

The Oregonian

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler to oversee city bureaus previously run by Commissioner Nick Fish

By Everton Bailey Jr.

January 7, 2020

Mayor Ted Wheeler says he added two city bureaus to his portfolio that had been overseen by late Commissioner Nick Fish.

Wheeler signed an executive order Tuesday that placed himself in charge of the Bureau of Environmental Services and Portland Parks and Recreation. Fish's staff will retain the same or similar duties, said Kirstin Dennis, Wheeler's chief of staff.

Fish died of abdominal cancer Thursday. He and Wheeler discussed future oversight of his staff and bureaus before he died, Dennis said.

Fish's city council seat will remain vacant until voters elect a replacement in a special election to complete his term, which expires at the end of 2022. The Portland City Council is scheduled to vote Wednesday to schedule the special election for May 19, the same time as the primary elections when three other city council positions will appear on the ballot.

Wheeler and Commissioner Chloe Eudaly are running for reelection in May. Commissioner Amanda Fritz's seat on the council is also open and she has announced plans to retire.

If a runoff election between the top two vote getters to fill Fish's seat is needed, it would be held Aug. 11.

Fish had been in charge of the parks and environmental services bureaus since August 2018.

The mayor's office already oversees the police, housing, and planning and sustainability bureaus as well as the city budget office, city attorney's office, bureau of development services, Prosper Portland, office of government relations, office of management and finance, and the community technology office.

It's not immediately clear if the parks and environmental services bureaus will go to the commissioner elected to fill Fish's spot or if the bureaus will be reassigned.

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler getting divorced

By Everton Bailey Jr.

January 8, 2020

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler and his wife, Katrina Maley Wheeler, announced Tuesday that they plan to divorce.

In a joint statement, the couple said their family and close friends have known about their decision for "some time."

"We ask everyone to please respect our privacy as we navigate our next steps and do our best to maintain a sense of normalcy for our young daughter."

Ted Wheeler is seeking his second term as mayor this year. He has been seen around City Hall over the past few months without a wedding ring.

The Wheelers married in 2005. No divorce petition had been filed in Multnomah County Circuit Court as of late Tuesday. Their daughter is in middle school.

The Portland Tribune

Infill project far from over for city's planners

By Jim Redden

January 08, 2020

No quick City Council vote expected on controversial neighborhood rezoning proposal

After four long years of planning and debate, the Portland City Council is finally scheduled to take public testimony on the controversial proposal to increase density in single-family neighborhoods.

The first hearings on the Residential Infill Plan are scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday, Jan. 15 and 16. The first work session, at which public testimony will not be accepted, is scheduled for Wednesday, Jan. 29.

But that does not mean the council is on the verge of passing the proposal that would allow up to four housing units on practically every residential lot in the city. In fact, a majority of the council has announced they will not vote for RIP — as it is commonly called — before they approve another plan to reduce the displacement of low-income and minority households it is expected to cause.

And that plan, called the Anti-Displacement Action Plan, is nowhere near ready for consideration.

"I cannot support RIP unless we have a meaningful anti-displacement policy in place at the time of the vote," Commissioner Chloe Eudaly said during a Dec. 11 briefing on the Residential Infill Plan by staff from the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, which drafted the plan.

The proposed infill plan has divided the city. Affordable housing advocates, land use watchdogs, social justice activists and homebuilders argue it will encourage a greater range of less expensive homes, helping to reduce the affordable housing crisis. Neighborhood activists and preservationists say it could change the character of the city without providing the opportunity for many more Portlanders to afford a new home.

But although hours of public testimony are scheduled for Jan. 15 and 16, nothing anyone says seems capable of convincing the council to make a quick decision.

About an hour into the briefing, Eudaly and commissioners Amada Fritz and Jo Ann Hardesty all said they will not vote for the infill plan until the council first approves the anti-displacement plan. Eudaly even presented a list of policies she wants it to include. Among other things, she wants renters to have the first chance to buy their house if it goes up for sale at market value. In the case of multi-family housing, Eudaly wants the city to have that opportunity.

The problem is, the anti-displacement plan is supposed to be written by a community task force that has not yet been appointed and will not begin meeting until late summer 2020, at the earliest. And such a process usually takes years to complete in Portland, which values civic engagement over deadlines. That process also is being overseen by the planning bureau.

Even when the anti-displacement plan is written, Mayor Ted Wheeler suggested the council might send RIP back to the citizen Planning and Sustainability Commission, which oversees the bureau and referred it to the council last March. Wheeler, Eudaly, Fritz and Hardesty all said they were bothered that the commission approved RIP on a close 5-to-4 vote, with all members of color and those who live in East Portland voting against it.

The council might even ask the commission to vote on RIP again when they know the policies in the anti-displacement plan.

Although Commissioner Nick Fish has died, all remaining council members support the infill plan's goal of creating more and less-expensive homes by allowing so-called missing middle housing to be built in existing single-family neighborhoods. That includes duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes.

But Eudaly, Fritz and Hardesty are worried that developers could replace existing lower-priced houses with smaller but costlier rental units, forcing the existing tenants to move to the edges or out of town. They fear only wealthier households could afford what might be predominantly smaller but more upscale housing units.

Staff of the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability admitted previous city zoning and redevelopment decisions have led to displacement. An estimated 10,000 longtime African-American households were forced out of North and Northeast Portland when projects like the Memorial Coliseum and Interstate MAX line demolished existing homes and encouraged the construction of higher-priced housing. Even when the council later approved policies to fight housing discrimination, racial displacement still happened. Eudaly, Fritz and Hardesty all want guarantees such displacement won't continue if RIP is approved.

The three council members also questioned whether nearly all single-family neighborhoods in the city should be rezoned, as RIP proposes. An economic analysis predicts most displacement caused by RIP will occur in East Portland neighborhoods with the highest concentrations of low-income and minority renters. Hardesty asked whether they should be exempt. Fritz suggested the density increases should be concentrated along major transportation corridors and around transit centers, something Eudaly said she might consider, too.

Despite the questions, the council is facing a deadline to adopt the Residential Infill Plan, or something like it. The 2019 Oregon Legislature passed a bill requiring Portland and other large cities to allow duplexes on nearly all residential lots by July 1, 2022. The RIP recommendations allow more density, but could legally be scaled back in all existing single-family zones.

But Wheeler and Fritz suggested that should be enough time for the planning bureau to propose specific anti-displacement strategies for the planning to consider and revote on RIP with them in mind.

Residential Infill Project recommendations

Current suggestions include:

- Increase the range of permissible housing types (such as duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes and additional accessory dwelling units) in single-dwelling zones.
- Reduce the maximum allowable sizes of new single-family homes to 2,500 square feet
- Allow structures with multiple units to be larger than single-family homes, up to 3,500 for a fourplex.
- Remove minimum parking requirements and adding new garage design requirements.

To learn more, go to www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/67728.

Fish's death triggers special election

*By Jim Redden
January 08, 2020*

City Council expected to choose May primary for special election to fill the vacancy created on Jan. 2

Portland is poised for the most sweeping change to the City Council in modern times.

Four-fifths of the council seats now are up for election following the death of Commissioner Nick Fish. At least two, and up to four, of those elected this year will be newcomers.

Fish died on Thursday, Jan. 2, from stomach cancer he had been fighting for more than two years.

Of the five City Council members, Mayor Ted Wheeler and Commissioner Chloe Eudaly already were running for reelection in 2020. Commissioner Amanda Fritz chose not to seek another term. Now voters also will pick a midterm replacement for Fish this year.

Only Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty, the newest member of the council, is guaranteed to continue serving in 2021.

