

CHAPTER V
RETRENCHMENT

The Jacky Years: 1989-1993

The 1988 budget skirmish between ONA and the Office of Finance and Administration (OF&A) was followed by a significant alteration in ONA's programmatic obligations. Beginning in July 1988, ONA would take on the responsibility for staffing three citizen commissions that had previously been served by the City's Bureau of Human Resources (BHR), including the Portland/Metropolitan Commission on Aging (PMCoA), the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission (MHRC), and the Youth Commission (YC).

Following a plan first formally proposed in 1988 by then City Commissioner Earl Blumenauer, City Council resolved to move PMCoA, MHRC, and YC to ONA, stressing the concordance between ONA's citizen-focussed mission and the citizen makeup and advocacy orientation of the three human resources commissions.¹ Rachel Jacky,

¹ Budget notes for FY 88-89 stated: "The youth, aging and human rights constituencies are a natural complement to the neighborhood network in that they serve as a vehicle for citizen participation and advocacy on social issues of concern to neighborhoods. The agendas of both programs will be enhanced by integration into one bureau." (from Appropriation Summary for Office of Neighborhood Associations, City of Portland Budget, p. 167, 1988-89.) Responsibility for coordinating human services with other local governmental jurisdictions was transferred to the City's Bureau of

previously Director of the now dissolved BHR, was then installed as Director of ONA in March 1989, under Mayor Bud Clark. Jacky served under Clark until January 1991, when ONA was shifted to newly elected Commissioner Gretchen Kafoury's portfolio. Jacky served under Kafoury until leaving ONA in November 1993.²

Jacky's tenure coincided with one of the most difficult periods in ONA's history. First, Jacky's previous association with the Bureau of Human Resources, and the method by which she was hired by Mayor Clark, stirred suspicions among several DCB activists across the City. Although it received approval by the ONA BAC, the transfer of the advocacy commissions from BHR was looked at askance by many NA leaders who feared it signaled a drift in the ONA mission away from its historic role of NA support towards an emphasis on human services delivery. Concerns about resisting a service delivery function for ONA had been long-standing, dating to the origins of the program and the debate over instituting the "District Planning Organizations"

Community Development. These were all transitions pursuant to Resolution A, a 1983 inter-governmental agreement between the City and Multnomah County, which called for a transfer of service obligations between the two jurisdictions.

² Jacky had started at the BHR in mid-1985, following her work as Program Director at the Center For Urban Education (CUE). Like Sarah Newhall, Jacky had also received grooming in local activism around refugee re-settlement issues in Portland prior to taking the ONA Director's post.

(Chapter III). These concerns were exacerbated during 1980s budget woes, as well as increasing pressure from City Council to enact the provisions of its inter-governmental agreement with Multnomah County that called for a swap of service delivery obligations.³ Resentment over this transfer would simmer and then re-emerge, and suspicion about Jacky's affiliation with the process would linger throughout her time at ONA.

Budget cutting in 1991 following the passage of Oregon's property tax limitation initiative, Measure 5, strained to the limit ONA's relations with DCBs, and fostered renewed resentment over ONA's obligations to deal with BHR functions. Beginning first in Spring 1990, rancor over DCB contract negotiations with the West-Northwest District Coalition would trigger another round of DCB discontent. This would peak during FY 91-92 budget negotiations the following year, in May 1991. These negotiations had followed Guidelines revisions that had been in process since late 1989. Some of the FY 91-92 contract stipulations appeared to DCB participants around the City as an end-run on agreements made during the Guidelines negotiations. The contract

³ Under Resolution A, the City of Portland would phase out its human service obligations and the County would phase out road and sewer development services.

dispute would garner support for West-Northwest from around the City against Jacky and Commissioner Kafoury.

Finally, North Portland community politics, having long simmered, came to a head between Fall 1991 and February 1992, eventually leading to a lawsuit waged against Jacky, Kafoury, and several North Portland District Coalition members. Somewhat ironically, one of Jacky's major accomplishments would be to help cobble a hybrid service delivery arrangement in North Portland, which, though by several accounts quite successful, would be anathema to Tufts' valorization of Portland's DCB model.

THE CONTRACT SKIRMISHES

Just prior to completion of the 1989-91 Guidelines, ONA entered into contract negotiations with DCBs for FY 91-92.⁴ Jacky introduced changes to the previous year's contracts at a May 6, 1991 meeting of DCB Chairs and ONA staff.⁵ New provisions came as a shock to several DCB delegates in attendance, already leery from the previous year's contract skirmishes. Now these activists faced

⁴ See Appendix C for discussion of the 1989-91 Guidelines revisions.

