoactive substances, including synthetic marijuana.

Portland police union, developers, nonprofit revive Wapato Jail as homeless shelter option

*By Molly Harbarger
September 18, 2019*

Nearly a year after Wapato Jail was sold to developer Jordan Schnitzer to be razed and turned into a warehouse, it is back in conversation as a potential homeless shelter.

A group that includes the Portland police union president, nonprofit leaders, neighborhood activists and developers appears to be gearing up to solicit funding to turn the jail in a community wellness center that would provide shelter, mental health and addiction services.

The Wapato Jail, which cost \$58 million for the county to build in 2004, was never used. Multnomah County commissioners sold it last year for \$5 million. They said offloading the unused jail was the most cost-efficient option, since the county paid about \$50,000 a month for upkeep.

Schnitzer said he bought the industrial property with plans to demolish the facility and build a warehouse. However, once he owned the jail, he put out a community call for ideas to use it for some good.

Schnitzer stipulated a proposal must have funding attached to it.

At the same time, he said he wouldn't hold on to the building forever and was moving forward with contractors – and his demolition permit. Yet, when permit expired earlier this year, he requested an extension from the city's Bureau of Development Services.

He now has until Oct. 28 to demolish the facility.

Volunteers of America Oregon President and CEO Kay Toran is leading the coalition. She is working with the Portland Police Association, the local police union, which appears to have commissioned a video that calls for community support to use Wapato as a behavioral health services center for homeless people.

Toran did not return a request for comment.

The version online is a [10-minute segment](#) of a longer video that bears the association's logo at the end. It was created by The Silent Partner Marketing agency, which specializes in videos for law enforcement groups.

Union President Daryl Turner refused to comment on the purpose of the video is. He suggested that it is merely a conversation starter until a more formal announcement he estimated might come in early October.

The coalition has already begun to air the video publicly. A version was shown at the Volunteers of America Oregon gala in early September. It has also been shown to the Lents Neighborhood Association, Turner said.

“Obviously they have a stake in wanting to help find a place where people are homeless, who have eviction issues, mental health issues, get the resources they need,” Turner said.

Turner declined to say who is involved in an effort to put services in the old jail -- yet the video shows a cast of prominent critics of the public sector's response to homelessness and nonprofit leaders.

Homer Williams and Don Mazzioti, who spent their careers in development, both appear as part of their nonprofit Harbor of Hope, which opened earlier this year. Williams said he is supportive of the attempt to turn the jail into a community wellness center.

“The only way it'll work is if it's truly some kind of public-private,” Williams said in an interview. “There's got to be some kind of private money brought into this.”

Angela Todd, an interior designer, also appears. She helped form the controversial Montavilla Initiative, which has tried to pressure the city to ramp up police presence in neighborhoods with large numbers of homeless campers.

The volunteer-run organization has been accused of harassing homeless people.

In the video, Todd says that the term “houseless” hides the many reasons people lose their housing and are unable to get new housing -- other than unaffordable rents. And, she said, there needs to be more emphasis on figuring out those reasons.

Todd and Turner have previously discussed how the city might better handle calls about homeless people.

In the past, Turner has called the city a “cesspool” after The Oregonian/OregonLive reported on the high rate of arrests of homeless people. His comments painted a dire picture of a blighted, dangerous city that resonated with many residents who dislike the growing presence of homeless people in their communities.

In the Wapato video, he made a softer case. He said that police have nowhere to take someone in the midst of a mental health crisis late at night, except for the emergency room.

Turner said in the video that the lack of resources drives arrests.

“We're creating this vicious circle ourselves because we have no other resources,” he said. “We have no other outlets to be able to provide to people.”

Wapato owner Schnitzer said city and county leaders lack vision for the facility.

“We need the leadership to help coalesce us and bring us together and show us how we can all work toward solving this problem,” Schnitzer said, “that's what's missing in this community now.”

Schnitzer declined to speak on the record about his plans for the facility.

However, public officials have largely made it clear that they do not intend to fund any services at Wapato -- at least on their own.