"I think the number of contested seats is uncharted territory at a time when 'uncharted territory' is becoming a cliché," said Portland-based lobbyist and veteran City Hall watcher Len Bergstein. "It's a 'best of times, worst of times' scene. If you like stability and continuity, you are in for a nail-biting election. But if you like fresh faces, new energy and innovative ideas, you will be loving it."

Fish was diagnosed with stomach cancer in 2017 but had been maintaining a busy schedule until December, when he took most of the month off because his disease had gotten more "complicated."

The council is expected to choose the May 19 primary for the special election to fill the vacancy on Wednesday, Jan. 8. That is when the other three positions also will be on the ballot. Like with those races, candidates would have until March 10 to file for Fish's position.

If no candidate receives more than 50% of the vote, the top two vote-getters would face each other in a runoff election, the same as the other races. If they occur, those races will be decided at the Nov. 3 general election. The council is expected to choose the Aug. 11 special election allowed by Oregon law, however.

No candidates immediately announced for Fish's position.

Multnomah County Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson and state Rep. Diego Hernandez have previously expressed interest in the council but have not yet filed for any of the other three positions that are up in 2020.

Former Multnomah County Commissioner Loretta Smith ran for the council in 2018 but lost to Hardesty in the runoff election. Metro Councilor Sam Chase previously served as Fish's chief of staff at City Hall. Some of the candidates who previously filed against Wheeler and Eudaly also could switch to a run for Fish's seat.

Regardless of the results, the council will at least be losing its two most senior members.

Fish, a lawyer, joined the council in 2008 after winning a May special election to fill the unexpired term of Commissioner Erik Sten, who resigned to pursue other interests. Fish was reelected to a full four-year term in 2010, 2014 and 2018.

Fritz, a psychiatric nurse and neighborhood activist, also was first elected to the council in 2008, but did not take office until the next year. She was reelected in 2012 and 2016.

In contrast, Wheeler and Eudaly were elected to the council in 2016, and Hardesty took office in 2019.

New chief rises up from within PPB

*By Nick Budnick
January 08, 2020*

Police Chief Jami Resch has been an unorthodox leader within the Portland Police Bureau for years

Several years ago, when a Portland Police Bureau lieutenant named Jami Resch spent several evenings visiting services at local mosques during the Muslim holiday of Ramadan, it wasn't like other police visits.

Normally an intermediary would call in advance and "create an environment that's kind of sanitized," said Musse Olol of the Somali American Council of Oregon. But in this case, Resch just showed up, meeting and greeting local residents — not just mosque leadership — to talk about the bureau's desire to protect vulnerable communities.

"You don't see that," Olol said of Resch's unorthodox approach. "She has been doing that throughout her career."

Now Resch, 45, takes over as Portland Police chief at a time when the city and its police face many challenges — some longstanding and some of them new. Four days after she was sworn in during a private Dec. 31 ceremony, tensions with Iran flared up following the U.S. assassination of a top Iranian leader. The next day, a Saturday, she attended a meeting of the bureau's Muslim Advisory Council to connect with local community leaders.

"It gives you a sense of confidence the PPB is there to communicate if there's any threats," Olol said.

In her second public appearance, a news conference Monday, Jan. 6, Resch briefly highlighted her priorities — transparency, fighting crime and tackling a bureau staffing shortage — and vowed to continue leading the Portland Police Bureau in the direction it was headed under her predecessor, Danielle Outlaw.

"I pledge to continue to support all of the great work that is already being done," Resch said in her first press conference since accepting the job, after Outlaw took the job of police chief of Philadelphia. "I plan to continue the commitment to ever-improving PPB and our relationships within the community. Now is the time to continue the momentum. It is not the time to remain status quo or veer in a different direction."

She was echoed by Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler, who said the goal is "seamlessly continuing the great work that's already taking place within the Portland Police Bureau."

Resch's priorities

- **Community relationships:** Resch cited her past work with refugee and immigrant communities and said she intends to continue working to improve those and other community relationships.

While Outlaw was talented at making personal connections with people, "I would like to see some things change a little faster as far as our ability to build trust within the community with different groups and things like that," Resch said. "I think I might have the ability to do that."

- **Gun violence:** Resch cited the seven local shootings that took place early on New Year's Day — just days after local police managers publicly had called for help in combating a string of gang-related shootings.

Calling the shootings "unacceptable," she added, "These are not crimes that are solved in a minute. While there may not have been any arrests, yet, these cases take intense, thoughtful, coordinated approaches. And I have every confidence in every single one of our investigators investigating these cases."

- **Transparency:** Resch expressed full-throated support of equipping officers with body-worn cameras, saying it's just a matter of funding. "I think that is something that's fully supported by the officers and I think it's beneficial for the community as well. I would like to see them."

- **Officer shortage:** Resch expressed concern over staffing levels, saying the bureau is facing waves of new retirements that will worsen the situation. The bureau has about 900 sworn officers and about 100 openings. Due to expected retirements, the openings are expected to grow to well over 200 by February 2021, she said at a recent roll call.

- **Protests:** Portland's police have been stretched by protests in which brawling between demonstrators has become routine, and the city has spent millions on overtime.

Resch said she will continue Outlaw's focus on seeking help from other jurisdictions and agencies: "I think you will see that more and more where we're reaching out, we're not trying to do it on our own. We're trying to gather as much information as we can ahead of time and really establish whose responsibility is what. ... You'll see a more collaborative approach, including other city bureaus and other agencies."

- **Morale:** For years, the bureau has suffered from low morale, and some officers said they felt Outlaw, who rarely attended roll calls, was distant. Resch repeatedly expressed affection for her fellow police and struck a positive tone, repeatedly complimenting the police officers and members of the public she's worked with.

"The best part about this job, 100% hands-down, is the people, the people who work for the Police Bureau, the people I've got to meet, the friendships that I've made," she said. "You know, when everybody retires from the Police Bureau, that's what they miss the most. And I know that that's what I'll miss the most when I do leave, which is not going to be anytime soon."

Outlaw left after two years as chief. Resch noted she has five years until she qualifies for retirement.

"I have five years left here, and I would love to spend every last one of those standing right here in this position," she said.

Background

A graduate of Beaverton High School, Resch attended the University of Portland and initially thought she would be a doctor.

On applying to be a police officer? "In all honesty, it was something that I did, almost to see if I could," she said Monday. "I had never been on a ride-along. I had never shot a gun. I'd never done anything related to police work, but when I applied and they hired me, and I started going through training, I loved it."

She was hired in 1999 and has worked all over the bureau. She made sergeant in 2008, lieutenant in 2012 and captain in 2016. Outlaw promoted her to assistant chief in May 2018 and then to deputy chief — Outlaw's then-second-in-command — on May 23, 2019.

In addition to having Wheeler's vote to be chief, the police unions representing line officers and managers have expressed their support for Resch.

Resch is known within the ranks for her "integrity and honor," said Bob Gorgone, a longtime cop who retired from the Portland Police Bureau last fall. "I've always known her to do a really good job balancing the needs of the agency with what our troops need, which is how she got to where she got. I always enjoyed working with her, because she did what she said she was going to do. I think she'll be good for the department."

Wheeler assumes oversight of Fish's city bureaus

*By Jim Redden
January 07, 2020*

Mayor issues executive order fulfilling agreement reached with the late commissioner.

Mayor Ted Wheeler issued an executive order assigning the city bureaus previously overseen by Commissioner Nick Fish to himself on Tuesday, Jan. 7.

Wheeler also said the staff in Fish's office will continue to be employed and will serve as the liaison with the bureaus that had been assigned to them.

Fish died Jan. 2 of the stomach cancer he had been fighting for more than two years.

On Wednesday, Jan. 8, the City Council is scheduled to set a special election to replace Fish at the May 19 primary. If no candidate receives more than 50% of the vote in May, a run-off election between the top two will be held Aug. 11.