⁵ Meetings between the DCB chairs and ONA staff had been a regular feature of the program since Patti Jacobsen's tenure.

several stipulations either discussed and discarded months previously during the 1989-91 Guidelines review process, or introduced by the contract for the first time. Among those discarded by DCB delegates during the review process was a proposal put forth by ONA to cinch up the City's crime prevention program. This came out of police concerns with increasing gang and drug related activity that, ONA argued, called for a more unified approach than could be sustained on a neighborhood by neighborhood basis. DCB delegates successfully asserted their preference to retain control over programming for district crime prevention staff, and the matter was dropped from the Guidelines review process, only to re-emerge in the contracts that were presented to DCBs by ONA in May 1991.

Besides trumping DCB demands to retain programming control over crime prevention, ONA imposed other restrictions, including: requiring that district staff meet with ONA officials upon request by ONA rather than only on a quarterly basis; require that DCB members and staff actively encourage citizens to attend training and orientation sessions sponsored by ONA, as well as related activities set by other city bureaus⁶; and

⁶ This had been an item previously dropped from the July 1987 Draft Guidelines.

restricting DCB control over office staff salaries (Perlman, 1991).

District Coalition leaders from around the City grumbled, but eventually agreed to sign the new contracts, with one exception; reaction to ONA's mandates from the West-Northwest DCB was defiant. A June 1991 story run in the Northwest Examiner newspaper⁷ highlighted the dismay and sense of betrayal felt by West-Northwest activists who had been actively involved in the Guidelines review process. The timing of the disclosure by ONA was deemed as an affront by DCB leaders across the City, for it would leave very little time for full DCB review before the start of the fiscal year. Requests for a deadline extension for contract acceptance by West-Northwest were met curtly by Commissioner Kafoury staffer, Kathleen Sadaat, who demanded documentation from West-Northwest detailing in what ways the contract stipulations were onerous (Classen, 1991).

A tete-a-tete between West-Northwest and Kafoury's office ensued for the next several weeks. Finally, on June 28, an eleventh hour agreement between ONA and West-Northwest (W/NW) was reached. The revised contract

⁷ "Kafoury seeks greater control over neighborhood offices", (in Classen, 1991).

included several concessions to W/NW demands, including deletion of references to the crime prevention obligations that had rattled DCB activists. The primary difference between the original and revised contracts was a matter of language and specification. The City's preference was to detail the duties DCBs would be required to undertake as part of their contract obligations. DCB resistance countered that these obligations were onerous and too heavily predicated on a "downtown view" of what neighborhoods needed to be doing to address crime issues.⁸

All DCBs received revised contracts along with W/NW, whose activists were valorized by other DCB regulars for their defiance of ONA and Kafoury. Kafoury retorted that the impetus behind the push to stiffen contract relations was to foster greater "partnership" between City bureau operations and neighborhood activity. But the "partnership" being pursued by the City felt heavy-handed to DCB regulars who feared, among other things, losing control over crime prevention staff

⁸ The language changes typically revolved around word choice. Whereas the City's preference was to stipulate that DCBs would "ensure" this or that outcome, the DCBs would diminish this to "promote". Or where the City would stipulate DCB participation in citywide activities and programs, the DCBs pushed to add, "As appropriate." In general the FY 91-92 contract negotiations read like a road map of contest over whose definition of involvement and "partnership"--the DCBs' or the City's--would prevail.

whom they had come to depend upon to help support other neighborhood issues. Too much specification of crime prevention personnel duties, they felt, would hinder DCB abilities to re-direct staff resources to respond to pressing organizing issues as they emerged.

Kafoury stated to the *Oregonian* that the contract interests of the City should not be construed as "mandates" to the DCBs. "It's not meant to mandate anything. It's meant to encourage participation in citywide programs." Kafoury opined that the real issue driving W/NW animosity revolved around low trust levels between that District and the City (Perlman, 1991a).

Although not as intense, contract negotiations for FY 92-93 would be driven by the same themes determining the FY 91-92 skirmishes, and would cede more concessions to the DCBs along lines of granting them control over determining contract priorities.⁹

Playing to win: the West-Northwest District Coalition

That the West-Northwest District Coalition led the FY 91-92 contract fight would not come as a surprise to

⁹ The DCBs achieved this largely through obtaining language stipulating that obligations set in the contract needed to concur with DCB workplans. On the one hand this amounted to a hair-splitting exercise, since the workplans were also an obligation required by the contract. But to the extent they could garner wiggle-room in setting their own agendas--a prerogative granted the DCBs and NAs that was key to fostering legitimacy for ONA--the DCBs viewed their workplan privileges as leverage to counter-control ONA.