“Despite years of exhaustive efforts, we found we didn't need an old jail 14 miles from downtown,” said Julie Sullivan-Springhetti, a county spokeswoman, in a statement. “But we do need behavioral health resource centers near where people in crisis are already living, and we’re working on opening our first one in downtown Portland. We know that providing services to people in a convenient location with trusted peer mentors is the key to recovery and stability.”

Multnomah County recently bought an empty building on Southwest Park Avenue in order to create a mental health center for this purpose, though it is expected to take years to complete. Sullivan-Springhetti said no one has reached out to commissioners recently about Wapato.

Mayor Ted Wheeler had a “productive meeting” with Volunteers of America about Wapato recently, said spokesman Timothy Becker.

Becker said that Wheeler is interested in “supporting innovative ideas” around homelessness, and that he is open to hearing more about this recent iteration of the Wapato-as-homeless-services-facility discussion. Wheeler has entertained the idea before, only to back away by saying it wouldn’t pencil out.

“As you know, over the years, many calculations have been made about the facility, especially surrounding the operating costs and the sustainability of those costs. It would be fiscally unwise to fund a program that doesn’t have a long-term and sustainable plan,” Becker said. “The mayor has reached out to Jordan Schnitzer about his vision for Wapato and requested to see a statement of financial sources and uses. That statement should have a viable, actionable, financially sustainable plan. He will be convening a meeting soon with Jordan and all the key partners.”

The desire to move homeless people out of neighborhoods and business districts has long fueled the debate around Wapato. Homeless advocates and some public officials say that people who want to house homeless people at Wapato just don’t want to see very poor people on the streets outside their homes and businesses.

Supporters say they see a 150,000-square-foot facility with built-in places to sleep and eat as a natural fit for some kind of homeless shelter.

One of the hang-ups of past Wapato plans was its distant from services in the central city. In the video, though, Volunteers of America CEO Toran quotes TriMet Board President Bruce Warner as saying the agency could figure out a way to provide transportation to and from the facility.

Yet an undercurrent of the video is clear: People living on the streets should not be allowed to cluster in the visible areas they currently occupy.

“Where are the rights of the other folks in the community that are paying taxes, that are working hard, trying to make a living?” Schnitzer said at the end of the video. “There has to be a balance here.”

The Portland Tribune

Group again pushes opening Wapato for the homeless

By Jim Redden

September 19, 2019

Backers use video to make last-ditch plea for support to use former jail as a homeless shelter and treatment center

A group of developers, social service providers, neighborhood activists and law enforcement officials are making a last-ditch effort to open the never-used Wapato Jail as a homeless service center.

As first reported by the Oregonian, they have posted a 10-minute video online urging elected and other leaders to help them open it as a community wellness center proving addiction and mental health treatment services.

Those appearing in the video include: developer Jordan Schnitzer, who owns the facility; Volunteers of America President and CEO Kay Toran, who says her organization would run the center; Portland Police Association President Daryl Turner; who says police officers currently can only take someone experiencing a mental crisis to an emergency room; and Montavilla neighborhood activist Angela Todd, who says such a center could help treat the many causes of homelessness.

"We are all astonished the city has had this facility and has not figured out how to use it when we have people living on the streets," said Jordan, who predicts he will have to demolish it within the next few months if it cannot be repurposed.

It is not clear who the video is aimed at. The Oregon reports Mayor Ted Wheeler has already met with representatives of Volunteers of America. But Multnomah County recently purchased a vacant downtown building for a similar purpose and is in the process of identifying the funds needed to convert it. County leaders opposed using Wapato for homeless services before they sold it last year, in part because it is far from existing social service agencies downtown.

As pointed out in the video, county voters approved a \$58 million bond measure to build the facility, which can house, feed and serve hundreds of people. But it was never opened and the county sold it last year for \$5 million.

Also appearing in the video are developer Homer Williams and consultant Don Mazziotti of Oregon Harbor of Hope, which recently completed construction of a homeless shelter and navigation center near the southern end of the Broadway Bridge.

[You can see the video here.](#)

Threats to Portland mayor lands man in prison

*By Pamplin Media Group
September 18, 2019*

Man threatened to firebomb the mayor's home and office if he did not immediately fire police officers involved in a shooting.