The bureaus Wheeler is assigning to his office are: Portland Parks and Recreation; the Bureau of Environmental Services; and the Portland Children's Levy.

Wheeler also assigned the following liaison responsibilities to his office: Office of Film and Video; Venture Portland; Metropolitan Exposition and Recreation Commission; Portland Utility Board; Portland Parks Foundation; Portland Parks Board; Pioneer Courthouse Square.

Liaison responsibilities for the Gateway Center, which serves domestic violence survivors, go to Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty.

In an email to the other council members, Wheeler said he and Fish had agreed on the reassignments. Here is his email:

Colleagues,

It is with a heavy heart that I send to you an Executive Order from the Mayor making changes to the Council Bureau assignments. Before he passed, Commissioner Fish and the Mayor discussed the future of the bureaus and liaison assignments in his portfolio, so we have the benefit of being able to issue an Executive Order that reflects how he wanted the work to continue.

Commissioner Fish's staff will continue to operate as an office and will have the same or similar assignments, ensuring continuity in the important work of their portfolio. We are honored to work with them even more closely than before in the coming months.

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler and his wife getting divorced

By Jim Redden

January 07, 2020

Mayor confirms he and his wife have separated as re-election campaign heats up.

Mayor Ted Wheeler and his wife Katrina have confirmed they are getting divorced.

The announcement was first reported by Willamette Week on Tuesday, Jan. 7. The newspaper said Wheeler confirmed that they have separated and are getting divorced.

"As our family and close friends have been aware for some time, with mutual respect, we have made the difficult decision to divorce," Wheeler said in a prepared statement. "We ask everyone to please respect our privacy as we navigate our next steps and do our best to maintain a sense of normalcy for our young daughter."

Wheeler is running for re-election. In 2019, he told the Portland Tribune he would not run for re-election without his family's approval.

Wheeler's family has endured numerous disruptions during his first term, including homeless protesters camped outside their property that prompted police responses.

Wheeler and his wife married in 2005. They have a daughter.

Willamette Week

No American City Has Ever Tried a Climate Justice Tax Like the One Portland Is Launching. What's the Plan?

By Nigel Jaquiss

January 8, 2020

It's a local version of the Green New Deal proposed in 2019 by U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

In just a few months, the city of Portland will begin investing the proceeds from a groundbreaking new tax on large companies.

No other city in the U.S. has such a tax.

"It's a model for the rest of the nation," Mayor Ted Wheeler said recently. "A beacon and a testament to our community's belief in doing things a different way."

The Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund, or PCEF, will raise as much as \$60 million a year from a new tax on big retailers. The money is supposed to supply clean, efficient energy and jobs to people the city has long slighted.

The overarching goals: to provide members of underserved communities with valuable skills while insulating, caulking and tweaking inefficient heating and cooling systems and installing rooftop solar panels at the homes of low-income Portlanders.

The new tax, and the still-developing ideas for how to spend the money, signal a sea change in Portland politics.

At its core, the concept transfers wealth from big corporations such as Walmart to low-income Portlanders of color. It's a local version of the Green New Deal proposed in 2019 by U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.). It's also part of a larger political effort to reshape who calls the shots—and who benefits—in America's whitest big city.

The new tax, created by a 2018 ballot initiative city voters passed by an overwhelming margin, is part of a power shift that saw two outsiders—Chloe Eudaly in 2016 and Jo Ann Hardesty in 2018—defeat establishment candidates for seats on the Portland City Council. The trend could continue this year with the probable election of the council's first Latinx commissioner: Carmen Rubio, executive director of the Latino Network.

It's long past time for Portland, a city with a history of institutionalized racism, to move aggressively toward equity, Hardesty and others say.

"Before PCEF, we had zero dollars dedicated to creating opportunities for folks who have been left out of the economic engine of the city of Portland," Hardesty said recently. "We're going to start creating some awesome opportunities for people in our community who could have never imagined them."

Never has City Hall had so much money to spend with so few strings attached. The guidelines for spending the tax are squishy, as are the yardsticks for measuring the effectiveness of those expenditures.

"One of the biggest tasks facing this effort is, what are the key metrics of success?" says David Heslam of Portland's Earth Advantage Institute, a supporter of the new tax. "They haven't communicated that yet."

That uncertainty concerns observers such as Maurice Rahming, an owner of O'Neill Electric, one of the city's largest African American-owned contracting firms.

"What are the accountability means they are going to use to track outcomes?" Rahming asks. "At the end of the day, it's about accountability and delivering on services."

Hardesty, the first black woman to serve on the City Council and the self-described "mother of the Portland Clean Energy Fund," promises she won't let it fail.

"I am the biggest champion of PCEF," Hardesty said recently, "and I stake my reputation on making sure it is implemented exactly as we envisioned."

Last month, the City Council made some last-minute adjustments to the new tax, exempting some companies, including national waste haulers and construction firms, leaving large retailers such as Walmart, Target and Home Depot to pony up.

On Dec. 12, while considering those tweaks, the council got a warning from Oriana Magnera, a spokeswoman for the coalition that put the measure on the 2018 ballot.

"These exemptions take money out of the hands of black, indigenous and other communities of color and put it instead in the pockets of corporations," testified Magnera, who works for Verde, a social justice nonprofit active in passing the ballot measure and making preparations for deploying the money. "We will fight fiercely if any future erosion occurs."

Magnera and her fellow advocates face both an unparalleled opportunity and a daunting responsibility: to spend the new money transparently and well.

Across the nation, elected officials are looking for ways to help marginalized communities that also stand to bear the brunt of global warming. The fund could provide a road map for other cities—or it could end up a cautionary tale.

Robert McCullough, a Portland energy economist, says the fund faces two challenges: the declining effectiveness of energy efficiency measures, and the city's poor track record of fiscal prudence.

"It's shocking how much the world has changed in energy terms," McCullough says. "And the time has come for us to be very careful with our dollars—not something the city has done well."

For all the talk about how new and innovative the Portland Clean Energy Fund is, the fact remains that the city tried something similar before—and not that long ago.

The results could be a wake-up call for Hardesty, Magnera and other advocates.

The promise of energy efficiency is seductive: Insulate walls, caulk some leaks and tune up the heating system, and the savings on utility bills will exceed the costs of the work.

Such savings are a big part of the allure of the Clean Energy Fund. But recent history shows they can be difficult to capture.

If anybody could have made an energy efficiency nonprofit thrive in Portland, Tim Miller seemed to be that guy.

He had the pedigree: a degree in economics and industrial engineering and an MBA from Stanford; five years at Intel; and a couple of decades doing green energy consulting before he signed on in 2012 at a Portland outfit called Clean Energy Works.

Clad on a recent day in a blue Oxford cloth button-down and a Columbia Sportswear fleece vest, Miller, 54, explained that Clean Energy Works had its origins in then-Mayor Sam Adams' office in 2009, when the country was mired in recession.

Clean Energy Works snagged a \$20 million federal stimulus grant in 2010 and became an independent nonprofit whose mission was to deploy minority contractors to make 100,000 homes energy efficient.

"Our model was to retrofit," Miller says. "The idea was to create jobs now—and let's have them be good jobs."

The program aimed to benefit underserved communities—just as the new tax does. "From the beginning, equity advancement was a hallmark of the program—promoting worker diversity and career pathways into the energy sector, as well as development of contractors including minority- and women-owned firms," Clean Energy Works said in a grant application.

The similarities to the Portland Clean Energy Fund extended to granular details such as pay: Both programs specified workers should get no less than 1.8 times minimum wage.

"A lot of the participants in Clean Energy Works took that model and ran with it to create PCEF," says Rahming, who served on Clean Energy Works' board. "There are definitely similarities," Miller acknowledges.