NA stakeholders around the City. This District has historically been the home to some of the City's most highly educated residents. It has therefore long been envied by other DCBs for human capital resources it has routinely been able to mobilize in its contests with the City. Well stocked over the years with architects, realtors and attorneys, the W/NW flagship NA, the Northwest District Association, has earned renown across the City as one of its most valiant and successful Neighborhood Associations. As such, it has held important symbolic significance for Portland's citizen participation efforts.

The NWDA got its start in the early 1970s fighting the expansion plans of Good Samaritan Hospital. It subsequently joined forces with a group of Willamette Heights neighbors spearheading a drive to stop a planned extension of Interstate 405, which would have cut a swath through the northern edge of the neighborhood.¹⁰

Besides these events, the NWDA's defiant posture has stemmed partially from several geographic characteristics which have historically distinguished this area from most of Portland's other neighborhoods.

¹⁰ The planned freeway extension would have removed several blocks of low-income housing and, it was then feared, fostered the continued encroachment of industrial activity from the northern edge of the neighborhood.

An ample supply of large vintage homes, clear neighborhood boundaries, and development and traffic pressures at its edges (especially to the east and north) have conditioned NWDA activists to be particularly vigilant towards encroachments on neighborhood livability. In addition, development pressures in the late 1980s--including the demolition of several older homes for rowhouse construction and the increasing commercialization of parallel commercial strips traversing the neighborhood north to south along NW 21st and 23rd Avenues--triggered intense political activity at the NWDA and West Northwest DCB.

But another part of this defiance emanated from the manner in which W/NW leadership had managed to control and guide agenda setting at the DCB. As mentioned in Chapter IV, this District had been particularly successful in adopting the logic inherent in the DCB building efforts Sarah Newhall had engineered in the mid-1980s. Key activists rising in rank from the NWDA took firm control of the DCB with the arrival of Newhall, and parlayed this into a dominance they wielded there for the next several years.

The process imperatives that determined NA and DCB agenda setting were played out with particular intensity in W/NW. This was in part due to the growing commercial

activity that posed ongoing livability issues for the community. But this intensity was also due to the manner in which key individuals were able to commandeer the levers of control over agenda setting. The logic driving incentives to focus on organizational maintenance at the expense of engendering broader participation would root firmly at the W/NW DCB, garnering for this organization a reputation for defiance towards downtown.^{11,12}

Hence, Jacky's arrival at ONA--with an agenda to harness the program to a service delivery orientation--met with a mobilized and militant period for the West-Northwest district. Key Northwest activists, who had garnered experience in a variety of neighborhood fights, would deploy new forms of resistance to what they

¹¹ Among other advantages, the W/NW DCB had a strong propaganda machine at its disposal through the *Northwest Examiner* newspaper, for many years owned and operated by the husband of the District office Executive Director. Allies to the DCB power base have downplayed this issue, but City officials and neighborhood activists not aligned with the W/NW clique have lamented this arrangement. The W/NW role in shaping Portland's NA ethos has been very significant, and will be taken up again in Chapter VII.

¹² The tight control over District affairs was shared primarily between NWDA leadership and NINA (North Industrial Neighborhood Association, located to the north of NWDA in industrial territory). These two neighborhoods had been bitter rivals during the freeway fights. But the imperative to abide Newhall's edicts necessitated alliance building. Eventually a third NA, Hillside, was brought into the loop of control. Hillside and NWDA had also skirmished previously over the spoils of funding set aside by the Oregon Department of Transportation following their withdrawal of plans to extend I-405. These three NAs formed a powerful league at the W/NW DCB through most of the 1990s.

perceived to be a decisive threat from a changing ONA ethos. Through cultivating contacts especially in Southwest and East Portland, W/NW activists deployed obstructionist tactics against Downtown that hamstrung ONA's efforts throughout Jacky's tenure.

"SHE HIT THE GROUND RUNNING"¹³

Gretchen Kafoury arrived at the City Council following a career first in the Oregon House of Representatives, then as Multnomah County Commissioner. Kafoury was an ardent social service advocate and staunch supporter of affordable housing policies and programs. She had also garnered a reputation for taking on agency intransigence. Kafoury was an activist Commissioner, and her zeal to mobilize an agenda for assisting dis-enfranchised groups would set her at loggerheads with key NA leadership.

Six months after taking over ONA, Jacky and Kafoury had begun crafting a way to incorporate NA activity into the City's Future Focus agenda.¹⁴ Jacky would also push

¹³ Comment made by Mayor Bud Clark to the *Oregonian* about Kafoury's start as City Commissioner (Kiyomura, August 1, 1991).