A 40-year-old Portland man will spend 14 months in federal prison for posting threatening comments on Mayor Ted Wheeler's Instagram page.

Federal prosecutors said Kermit Tyler Poulson was sentenced Wednesday, Sept. 18, for transmitting threatening communications with the intent to extort Wheeler. Poulson pleaded guilty on July 3 to one count of transmitting threatening communications with the intent to extort Wheeler.

"Using social media to threaten violence against any person regardless of that person's position in our community is wrong," said Billy J. Williams, the U.S. attorney for Oregon.

According to court documents, on Oct. 9, 2018, Poulson posted several threatening comments on Wheeler's personal Instagram page. Poulson threatened to firebomb the mayor's home and office if he did not immediately fire police officers involved in a shooting. Investigators tracked the IP address associated with the comments to a Portland residence where Poulson was staying.

Willamette Week

Nine New Affordable Housing Projects Have Been Approved Through Portland's Housing Bond

*By Kelsey Harnisch
September 19, 2019*

The city says the new projects will exceed the number of units outlined in the 2016 voter-approved bond measure.

Mayor Ted Wheeler's office announced Tuesday the approval of nine new affordable housing projects across the city, funded by a 2016 bond voters passed.

The city says that brings the total number of units built, acquired or maintained as affordable to 1,424 units, exceeding the goal of 1,300 outlined in Portland's Housing Bond.

The projects will be a combination of both new construction and renovation, and will include family-size units, supportive housing for chronically homeless individuals and those with disabilities, and housing for those making 30 percent of the Area Median Income.

"Meeting these goals and delivering on our promise to voters reflects our collective resolve and commitment to addressing the needs of Portlanders most impacted by the housing affordability crisis," Wheeler said in a statement.

Voters in 2016 approved the city's first-ever housing bond, dedicating \$258 million to create more affordable housing options across the city to address this issue.

Project locations will be spread throughout the city from deep southeast to the Alphabet District and in between.

One property that's been approved? The historic Mann mansion, which WW previously reported was being considered. The 62,000-square-foot manor, which had been used as an ashram, will offer 88 units for families and individuals including 45 one-bedroom, 36 two-bedroom and eight three-bedroom apartments, housing an estimated 213 people.

These nine new projects, along with two already opened projects and another in development, will provide housing for more than 2,900 Portlanders.

"They are children who will have a stable place to grow up in a neighborhood that offers them opportunities, seniors on fixed incomes living with dignity and peace of mind, and our homeless neighbors getting a new start and a chance to live safely off the streets," said Portland Housing Bureau Director Shannon Callahan. "Together with our partners, we are creating new housing across the city to serve and support the diverse needs of our community."

The Portland Mercury

Man Sentenced to 14 Months in Prison for Threatening Mayor Wheeler on Instagram

*By Alex Zielinski
September 18, 2019*

A Portland man has been sentenced to 14 months in federal prison for threatening to burn down Mayor Ted Wheeler's house on Instagram.

Kermit Poulson, 40, was arrested after leaving ominous, threatening comments on a photo Wheeler posted on his public Instagram account in October 2018. Poulson specifically threatened to hurt Wheeler if he didn't fire Officer Garry Britt, one of the two police officers who fatally shot Patrick Kimmons in September 2018.

"You like your bricks? We can remove them from the house and throw them through a window," read one of Poulson's comments, according to court documents.

"Ever had a Molotov cocktail thrown threw [sic] your bedroom window at 4 am?" read another. "Or your office building?"

Poulson pled guilty to extortion in July 2019. According to an Oregonian article, Poulson said he was drunk and not taking his prescribed medication when he posted those comments. According to court documents, Poulson is partially paralyzed and is diagnosed with bipolar disorder.

"It was a dumb mistake. I regret doing it," Poulson said at the time.

Poulson's 14-month sentence (and one year of parole) is ten months shorter than what federal prosecutors requested. On September 11, US Attorney for Oregon Billy Williams argued that Poulson should serve two years in prison, the maximum sentence for his crime.