Clean Energy Works conducted energy audits—and then, for a fee, referred homeowners to contractors for retrofits. "The feedback from the homeowners was almost universally positive," Miller says. "People said, 'We're more comfortable in homes and we save money on our bills.'"

But Clean Energy Works' services were expensive.

The Energy Trust of Oregon, a nonprofit funded by utility ratepayers, found the program's costs "significantly" higher than those of other contractors doing similar work without public funding.

Miller acknowledges Clean Energy Works was more expensive, but he says the nonprofit's holistic approach provided significant intangible benefits.

"What we were still working on is the health benefits of retrofitting," Miller explains. "If you do good air-sealing and are no longer dragging air up from a rat-infested crawl space, you can sit by the window now that it's sealed. You don't see those benefits when you see how many kilowatts you saved."

By 2014, Clean Energy Works had spent the \$20 million in federal stimulus money it received four years earlier. It then secured an additional \$10 million state grant to keep going.

But it could never generate significant revenues from its contractor referral service—and when the state grant ran out in 2016, tax records show, Clean Energy Works began recording large operating losses.

"An energy efficiency-based program could not support itself," Miller says.

Although Clean Energy Works hoped to weatherize 100,000 homes, it only completed about 5,000.

Yet Miller judges the effort a success. "You got thousands of homes retrofitted, hundreds of jobs created, dozens of contractors, a ton of awareness," Miller says. "It was money well spent."

Adams, Portland's former mayor, served on Clean Energy Works' board. He says the work the nonprofit set out to do was much more expensive than expected. But he says it would be wrong to call the effort a failure.

"Clean Energy Works lasted a lot longer than other similar organizations across the country," Adams says, noting the nonprofit pioneered a method for financing retrofits that remains in use today. "We got one-time money, and when that ran out, there wasn't any more."

The lesson from Clean Energy Works' experience: Good intentions and an extensive background in the field were not enough to create an operation that could finance itself. What such a project needed instead was a spigot of money that couldn't be turned off when political goals changed.

So, two years ago, advocates set out to secure permanent funding.

In the sweltering summer of 2018, patrons exiting Powell's City of Books often encountered a signature gatherer, pushing a measure that would "ensure that the biggest corporations [pay a new tax] for climate resilience and wealth-building in low-income areas and communities of color."

That was a mouthful. The real question was: Did Portlanders want to tax Walmart?

They did. Voters approved the tax in November 2018 by a landslide, 65 to 35 percent. The result is a \$60 million annual pool of money.

One of the leading evangelists for spending that money is Magnera, 32, a bookish, intense Columbia University graduate.

Magnera cut her teeth in Oregon working on Measure 98, which funds dropout prevention for underserved students, and then worked for the NW Energy Coalition, advocating for solar energy.

A homeowner who identifies as white, Magnera is not in the target demographic for PCEF. But with her background and fearless demeanor, she's good at advocating for the groups that are.

"It all comes down to the idea of justice for the folks who are most impacted and harmed historically," she says, adding that the changes taking place in the halls of power and at the ballot box are "long overdue and not happening fast enough."

Last year, Wheeler named Magnera to the Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission.

She shook up that influential, sometimes sleepy panel, demanding immediate action on issues ranging from exemptions for commercial and industrial property owners from the city's tree code (she opposed them) to requirements that private developers create space in new buildings to shelter the homeless (she favored them).

Magnera says she has a vision of what a favorable outcome for the Clean Energy Fund will look like.

"A number of successful projects that are supporting black, indigenous and other folks of color," she says. "Having lower energy bills, building resiliency and helping folks stay in their homes."

Over the past year, the city has set about translating such hopes into a framework that will put the new tax dollars to work.

Giving away \$60 million a year in grants is a challenging proposition. The Meyer Memorial Trust, for instance, has a full-time staff of 38 and gave away just \$36 million last year.

The Portland Arts Tax, which collects about \$11 million a year, distributes its money based on a per-student formula.

And PCEF differs from another specialty tax—the Portland Children's Levy and its \$20 million a year—in a key way: For the first 15 years of its existence, the Children's Levy required voter renewal every five years. There is no sunset mechanism for PCEF.

A nine-member citizen committee, staffed by a new office in the city's Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, will decide who gets the money.

The measure specifies that PCEF give money only to nonprofits. Groups such as Verde (Magnera's employer), OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon, and the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, which were instrumental in passing the measure, are likely to apply for grants but are not represented on the board.

The measure otherwise gives the all-volunteer grant committee broad latitude. There are wide ranges delineating where the money should go—40 to 60 percent for renewable energy and energy efficiency, for instance—and buckets of money whose purpose is barely defined at all: Five percent, for example, is earmarked for "future innovation."

Unlike the retrofits Clean Energy Works did, PCEF's money can subsidize projects without meeting Oregon Public Utility Commission standards for financial return. That means low-income families can benefit from a direct subsidy. Grant recipients can simply pay for improvements that lower utility bills.

On one hand, this relieves PCEF from the economic pressure Clean Energy Works faced. On the other hand, Portland economist Joe Cortright worries an absence of clear guidelines could make for a lack of accountability.

"There oftentimes isn't a lot of discipline on this kind of stuff," Cortright says. "The thinking is, if we wrap it in green enough cloth, nobody will look under the hood."

Rahming says he will be also watching closely to see whether PCEF money genuinely builds management skills for minority contractors and provides meaningful training for workers.

"It's not difficult to find an insulation company that meets minority goals, because most of those workers are minorities anyway," Rahming says. "But helping build a real contracting business that understands cash flow, bidding and scheduling, that's another thing entirely."

Hardesty says she's confident protections are in place to make sure the new tax money is properly spent and will produce genuine training and job skills for members of underserved communities. She notes that the fund prohibits self-dealing by board members, all deliberations on grant proposals will be public, all awards must be ratified by the City Council, and the program will be audited annually.

"There's no free money here," Hardesty says. "We're going to have really smart people staying very connected to this process."

Hardesty and the 200 organizations who backed the clean energy measure—as well as everybody who voted for it—had no idea how much money it would raise.

In campaign materials, including Voters' Pamphlet statements, proponents repeatedly said the measure would raise about \$30 million.

But after the measure passed, city officials ran their own numbers based on previous experience collecting taxes from large corporations. They concluded the take would be twice what the campaign expected.

Hardesty says the doubling of revenue projections came about because the campaign had no access to the city's corporate tax data (such information is confidential by law) and so harbored an incorrect understanding of which "retailers" the tax would hit.

"We did not know the definition of 'retail,'" she said recently. "Not until it passed did we find out it much broader than we anticipated."

Hardesty now has a strong incentive to make sure the tax succeeds. "There are a lot of eyes and ears from around the country on us," she says, noting that at least 15 jurisdictions have let Portland know they are interested in creating a similar tax.

One place for PCEF to focus its efforts could be on the thousands of units of low-income housing scattered across the city. Unlike market-rate buildings, where landlords pass along utility costs to tenants and so have little motivation to weatherize, nonprofits that own subsidized housing have a big incentive to save money but often can't afford to.

"That would set [PCEF] up for years of impactful work," says Earth Advantage's Heslam.

Phil Welker, retired executive director of Portland Energy Conservation Inc., which began working on efficiency 40 years ago, says he thinks Portland's new fund could do plenty of useful work, if it's judged on all the benefits it provides. That means including the health and climate benefits of weatherization, not just the financial savings on utility bills.

"In the old, utility model," Welker says, "any package of measures had to be cost effective at all times. But doing it that way, you miss out on dramatic opportunities."

He and Miller both see PCEF as a chance not just to save money for low-income Portlanders but to fulfill Portland's commitment to carbon reduction.

"Hopefully, there are the seeds of a new paradigm that will consider climate first and foremost," Miller says.