¹⁴ Future Focus was a policy formation framework spearheaded by Mayor Bud Clark. The impetus for this grew in part out of Clark's desire to restore equanimity and consensus on City Council following the budget woes of the 1980s.

to incorporate this work with strategic planning efforts internal to Kafoury's bureau portfolio. These various efforts were guided by a strategy engineered by Jacky to harness the NA program to broader efforts Kafoury was hoping to actualize while in office. Charting a course for this agenda through NA and DCB waters was a task Jacky would take on in earnest.

The motive behind these efforts derived in part from the concordance between agency prerogatives within Kafoury's portfolio. As requested of Mayor Bud Clark, Kafoury received executive authority over the Bureaus of Planning, Buildings, Community Development, and the Office of Neighborhood Associations. Also, beginning in 1990, Portland faced requirements from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to formulate a five-year funding allocation strategy for federal subsidies targeting affordable housing initiatives. Coupled with Portland Future Focus, these HUD mandates helped Kafoury establish a broad activist platform. These initiatives would be packaged and presented to NA and DCB participants as the City's "Neighborhood Futures" effort.

With one set of ONA Guidelines now in place (and a revised version forthcoming), Jacky turned to the DCB contracts as a way to legitimate a dialogue with

District Coalition leadership through which Kafoury's agenda could be positioned. In step with the initiatives undertaken by her predecessor, Sarah Newhall, Jacky had hoped to engineer a "discussion" between Kafoury and DCB leadership that would focus on the many long-standing issues of concern for ONA stakeholder groups. Among these were issues that bore directly on the tendency for conflict and brinkmanship to evolve around control prerogatives.

A June 19, 1991 memo from Jacky to Kafoury detailed a strategy for this: the broader dialogue would be structured as a series of forums where DCB chairs would be invited to host the process. These "dialogues" would include bureau personnel from Kafoury's portfolio. But what DCB participants would not be entirely privy to was the extent to which agency personnel were lined up behind a unified portfolio agenda developed by the portfolio "long-range planning group".

Jacky's memo suggested that other stakeholders be brought into the dialogue, including community leaders working outside of the NA network, Council members and their staffs, other bureau managers, etc. As a primary goal of this exercise, Jacky hoped that input and feedback would stimulate further commitments to deal with long standing questions and tensions shadowing the

program.¹⁵ She also hoped that this would lead towards a consensus on "new procedures to be followed."

Importantly, and fatefully, none of these initiatives had originated from DCB leadership. As such, the DCB Chairs were being invited to preside over a process staged to be a dialogue but which was in fact a referendum for change towards a program blueprint determined outside of NA purview.

By using the policy armature of Future Focus, ONA's contracting authority, and a carrot and stick approach to conditioning DCB leadership, Jacky maintained the pressure first initiated by Newhall to unbundle and challenge assumptions about how the NA program should work. But ONA's drift towards a center-initiated plan limited its ability to play a neutral role to help catalyze this discussion. DCB regulars would quickly conclude that Jacky's moves were freighted with an agenda that didn't fit the prickly idiosyncrasies and

¹⁵ These questions were noteworthy for how transparently they conveyed the long-standing ambiguity and embedded contradictions of Portland's NA institution. Now 17 years old, the program was still nettled by the same basic questions. As worded in Jacky's memo to Kafoury: "How do/should Neighborhood Associations and their Coalitions relate to their respective communities?" "How do/should Neighborhood Associations/District Coalitions and city bureaus relate to each other?" "What should be the relationship between the Coalitions, which rely on City funding, and the City (ONA) in terms of program development and management?" (Jacky memo to Kafoury, January 2, 1992, in ONA Policy & Historical, File: Misc. ONA Historical.)

disparate priorities that determined NA and DCB consensus building imperatives.

The Portland Future Focus Policy Committee established twenty-five strategic goals in total, six of which were to be implemented through detailed "Action Plans". Of these six, three were deemed by PFF to relate directly to ONA programs. These included crime reduction, tolerance for diversity, and leadership development. Notably, each of these had a distinctive service orientation. No mention was made of the need for NAs to focus on land use issues, or to serve as watchdogs of local governance.

Kafoury requested that the ONA BAC review these goals and advise her on their suitability vis-à-vis ONA given its budget constraints. The ONA BAC noted that the PFF goals were laudatory, and that several of them were already being undertaken in accordance with previous and existing ONA program objectives, especially those pertaining to crime prevention. But the PFF action items pertaining to diversity and leadership initiatives were more problematic.

The ONA BAC could not support any new priorities that would require funding shifts. As they would state: "We believe that ONA is already operating a complex program with high staff demands and is expected to do

more than is reasonably possible. We also cannot recommend any current functions to be traded off in order to implement those three (new) action items."¹⁶ The action items included an elaborate schedule for evaluating neighborhood association activity, establishment of a mentoring program for new and emerging leaders using NA leadership, and a logo contest for kicking off a public relations campaign on diversity issues.