"The recommended sentence of 24 months will make clear that defendant's physical and mental conditions do not give him license to repeatedly threaten others," Williams wrote. "It is proportionate to the seriousness of the offense, and will serve as a deterrence to others who, like the defendant, use the internet to publicly broadcast threats."

Wheeler's office declined to comment on Poulson's sentencing.

The Daily Journal of Commerce

New building code scheduled to take effect in Portland

*By Josh Kulla
September 18, 2019*

The city of Portland on Oct. 1 will adopt the new statewide Oregon Structural Specialty Code, which comes with new regulations regarding mass timber and much more.

There will be a phase-in period from Oct. 1-Dec. 31, 2019, when applicants will have the option of submitting documents for permits using either the current OSSC adopted in 2014 or the new OSSC. After Jan. 1, 2020, all permits must meet the requirements of the new OSSC.

The Portland Bureau of Development Services recommends submission of development applications no later than Dec. 16 to ensure the project is vested under the 2014 OSSC.

For projects in the city's phased permitting process, at a minimum, foundation or structural partial permits must be submitted by Dec. 31 in order to be vested under the 2014 OSSC. An excavation and shoring partial permit will not be sufficient to vest a building under the 2014 code, according to BDS.

"Oregon is adopting the 2018 International Building Code, which will become the 2019 OSSC," said Terry Whitehill, the city's Building Official. "That's the base model code. We're also adopting the 2019 Oregon Mechanical Specialty Code, and they both will go into effect on October 1."

If land use review is required, it must be substantially complete before an applicant may submit an application for a building permit.

There are many changes in the new code.

"One of the big things we've incorporated in this code cycle are a bunch of changes for mass-timber construction," Whitehill said.

The regulations, including three separate categories of mass timber construction, were already in place as interim rules set to take effect in the 2021 International Building Code, he added.

Also, Oregon is adopting new energy code requirements that will be mirrored by the city.

"Those are probably the two biggest things, but there are plenty of other changes and clarifications," Whitehill said.

OPB

Portland Reveals 9 New Bond-Funded Affordable Housing Projects

*By Rebecca Ellis
September 18, 2019*

The city of Portland revealed nine new affordable housing projects Tuesday, all funded through its first-ever housing affordability bond approved by voters in 2016.

After those nine projects, the city says it still has \$45 million of the bond left over.

The bond measure initially pledged \$258.4 million for 1,300 units of affordable housing. City officials now say they'll surpass that estimate. The new housing stock announced Tuesday, combined with two bond-funded buildings that have already opened and one in development, would create a total of 1,424 affordable units.

In addition to promising 1,300 units, Portland had said 650 of them would provide housing suitable for families, 600 would be in the range of a household making less than 30% of the area median income, and 300 would provide housing for disabled people or those experiencing chronic homelessness.

Announcing the new projects Tuesday, Mayor Ted Wheeler said the city now has enough "bond-funded units completed or in progress around the city to meet and in some cases exceed all the goals that were established for the Portland Housing Bond."

Nine projects will be erected across the city: three are slated for downtown Portland, one in North Portland, and five on the east side. Two of the eastside projects are planned to provide a total more than 130 affordable housing units east of Interstate 205.

Montana Man Sentenced To 14 Months For Threat Against Portland Mayor

*By Rebecca Ellis
September 19, 2019*

A Montana man was sentenced to 14 months in federal prison Wednesday for threatening and attempting to extort Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler in the comment section of one of the mayor's Instagram posts last fall.

Under a picture of Wheeler preparing to ride his bike to work, Kermit Ty Poulson threatened to throw a Molotov cocktail through the mayor's bedroom window if he did not fire an officer involved in a recent shooting. Poulson, 40, pleaded guilty in July.

Poulson's defense attorney, Bear Wilner-Nugent, had previously told OPB that Poulson had bipolar disorder and was not acting rationally when he made the threats.

"This is a person with significant mental illness," Wilner-Nugent told OPB in July. "He admitted on the record that he was drunk, he was off his meds and he was swept up in a heated environment."

In addition to his 14 months in prison, Poulson was sentenced to one year of supervised release. The case was investigated by the Portland FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force and the Portland Police Bureau.