Both men say PCEF can thrive where the nonprofits they ran could not because the program won't be measured by the strict financial metrics that utility-funded projects are measured by. Instead, PCEF projects can focus more on less easily measured health and climate benefits.

Magnera says the fund's opportunity is even bigger.

"What we are seeing now is representation for communities that haven't been represented in our state and our city," she says. "Those doors are finally open."

Creating cost savings via energy efficiency looks easier than it is.

Energy efficiency, always economically challenging in Oregon's mild climate, has grown more difficult to achieve as energy remains cheap—and therefore less worth conserving.

The experience of another once-celebrated Portland nonprofit focused on energy efficiency shows how the industry has changed.

Serious energy efficiency efforts emerged after OPEC shocked the world in the 1970s, driving fuel prices to historic heights.

In 1979, a new nonprofit called Portland Energy Conservation Inc. spun off from the city of Portland's energy office. The nonprofit performed energy audits and weatherization retrofits, building up a national customer base.

By 2010, PECEI employed 300 and even put its name in neon on the exterior of a downtown Portland high-rise, a bold move for an Oregon nonprofit. But PECEI's revenue declined precipitously from 2011 to 2014, and that year the nonprofit sold its business to CLEAResult, a for-profit Texas company.

PECEI executive director Phil Welker chose to bank the \$7 million in proceeds from that sale rather than stay in the energy efficiency business.

Welker has retired to Utah, replaced by Tim Miller, the former Clean Energy Works leader, whose task now is to give PECEI's money away.

"The world has changed," Welker says. "Energy efficiency as a siloed, stand-alone activity is a solution for a problem that's kind of in the past

How \$60 million a year will be distributed.

THE NEW TAX: Big retailers, with revenues of more than \$500,000 in Portland and \$1 billion nationally, pay a 1 percent surcharge on their Portland sales. The city estimates the tax will raise \$44 million to \$61 million annually. The city keeps 5 percent for administration.

WHO GIVES IT AWAY? City commissioners each selected one member to serve on the grant committee; those five members then picked four more. The committee chooses which grants to award, and their recommendations must be ratified by the Portland City Council. Committee members may not direct money to their own organizations. (See list of committee members below.)

WHO GETS THE MONEY? Nonprofits, working alone or with partners. One-fifth of the money must go to groups with a history of working with "economically disadvantaged" Portlanders. All workers must be paid no less than 1.8 times minimum wage.

HOW WILL THE MONEY BE SPENT?

Renewable energy and energy efficiency: 40 to 60 percent

Job training and contractor support: 20 to 25 percent

Renewable agriculture and green infrastructure: 10 to 15 percent

Future innovation: 5 percent

Source: Portland Clean Energy Fund

MEMBERS OF THE GRANT COMMITTEE: Shanice Brittany Clarke, Portland Public Schools; Faith Graham, Network for Energy, Water, and Health in Affordable Buildings; Andrea Hamberg, Multnomah County; Michael David Edden Hill, journeyman electrician; Megan Horst, Portland State University; Jeffrey Moreland Jr., general contractor; Maria Gabrielle Sipin, transportation planner; Ranfis Villatoro, BlueGreen Alliance; Robin Wang, Ascent Funding

Commissioner Nick Fish's Death Leaves Portland Grieving—and City Hall Changed

*By Rachel Monahan
January 8, 2020*

An ex-New Yorker, he came to symbolize the best of Portland.

Within minutes of City Commissioner Amanda Fritz learning of her husband's death in a 2014 car crash, Commissioner Nick Fish arrived in her office.

Fish arranged for then-Police Chief Mike Reese to take her to the crash site on Interstate 5, Fritz recalls. Fish then accompanied her on that grim drive.

"I found out later that Nick hated being in the back seat as much as I do, but he insisted I sit up front," she wrote in a recent statement. "Knowing that his mother died in a car crash, too, it must have been especially awful for him to spend those hours with me in my darkest day."

Fish, 61, died of stomach cancer Jan. 2, more than two years after his diagnosis and just two days after announcing his resignation from a job he cherished.

His chief of staff, Sonia Schmanski, says he was so dedicated because the public had given him its trust. "He came to work every day to earn it," she tells WW. "He worked really hard every single day for 11 years to deserve it."

Fish's death seems to mark the end of an era in Portland government. As the longest-serving member of the Portland City Council, he loved offering counsel and witty repartee, thinking through an issue aloud and forming alliances to reach compromise. Those inclinations now seem scarce on an ideologically divided council—but they were, in fact, always rare.

"A bureau in trouble? Give it to Nick. Controversial issue? Give it to Nick. Time and time again he proved he could take care of it," wrote Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury on her Facebook page. "It is impossible to quantify just how better off Portland is because of his contributions."

An ex-New Yorker, he came to symbolize the best of Portland. His fondness for the city was palpable in a government building where many citizens had turned resentful. As Fritz revealed last week, Fish had been recruited to a housing job in the Obama administration but instead chose to stay in Portland.

The loss of Fish isn't just painful. It will measurably change how Portland government functions. Here are three ways.

City Hall has lost an old-school consensus builder.

If you measure politics along a left-right spectrum, Fish's death may create no change on the City Council.

But in an era of partisan, take-no-prisoners stridence exacerbated by social media, Fish practiced a make-no-enemies politics that no one else in the building attempts.

Former City Commissioner Mike Lindberg, who served 18 years on the council, called Fish's death "one of the most significant changes to City Council in my lifetime."

Lindberg says Fish didn't just know how to count to three—the majority of votes needed on the council—but instead strove for all five. "Because of his background, temper and approach to the job, he's been the glue that keeps things together," Lindberg says. "He's constantly shuttling between other commissioners to work issues out."

Fish's aversion to conflict made him the subject of some teasing. But lobbyist Len Bergstein says Fish's ability to work collaboratively was one of his "superpowers," and described his ability to listen to others as "unique for politicians with huge egos." It's certainly rare: The current mayor, Ted Wheeler, and his three remaining colleagues all have prickly reputations.

Former Mayor Charlie Hales says what City Hall will most acutely miss is Fish's lawyerly mind—and his willingness to use it to help people who disagreed with him.

"Nick would play back to people what they had expressed, frankly in a better-organized way," Hales says. "And they would agree: 'Thank you for stating my point better than I could.' They didn't go away mad, they went away gratified they had been heard."

City Hall just lost its biggest champion for affordable housing.

Fish was too ill to talk to the press when he announced his resignation from the City Council on Dec. 31, but in his final public statement, he endorsed a ballot measure that would fund homeless services.

"Supportive housing is a proven, efficient tool to serve our most vulnerable citizens, and I have worked hard to ensure that council has maintained this priority," he wrote. "Later this year, I hope our region passes a new measure to fund the services that allow people to remain successfully housed."

It's not clear whether such a measure will appear on a ballot in 2020. The regional government Metro, which could refer it, is reluctant because its leaders prefer a transportation funding measure.

Fish's words may add new moral urgency. But his absence will clearly be felt by the campaign itself.

Fish worked tirelessly to pass the Portland housing bond in 2016 and, even while undergoing chemotherapy, the Metro housing bond in 2018.

"He came into office and left office focused on the very poorest people in our community," says Schmanski. "He has always been an advocate for people who have no money, living outside, and have one or two medical conditions, who need a lot of help and don't have a champion."

Israel Bayer, former executive director of Street Roots, recalls Fish delivering the first meals to people who had just found housing. Marc Jolin, who runs the city-county Joint Office of Homeless Services, says that just two months ago, "Nick attended the wedding of two people he met almost a decade ago when he delivered a holiday food box to their home."

No one else in City Hall shares Fish's zeal. Wheeler, who serves as the city's housing commissioner, has followed Fish's lead on housing issues; City Commissioner Chloe Eudaly has mostly focused on tenants' rights.