SOUL SEARCHING IN THE '90s, ROUND ONE: 1992-1993

The ONA BAC had served a fly-wheel function in buffering the NA program from the edicts of Future Focus, but the experience garnered in the process by DCB activists served as a catalyst to more skirmishing. Beginning in the Winter of 1992, Portland's NA institution commenced what would become a year-and-a-half-long identity search. Provoked by Commissioner Kafoury's efforts to define a center-initiated agenda, DCB activists from around the City came together, on their own terms, to define for themselves why they existed. The DCB logic Sarah Newhall had tried to

¹⁶ Letter from ONA BAC to Kafoury, February 19, 1992 in ONA Policy & Historical, File: Misc. ONA Historical.

manifest was, with Jacky's help, beginning to bear fruit in ways neither Director could have fully anticipated. The 1992-93 period of soul-searching would be repeated in 1995-96 under yet a new ONA Director, Diane Linn.

Portland's NA program had, by 1992, settled into a pattern of limited confrontation between ONA and the DCBs. Although these soul-searching efforts would jar status quo perceptions and stakeholder positions, they would provide only limited impetus towards the mobilization of new resources or explorations into program innovation. Instead, vested interests would, for the most part, retrench their positions following a series of blinkered standoffs.

An equal and opposite reaction

As a result of the contract skirmishes of Spring 1991-- and the initiatives being undertaken by Jacky and Kafoury noted above--leadership from the West-Northwest DCB mobilized to bring more pressure to bear on ONA regarding the contract negotiation process, as well as to gain a stronger position in the "big picture" dialogue Kafoury's portfolio staff had been engineering. Drawing together members of other DCBs, West-Northwest activists pressured Jacky to support a survey effort it had hoped would achieve three things. First, they hoped

to depict for ONA the diversity and range of interests that existed among the various DCs, thereby (secondly) proving the futility of a centralized agenda. Finally, W/NW activists also hoped to demonstrate DCB intransigence vis-à-vis ONA and the City.

In January 1992, surveys were dispersed to the six DCBs then in operation. A retreat was then scheduled for February 22, 1992, to which were invited all DCB Chairs and District office Directors.¹⁷ The stated objective for the retreat was to discuss the results of the survey. Forty-five participants attended. Eighty-four DCB board members had responded to the survey--a nearly 100% response rate.

The thrust of the survey effort was to characterize the ways in which the DCBs both varied and converged amongst one-another in outlook and priorities. Following two general queries pertaining to the mission and functions of each board, the survey posed a series of two-part questions geared to assess respondents' perceptions of "current" practices juxtaposed to "ideal" situations. These questions were grouped under four themes: DCB relationships with citizens and neighborhood associations; DCB relations with City bureaus (other

¹⁷ Board Directors from the North Portland DCB did not attend. The Retreat followed only days after a momentous breakup of the North Portland's Citizen Committee.

than ONA); DCB relationships with other community-based organizations; and DCB relationship with ONA. The survey was designed with closed response items. Respondents were to rank each item according to their perceptions of which "best characterized" the current situation. A tandem question with tandem response sets then asked respondents to indicate their "ideal situation".¹⁸

Analysis of this survey is limited to the summary of findings that were provided to the DCB chairs and staff Directors at the February 22, 1992 Retreat. According to this summary, responses to the first theme, "DCB relationships with citizens and neighborhood associations", indicated that "actual" and "ideal" conditions were in fairly close alignment.

By comparison, the summary noted that retreat participants felt that DCB relationships with City bureaus (other than ONA) "tended to be reactive and adversarial." Regarding DCB relationships with other community-based organizations, the summary reported that--as with DCB relations with member NAs--DCB relationships with other community-based organizations were "pretty much" aligned with the "ideal".

¹⁸ The results of these surveys are reproduced in Appendix D.

With regards to DCB relations with ONA, the survey summary stated that the largest discrepancy between "current" and "ideal" had to do with three items. ONA was viewed as not doing enough to provide technical assistance "at the request of coalitions." Conversely, ONA was viewed as spending too much time in "fiscal oversight of the contracts," and "performance oversight of (DCB) contract(s) and workplan(s)".

Jacky, who attended the Retreat, noted that DCB perceptions about how ONA regimented DCB efforts were in fact quite different from how ONA actually worked. As Jacky noted at the Retreat, ONA spent most of its time providing technical assistance to neighborhood associations and citizens making various requests, whereas relatively little time was spent by the agency on both DCB fiscal and performance oversight. Jacky attributed these DCB perceptions to what is most salient to DCB experience: requests by ONA for accountability are perceived as excessive because a primary function of the DCB/ONA relationship in fact has to do with contract compliance.

A modest counterpoint

A few months later, Kafoury turned to long-time friend and ally, Margaret Strachan, for help in

navigating between the rock of DCB intransigence and the seeming hard place of Future Focus goals and mandates. Strachan had achieved a distinguished career in local activism and politics. Following her work as an activist in NW Portland in the early 1970s, Strachan served a stint as office Coordinator for the West-Northwest District Coalition, moving on in 1981 to Portland City Council, where she spearheaded the City's first efforts to forge the Central City Plan. Kafoury hired Strachan on contract to perform focus group research to assess the suitability of adapting NA efforts to fit with the Future Focus agenda. Strachan's work included feedback from NA participants from across the City, current and past DCB staff people, neighborhood business interests, representatives from community-based organizations, and City bureau personnel. All focus group participants shared a long history of involvement either in and/or with NAs. Additionally, some of the bureau people interviewed were also active in NAs.¹⁹

Strachan's findings provided measured support for the Future Focus agenda. One theme emerging from the

¹⁹ Strachan's research findings are limited by the small overall amount of participants (twenty-four total attending). Still, her knowledge of local politics and grass roots mobilization added depth to her findings and recommendations.

focus groups was that organizations other than NAs and DCBs were needed to broaden the base of citizen participation in Portland. Related to this were concerns that the NAs were being burdened with too many tasks from ONA. As a corollary to this point, Strachan's findings echoed DCB disgruntlement about Kafoury's "agenda":

Neighborhood Associations must maintain their grassroots orientation. The city cannot use them as another service delivery network without risking co-optation of their independence, credibility, and ability to get things done by pulling neighbors together and speaking with an independent voice. (Strachan, 1992, p. 2)

Strachan's report made another notable observation. "A suggestion that gained support proposes more personal intervention and fewer legalistic approaches to problem-solving within neighborhoods and between the City and neighborhoods (p. 3)." This should probably be taken as implicating all NA stakeholder groups. The coercive powers NAs and DCBs had garnered, both through the Guidelines as well as through procedural innovations (including the sometimes heavy-handed use of Roberts Rules of Order), had provoked many criticisms, including routine accusations about power cliques taking control over agenda setting, especially at the DCB level.

Likewise, ONA's growing dependence upon the Guidelines and contract negotiations to induce DCB "accountability" had provoked resentment. In total, a rule driven approach was beginning to show signs of significant strain.

Redeclaring independence

Strachan's research rekindled her activist spirit. A few months later, she joined with relative newcomer to NA activism, then Northwest District Association President Marvin Pohl, to co-Chair planning efforts for an event they hoped would provide a new referendum for Portland's NA institution. Strachan and Pohl worked diligently to assemble another round of focus groups, this time with the intention of generating an agenda for a three-day symposium event. The event would eventually be coined "Portland's Neighborhood Congress". Using her political contacts to City Hall, including recently elected Mayor Vera Katz, Strachan pushed hard to frame the Congress effort as a citizen-led charge to revitalize Portland's commitment to neighborhood-based citizen involvement, and to break the deadlock between ONA and the DCBs that had emerged over the previous few years. As the effort gained momentum, activists from

the North, Northeast and East District Coalitions would participate.²⁰

Whereas Strachan's focus group research focussed on individual stakeholder perceptions, focus groups convened for the Congress planning effort were intentionally designed to foster discussion across stakeholder groups, including thirty-eight people in total. Out of this process, Congress planners developed a program agenda slated to accommodate a broad base of concerns.

The Congress would be a weekend long event held at Portland State University in October 1993. The event was designed to host several "Workgroup" themes, where participants who had gathered in sub-committees would craft "resolutions" that would then be ranked in importance by a vote of all participants during the last day of the event.²¹ The votes would then be tallied and presented to City Council for adoption by resolution.

²⁰ W/NW leadership was approached early in the Congress organizing effort and invited to participate, but declined after realizing it would not be a referendum focused against ONA. Key participants in the early planning efforts included: Steve Rogers, then Chair of the the Northeast Coalition of Neighbors (DCB for inner Northeast Portland) and recently member of the 1989-91 ONA Guidelines Review Committee; Lee Perlman, newspaper reporter and former ONA staffer under Patti Jacobsen, as well as widely recognized expert on Portland's NA history; and Julie Rogers, North Portland activist. The author also participated in these efforts.

²¹ Participants were asked to rank their preferences for workgroups to allow the Congress planners to insure relatively even attendance in each workgroup.

In this way, Congress planners hoped to establish a mandate for revamping the NA program.

Five workgroups produced a total of thirty-nine resolutions. Workgroup themes included the following: "Planning: Land Use, Environment & Transportation", "Neighborhood Associations: Roles, Rules, & Regulations", "Neighborhoods & Community Policing", "Broadening the Base of Citizen Participation & Diversity", and "Regional Communications Technology".