Says former City Commissioner Dan Saltzman, "We certainly lost a champion of the underdog, particularly when it comes to housing and the homeless."

Fish's death opens the door for a second act for two former elected officials.

The City Council is expected to call an election in the May primary to fill Fish's seat. (A runoff, if needed, would be held in August.)

Former Mayor Sam Adams and onetime County Commissioner Loretta Smith are both considering a return to public life by seeking Fish's seat, multiple sources tell WW. That would make for a no-holds-barred election to replace him: Both Adams and Smith are notoriously gloves-off campaigners.

Smith declined to discuss her plans for any run before "my friend is memorialized." But she did signal an interest in the race.

"Nick's passing left a leadership vacuum at City Hall," she says. "It's concerning for some of us who care about the future of the city."

Adams, who beat Fish in a 2004 City Council race and later served alongside him, declined to comment on a possible run. Instead, he hailed Fish's work, recalling a time Fish voted against a deal to renovate a stadium with public funds for the Timbers soccer team.

"His commitment to civility does not mean he was namby-pamby; he was not," says Adams. "I could count on him wanting to explore an issue. He was a great Portland policy nerd in the best sense of that phrase."

The race could also bring a fresh perspective. Metro Councilor Sam Chase, a former chief of staff to Fish, tells WW he intends to enter the race. So do Fritz staffer Cynthia Castro; Julia DeGraw, a community organizer who ran against Fish last year; and Margot Black, co-chair of Portland Tenants United. Meghan Moyer, a project manager for construction firm Skanska USA, tells WW she too is weighing a run. Also said to be considering a run is Kayse Jama, executive director of the nonprofit Unite Oregon.

In the meantime, the seat will remain empty. For the next four months, no one will replace him.

Amid the Camping Controversy, a Portland Bureau Director Tries to Stifle Communication With the Media

*By Nigel Jaquiss
January 8, 2020*

She doesn't want anyone talking out of school with the press.

Date: Dec. 4

From: Andrea Durbin, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability director

To: Members of the Planning and Sustainability Commission

"We ask the Commissioners not contact the media about any [Planning and Sustainability Commission- or Bureau of Planning and Sustainability]-related business, unless it is a part of a

coordinated media plan with BPS staff. If a reporter reaches you by phone, please get their contact info and tell them you'll forward their questions and a spokesperson will get back to them."

What it meant: Durbin doesn't want anyone talking out of school to the press. The instructions came on the same day WW published a story ("Rest Easy," Dec. 4, 2019) about a controversial debate among commissioners whether to amend design guidelines to include the word "rest." The intention of the change was to encourage developers of new private buildings to include design features that could shelter homeless Portlanders.

In the end, the PSC passed along its draft language including "rest" to the city Design Commission, which scratched the word and the concept it represented. The draft next goes to the Portland City Council.

What others say: The gag order doesn't sit well with City Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty, a former legislator and longtime civil rights advocate with decades of volunteer positions and public meetings under her belt.

"I would never send an email like that," Hardesty tells WW, "nor do I think it's appropriate for a staffer to tell a commissioner not to talk to the media."

John Russell, a downtown developer and property owner who has served on numerous city commissions, including the PSC and the city agency now called Prosper Portland, says it's important when commissioners speak to the press that they make clear they are speaking for themselves and not the public body they serve. But he would not appreciate being muzzled.

"Anybody has the right to speak on their own behalf," Russell says.

Durbin says her goal is to protect the "sanctity of the process" as the PSC engages in a monthslong review of city design guidelines. She prefers that only the commission chair speak to the press, and that commissioners express their views only during open meetings. "It makes the process harder," she says, when individual commissioners grant interviews.

Mayor Ted Wheeler is Divorcing in the Middle of His Re-Election Campaign

*By Rachel Monahan and Nigel Jaquiss
January 7, 2020*

Wheeler, the heir to a timber fortune, married Katrina Wheeler in 2005.

Mayor Ted Wheeler and his wife, Katrina Maley Wheeler, have separated in the middle of his re-election campaign.

Wheeler confirmed the split in a statement from him and his wife Tuesday afternoon in response to questions from WW.

"As our family and close friends have been aware for some time, with mutual respect, we have made the difficult decision to divorce," Wheeler said. "We ask everyone to please respect our privacy as we navigate our next steps and do our best to maintain a sense of normalcy for our young daughter."

It's unusual timing for a political divorce. Wheeler is seeking to be the first Portland mayor to win reelection after three one-term mayors.

Wheeler is an heir to a timber family. When he ran for mayor in 2016, his annual income average \$1.5 million a year between 2012 and 2014, WW reported at the time.

Wheeler and his wife married in 2005. They have a daughter.

The Portland Mercury

City Council To Extend Homeless Camp Cleanup Program For One Year

By Alex Zielinski

January 7, 2020

Despite opposition from the homeless community, Portland City Council is expected to approve a new year-long contract with Rapid Response Bio Clean—a company that removes homeless encampments on public property—during Wednesday's council session.

Rapid Response and a fellow contractor called Pacific Patrol Services have been conducting camp sweeps for the city's Homelessness/Urban Camping Impact Reduction Program (HUCIRP) since 2014.

The cleanups, often triggered by complaints submitted by members of the public on the city's One Point of Contact website, fall within legal boundaries outlined in a 2012 settlement agreement. That agreement mandates that the city gives campers at least 48 hours' notice before cleaning up their campsite and that, at the time of the sweep, the city must collect and store all property that is "recognizable as belonging to a person and that has apparent use." That property can be retrieved at a Southeast Portland warehouse within 30 days—after which it's discarded.

After hearing of complaints of lost property and harassment by contractors, HUCIRP decided to update the contract it has with cleanup companies. The new contract increases the responsibility of these waste removal contractors, turning them into quasi-social workers during severe weather (by requiring contractors "conduct welfare checks" and direct campers to warming stations) and making sure they have at least one staffer on call who is trained in de-escalation techniques for people in a mental health crisis.

A new contract (which comes with a yearly \$4,528,000 stipend) meant current contractors had to re-apply to the job—if they wanted it—and gave other businesses a chance to take over the contract. After a search, a city committee selected Rapid Response to be the sole company carrying out the city's sweeps. But, days before City Council was expected to approve that contract, homeless advocacy groups lobbied to stall the vote and reconsider the entire program.

"We can't be asking biohazard cleanup folks to do frontline outreach work," Street Roots director Kaia Sand told the Mercury on December 19. "The city says this is the best system they got. But I say, if the system is broken—we go after the system."

Sand was joined in her opposition by a new advocacy group called Stop the Sweeps PDX, which demanded a moratorium on all cleanups conducted by the city. The outcry got the attention of at least one city leader—Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty announced that she opposed the current contract and asked council to only approve a 6-month-long contract. That would allow time, Hardesty argued, for the city to "reimagine" the camp cleanup process and possibly divvy up cleanup responsibilities among smaller organizations with more specific expertise. The city delayed the vote until the new year.

Meanwhile, the current Rapid Response contract expired, effectively halting all camp cleanup operations in Portland.

Those cleanups are expected to resume after a Wednesday council vote, when commissioners are set to reconsider the contract. In response to Hardesty's pushback, Mayor Ted Wheeler's office agreed to hold community meetings to discuss the contentious program before a contract renewal in 2021.

It's expected to get a unanimous vote from council.

"Previously I had stated my hope that an alternative to one large contract could be fostered with a six month extension," wrote Hardesty on her public Facebook page Monday. "What I know now is that the city is in fact working to split the contract work to award to smaller contractors in the near future and I am hopeful we can do this within this new one year time period."