Distinguished hosts led the workgroups. Sumner Sharpe, planning consultant and former Chair of the Department of Urban Studies & Planning at PSU led the Planning workgroup. Patti Jacobsen, former Director of ONA led the workgroup examining NA roles, rules and regulations. Then Chief of Police, Charles Moose, led the discussion about community policing. Co-author of the Tufts' study and boyhood Portland resident, Ken Thomson, led the discussion about expanding the base of citizen participation (and would also give the keynote address to the Congress). And Steve Johnson, long-time Portland activist and recognized leader in computer applications to civic initiatives hosted the discussion on Regional Communications Technology.

In total, the Congress attracted over 400 activists during the three-day affair. Ultimately, the more

ambitious aspirations of the event--to induce City Council and ONA to adopt the resolutions produced by the Congress--would not materialize.²² Still, the Congress was a significant historic marker for Portland, for it demonstrated that there still existed fervent interest in sustaining and renewing the NA program.

Part of its limited success stemmed from some of the same reticence to "rock the boat" evinced at the Congress that curbed the DCB and Future Focus research efforts. For instance, the workgroup focused on NA roles, rules, and regulations produced resolutions that pointedly stated participant concerns about the DCBs; but these resolutions offered no road map by which to subvert the control/counter-control paradigm driving the NA program at the time. Significantly, the one resolution that could have altered the DCB/ONA dynamic--the institution of a citywide coalition--received zero votes from program participants. This idea had in fact been floated before (Tufts had also promoted the notion in the conclusion of their study), but various efforts

²² The Congress would be referenced in a Council Resolution two years later that sanctified yet another round of ONA soul-searching, ONA's "Task Force on Neighborhood Involvement". ONA managed to recapture whatever momentum the Congress was able to generate. The implications of the Task Force effort will be fully discussed in Chapter VI.

over the years to enact it would falter for a variety of reasons.²³

Jacky's dilemma

Of all the soul searching efforts Portland's NA institution would undertake between 1992-93, none was more painful nor portentous than the breakup of North Portland's DCB, the North Portland's Citizen's Committee (NPCC). By then a twenty-year-old institution, the once venerable NPCC had held a very important place in Portland's activist legacy, not only for local achievements but also for the national acclaim it had garnered for Portland's NA institution. But as events unfolded throughout 1992 and 1993, ONA Director Jacky found herself presiding over a process that would ultimately lead to the disenfranchisement of North Portland's activist legacy. She would also face the difficult decision to dismantle the City's contract relations with North Portland, thereby threatening to undo the DCB logic. We turn to an account of this process below.

²³ The idea of a "coalition of coalitions" had first originated with the 1973 District Planning Organization (DPO) Task Force.

NORTH PORTLAND & NPCC

From its inception in 1972 through the early 1980s, the North Portland Citizens Committee (NPCC) had distinguished itself as a competent and able player in Portland's efforts at revitalization. Through 1979, the NPCC tallied up major accomplishments, and its close ties to Mayor Goldschmidt eventually brought national renown to NPCC and North Portland. President Jimmy Carter visited the area in 1978 to promote his National Urban Policy platform, and in 1979 the NPCC was tagged as a case study site for the National Commission on Neighborhoods.²⁴

But by the mid-1980s several factors led to diminished stature for the organization. First, NPCC's pioneer leadership began to move onto other endeavors.²⁵

²⁴ A compendium of NPCC and North Portland accomplishments covering seven years, provided in a report from Neighbors North Coordinator Jerry Mounce to ONA and the National Commission on Neighborhoods in 1979, included the following: realignment of Columbia Boulevard, the restoration of the Kenton Firehouse, sidewalk construction throughout North Portland, six-and-one-half miles of roadway reconstruction (including curb ramps, stop signs, and traffic diverters), 326 rehabilitated homes, 10.9 miles of improved streets, restoration of St. Johns City Hall, the Kenton-Portsmouth plan, and construction of Cathedral Park (what had for long been a vacant and overgrown plot underneath the St. Johns Bridge).

²⁵ NPCC had produced some very capable activists, mostly drawn from middle-class backgrounds. Mike Burton would go on to the Oregon House of Representatives and is currently Executive Director of METRO. Sharon Roso, one of NPCC's most stalwart early activists, went on to serve as President of the Portland City Planning Commission, as Board member of the National Association of Neighborhoods, as well as to distinguish herself through various

Secondly, the heavy flow of federal subsidy that had kindled much of the area's activist efforts--especially from the Urban Development Action Grant program--had dwindled significantly by the mid-1980s. Also, Newhall's regime and the DCB logic she sought to cultivate posed a significant threat to NPCC's activist style. Added to the re-development pressures facing the southern portion of the district through the mid-1980s and early 1990s, these various factors put new demands on the North Portland DCB that it was ill-equipped to deal with. In total, these various pressures surfaced many issues that would eventually unravel the organization.