Hardesty expressed her support of upcoming "community conversations" regarding homeless sweeps. This concession doesn't sit well with Sara Rudolph, member of Stop the Sweeps PDX.

"It doesn't make sense that they'd agree to extend this contract before hearing from the community," Rudolph said. "To go ahead and promise public money to a private entity without getting community input, that doesn't seem responsible. They clearly aren't genuinely invested in these conversations. It's negligent."

Mayor Wheeler Takes Over Commissioner Fish's Bureau Assignments

*By Alex Zielinski
January 7, 2020*

Mayor Ted Wheeler has signed an executive order reassigning Commissioner Nick Fish's bureau assignments to himself. Fish, who died from cancer Thursday, January 2, oversaw Portland Parks and Recreation, the Bureau of Environmental Services, and the Portland Children's Levy.

Fish announced he'd be resigning from City Council mid-term on December 31. According to Kristen Dennis, Wheeler's chief of staff, Fish and Wheeler had already discussed the future of Fish's bureaus following his resignation.

"We have the benefit of being able to issue an Executive Order that reflects how he wanted the work to continue," Dennis wrote in an email announcing the order.

A special election to appoint Fish's predecessor will take place on May 19, coinciding with the local primary election. If a candidate doesn't win by more than 50 percent of the vote, the city will hold a runoff election on August 11.

Several Portlanders (a few with serious name recognition) have already begun quietly considering a run for Fish's empty seat.

Fish's staff are expected to continue working on assignments and bureau projects that began under their late boss' tenure, and report to Wheeler's office. According to Sonia Schmanski, Fish's chief of staff, they'll continue working up until the new commissioner enters office.

Schmanski told the Mercury that she hopes the city retains her fellow staffers' talent. "They're excellent, and we're lucky to have them," she said.

A Formerly Homeless Man From the Oregon Coast Has a Plan to Save Wapato Jail

By Tess Riski
January 8, 2020

Alan Evans aims to convert the Wapato property into a 500-bed homeless shelter and addiction treatment center.

When real estate magnate Jordan Schnitzer bought the Wapato Jail in 2018 and promised to revive it as a homeless shelter, some Portlanders rolled their eyes.

But not Alan Evans.

Evans, 56, is founder of a Seaside, Ore.-based homelessness outreach and re-entry program called Helping Hands. Since 2004, the organization has opened 11 emergency shelters with a total of 200 beds—mostly in cash-strapped timber counties along the Oregon Coast.

Wapato, a jail built by Multnomah County but never used, has stood empty in North Portland for nearly two decades. For years, local business leaders have viewed it as a promising site to shelter Portland's growing homeless population, even as elected officials mostly scoffed. Last October, a year after Schnitzer's \$5 million purchase, he said if local governments didn't pitch in, he would demolish the jail and build a warehouse instead.

He hasn't. Instead, he's turned to Evans, who was himself homeless for more than two decades before starting Helping Hands. Together, they aim to convert the Wapato property into a 500-bed homeless shelter and addiction treatment center—no public funding necessary.

By next winter, Evans says, the seemingly cursed Wapato Jail could re-emerge with a new purpose under a new name: the Bybee Lakes Hope Center.

WW spoke with him this week about the plan.

WW: How did you first get involved with Jordan Schnitzer on this project?

Alan Evans: A little over a month ago, I was helping with a project in Clatsop County for United Way. [Sen.] Betsy [Johnson, D-Scappoose] came up to me and said, "Would you be interested in meeting Mr. Schnitzer?" She introduced me. He said, "Have you seen this facility?...I'm signing papers tomorrow for the demolition." I said, "Well, this is too bad, because there's a gigantic problem in the state of Oregon, and there's a gigantic facility that would be ideal, with a little bit of work done on it, to serve a purpose."

Then I got a call the next day. He said, "I'm sitting around the table and we're trying to figure out which contract to sign to tear the building down. Do you really believe this facility could work?" I said, "Absolutely."

What about this building attracted you to it for this project?

Years ago, we had a house in Seaside that had eight men in it. These guys would come in, they'd get an apartment, and in six months they were back at our door. What we realized was that people needed more than just a place to live. They needed help overcoming and building resilience to change things. From my experience on the street: Let's say I was living in a tent under Burnside, which I did, and I needed mental health services and I needed to get an ID. When you're in that place, all of those things seem unreachable.

So, to see a building like this where all of these resources could be provided under one roof? How is that not a fit?

What services do you plan to provide?

We would love to see an intake center, which we would run. We're looking at having three dorms in this building. People would get referred to us—referral only. We would do an intake on them and put it into our system. And then we would have mental health services on site. We would have addiction services on site. We would love to see detox services on site. We'd love to see different kinds of schooling on site. More education, more vocational training. And opportunities for job placement.

Do you have a sense of what it might cost?

Our budget stated it would take us about \$1.4 million to make the changes that would need to be made to the kitchen and to the dorms for us to provide our service in there, and another \$1.2 million to run it every year. We're raising about \$3 million right now, and we're doing very well.

Where is that \$3 million coming from?

That's coming from private donors. We've secured \$1.2 million so far. The biggest donation we received was \$1 million, and the smallest was \$50.

Who are the donors?

You can drill me all you want, but all I can say is we need to make sure we honor our givers' [anonymity].

City code says you can't take an industrial facility and use it as a treatment center or for group living. How do those laws apply here?

There are always regulations in areas that state you can't do certain things in certain ways. But we know the city is capable of voting for us to be able to utilize this building the way we want to utilize it. We know they can vote to do that.

Do you have a sense of when this will be completed?

If we have our way, we could be up and running before next winter, which is our goal. I'm a guy who lived on the streets for 27 years, and with \$40 in my pocket, I started an organization that has changed the lives of thousands of people in communities. I know when people band together to make a difference, things begin to change. I don't have a doubt in my mind we can make this work.

The Daily Journal of Commerce

82nd Avenue changes hinge on Metro bond

*By Chuck Slothower
January 7, 2020*

Metro is in discussions with state and local officials about the possibility of turning over to the Portland Bureau of Transportation state highways where they function as city streets within Portland.

Oversight of streets such as 82nd Avenue, which is also Oregon Route 213, would be transferred. That could set in motion a change in priorities from enabling fast-moving vehicle traffic to instituting greater safety features for bicycles and pedestrians.

“At Metro, we want these roadways to best reflect our land use and our regional goals,” said Margi Bradway, deputy director of the regional agency’s planning and development department.

Many obstacles remain for the plan, not the least of which is funding. If control of streets were to shift to the city or county, responsibility for maintenance and upgrades would shift as well.

Neighborhood residents and community groups are eager to see improvements on 82nd Avenue, which they said has suffered from years of deferred maintenance by the Oregon Department of Transportation.

“I think there’s great interest in getting it done; it just comes down to finding the money,” said Duncan Hwang, associate director of the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, which has an office at Southeast 82nd Avenue and Division Street.

Metro is serving as the facilitator of the jurisdictional transfer assessment. The regional agency aims to have draft recommendations completed by the end of 2020, with an implementation plan to follow.

Funding hinges on passage of Metro’s regional transportation bond measure that is expected to appear on ballots in November. The package of projects included is still taking shape, but a Metro task force recommended the bond measure include \$400 million for improving 82nd Avenue. The Metro Council will weigh which projects to include in the funding package at a public hearing on Monday.

82nd Avenue has changed little for decades, remaining a four-lane vehicle corridor with little infrastructure for pedestrians and bicyclists. It also has one of the highest rates of crashes in the Portland area.

Local leaders hope to reduce pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle crashes. A 12.9-mile section of 82nd Avenue (Oregon 213 North) through Lents and Gateway had 117 crashes involving pedestrians, 48 involving cyclists and 3,270 involving vehicles from 2013 to 2018, according to Metro.

“Many of the state-owned highways, the state-owned arterials, have the highest crash (rates) in the region,” Bradway said.

Brian Wong, a local activist with the 82nd Avenue Improvement Coalition, lives off of 82nd Avenue near Southeast Stark Street. His main concern is pedestrian safety, he said. His children cross the highway every morning to reach their school bus stop.

“I really would like to see more pedestrian-activated crossings along 82nd Avenue,” he said. “If you’re not at a lighted intersection, it’s really playing ‘Frogger,’ and you’re just hoping you don’t get stuck in that middle turn lane. It just can feel really threatening to get across the road.”

While 82nd Avenue has remained a car-first thoroughfare, PBOT has worked with TriMet to transform other streets that it controls with features such as red-striped bus-only lanes and larger bus stations that facilitate access by pedestrians and bicyclists.

“I visualize the local street as having pedestrian movement, transit movement (and) bike lanes, versus the interstate – which is about moving cars quickly,” Bradway said.

Many of the state highways, including 82nd Avenue, were originally used to move farm products to urban consumers. The old highways have changed since completion of the interstate system, Bradway said.

“These roadways continue to function more like local roads and densify,” she said.

Aaron Brown, who runs the local group No More Freeways, said he welcomed new ideas for the state highways, but was concerned ODOT would dump the roadways onto local jurisdictions without the funding to improve them.

“It’s like inheriting your uncle’s beat-up car and having to fix it up,” he said.

Bradway said ODOT’s Region 1 leaders have been open to the discussions.

“ODOT has been a great partner on this,” she said. “They really have.”

Much remains to be negotiated between the state agency and local authorities, ODOT spokesman Don Hamilton said.

“Each of these is a separate process that would require an (intergovernmental agreement) between ODOT and the city to determine what steps are necessary before the transfer is complete,” he said.

ODOT has a memorandum of understanding with PBOT that is essentially a to-do list before jurisdictional transfer. Among the items are cost estimates to bring 82nd Avenue to a state of good repair and to implement safety improvements, PBOT spokesman John Brady said.

“The expectation is that ODOT will need to chip in and contribute to get 82nd up to a state of good repair,” he said.

Encouraging development is not an immediate goal of jurisdictional transfer, but it’s not hard to see more housing and commercial potential in a revitalized 82nd Avenue. The ongoing urbanization of 82nd Avenue and potential changes have given rise to fears of gentrification.

“That’s definitely a fear, but we have to balance that with the public-safety issues that are a community priority now,” Hwang said.

Portland’s communities of color are clustered around the state highways, including 82nd Avenue. The East Portland corridor has thriving Chinese-American, Vietnamese-American, African and Slavic-American communities.

“It’s just a really diverse community all along,” Hwang said.

Besides funding, legal liability has been top of mind in the intergovernmental talks. The high-crash corridors have attracted lawsuits.

Other highways are under discussion to change jurisdictions include the Tualatin Valley Highway (Oregon routes 8 and 47) and McLoughlin Boulevard (Oregon 99E).

The Legislature has occasionally weighed in on highway jurisdictions, including a 2017 transportation bill that called for the Oregon Transportation Commission to study a stretch of Southeast Powell Boulevard between Southeast Ninth Avenue and Interstate 205. State Rep. Alissa Keny-Guyer, D-Portland, sponsored a bill in the 2019 session to establish a formal statewide process to transfer road jurisdictions, but it did not move forward.

Local advocates said they recognize 82nd Avenue is critical for motor vehicle transportation, but added that improvements must be made for pedestrians and drivers alike.

“No one’s winning on that road at this point,” Wong said. “Any improvement will be an improvement for anybody. The road is in such bad shape that the cars aren’t getting any service out of it, and neither are pedestrians at this point.”

The Portland Observer

Fire Bureau Mural Puts Community in Focus

January 7, 2020

Showcases diversity in city

A new piece of public art at Portland Fire & Rescue’s main administrative building downtown showcases the fire bureau’s connection to diverse communities, a mural created by Portland artists Addie Boswell thanks to a commission from new Portland Fire Chief Sara Boone, the first African American to lead the bureau.

When Chief Boone was sworn in last summer, she communicated that the three areas she considers the most important pillars of Portland Fire and Rescue were community, service and sacrifice.

In her first weeks of the job, she highlighted the sacrifice of past members of the fire bureau by installing new lighting and painting an accent wall behind the historical portrait of Chief David Campbell who died in a 1911 fire while protecting fellow firefighters.

The new mural sends a message for community and service by showcasing the diverse populations the fire bureau serves.

Boone said she wants everyone who walks down the hallway to the chief’s office to know they are welcome and included.

The bureau engaged the Regional Arts and Culture Council to manage the mural project and Boswell and Thomas’s submission “It takes everyone to create community” was selected and commissioned through a public process.

The colorful painting, now titled “Vibrant Cities Don’t Burn,” creates a bright tapestry of Portland imagery stitched together with symbolic threads denoting the fire bureau’s history and work. A flutter of 36 butterflies representing each of the 36 Portland Fire & Rescue firefighters lost in the line of duty fly in the direction of Chief Campbell’s portrait down the hall.

Among the scenes of nature and people working in harmony are roses, which are both a symbol of the city and the centerpiece of PF&R’s logo. The work also honors the sacredness of the land and people who came before us and is imbued with so many surprise bits of symbolism that a key will accompany it on the wall.

“I want to thank the artists for creating this celebratory, inclusive and engaging piece of work,” Chief Boon said. “I appreciate the level of commitment and understanding that the artists put into this work as visual and visceral representations of service and community.”

“Those who head down this hallway will understand our history and know that we are going into the future together. This artwork highlights the best of our city and Portland Fire & Rescue,” she added.

OPB

Portland Poised To Approve \$4.5 Million Contract For Campsite Cleanups

*By Rebecca Ellis
January 7, 2020*

After abandoning the vote last minute amid outcry from homeless advocates back in December, Portland's city council is poised to approve a controversial \$4.5 million annual contract to clear out homeless encampments.

The contract with Rapid Response Bio Clean, a hazardous waste removal company, was originally expected to sail through city council on Dec 18. But it became clear the day before that commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty would be a "no" vote after meeting with homeless advocates and the item was pulled.

Though the city has worked with Rapid Response since 2016, the new contract drew the ire of advocates, who said they did not want to see millions going to a hazardous waste removal company — nor did they want to see Portland's government nearly double the amount it was willing to spend on cleanups overall.

The city spent about \$2.3 million last year on campsite cleanups, distributed between three providers. The city has said there are two main reasons for the increase: the number of illegal encampments has ballooned and the states now pays the city to clear out the sites along the area's interstates.

The city council is expected to approve the contract when it returns to council Wednesday. Minor negotiations have happened in the weeks since, notably the promise of a future public work session that would allow residents to discuss the contract, after it's approved. The contract is renewable for up to five years.

Council members also may have felt the pressure in the last week as Rapid Response halted their cleanups, which entail removing trash and human waste from sites and dispersing campers. Their funding ran out on Dec. 30.

Central City Concern's Clean Start program has continued its more limited work of picking up trash and needles from campsites.

Assuming the new contract's approved, Rapid Response is poised to restart cleanups Wednesday afternoon, according to Heather Hafer, spokesperson for the Office of Management and Finance, which oversees campsite cleanups.

The office has framed this contract as a significant improvement from those that preceded it. This version requires staff to be trained in non-violent conflict resolution, "be polite, diplomatic and professional at all times," and be capable of administering Naloxone.

Mayor Ted Wheeler has also thrown his support behind the contract.

"We can effectively address public health, environmental, and public safety issues in problematic camps while also being compassionate in our approach," Wheeler said in a statement. "This contract achieves both goals. This is the case that I will make to my City Council colleagues on Wednesday."