The 1985 grievance proceedings that engulfed the NPCC signaled a shift away from the spirit of North Portland activism that earlier efforts had fostered. To understand how this came about requires first a brief discussion about the socio-economic, geographic and

other civic efforts in Portland. Other key leaders included: Steve Roso, who devoted a tremendous amount of time as Chair of NPCC; Jim Chrest (who held the State Representative seat prior to Burton); Barbara Jaeger (who became a leader in the League of Women Voters); and Sheila Driscoll (then Director of Project ABLE, a service program for the elderly). Jerry Mounce, first coordinator of the NPCC district office would pursue extensive consulting work nationwide, and currently works for Portland's Bureau of Environmental Services. Like Mounce, Roso also did consulting work on community and economic development around the country.

historic forces that have shaped North Portland's activist culture.

"Which downtown?"

North Portland has a long history of feeling outside of, or apart from, metropolitan Portland. Located along a peninsula formed by the confluence of the Willamette and Columbia Rivers, North Portland was recognized early in this century as a strategic location for port facilities development. The cultural heart of the area for many years was the St. Johns community, located at the northwestern edge of the urbanized portion of the peninsula, downstream from Portland. Prior to 1915, St. Johns was an independent jurisdiction. Beginning in 1910, the City of Portland began to aggressively pursue annexation of St. Johns, succeeding by 1915 (Abbott, 1983). To this day the St. Johns community has retained a strong sense of cultural separation from Portland.

This separatist sentiment has been encouraged in large part by two factors: the continued industrial development of the area, and the decision earlier this century (1940) to site Portland's principal landfill (officially closed in 1991) over marshland located at

the edge of the St. Johns neighborhood. As such, the St. Johns community has long felt as if it was the "dumping ground" of the region, and as a result many residents there continue to perceive any political initiatives emanating from downtown Portland as suspect. For many long-time North Portlanders, "downtown" signifies two places: St. Johns *and* Portland.

St. Johns and the Portsmouth and Kenton neighborhoods east of it are all situated north of North Lombard Street. All three neighborhoods host a predominantly working class population with generational ties to the area, and border (or include within their NA boundaries) heavy industrial activity.

The neighborhoods south of North Lombard, situated for the most part east of the St. Johns Bridge and therefore away from heavy industrial traffic heading to port facilities and, in the past, to the landfill, have attracted substantial redevelopment over the last fifteen years. Anchored by the private, University of Portland campus to the west and an interstate highway to the east, three of the four NA boundaries south of North Lombard form a crescent of neighborhoods--featuring a significant stock of vintage Victorian architecture--which sweeps southeasterly along Mocks Crest, a bluff carved by the Willamette River. This

location offers excellent views of downtown Portland to the east, and, directly to the south, the north slope of the Forest Park ridge. The fourth neighborhood south of North Lombard, although lying northwesterly of the University campus and therefore abutting heavy industrial activity, nonetheless features some of the same excellent views with the added advantage of a sloped topography.

These geographic and historic features of North Portland conditioned politics in this area for many years. A sense of "being done wrong" by downtown Portland politics and being deprived over the years of decision-making autonomy appears to have fostered strong social ties within the interior of the area north of North Lombard Street.

These ties, coupled with the typically low income status of North Portland residents and their suspicions of downtown Portland's dominance, had played a part in conditioning a "hang together" activist strategy in North Portland throughout the 1970s. In order to maintain their clout vis-à-vis Portland's development ambitions, including the powerful industrial and manufacturing presence in North Portland, NPCC activists keenly felt the need to consolidate their authority at

the DCB level, or risk becoming fragmented, splintered, and pitted against one-another.

NPCC had started prior to the formation of ONA and formalization of Portland's NA program. As such, NPCC had a strong, unified identity by 1974 when the first ONA ordinance was passed by City Council. Although its Bylaws granted board membership to recognized neighborhood areas (as well as areas not defined by neighborhood boundaries), the NPCC had never set out to aggressively forge independent NAs. It seems likely, however, that as NPCC evolved, the specter of independent sub-units--especially in neighborhoods south of North Lombard Street--became increasingly threatening. This had in part to do with the "us vs. them" outlook NPCC regulars felt the need to cultivate and sustain.

But the specter of and potential for new NAs to begin independent organizing also threatened an activist remnant that had stayed on with NPCC after the heady days of "fighting the good fights" and various urban renewal efforts that early NPCC leadership had been so successful in bringing to fruition. This founding leadership believed--and was probably correct in doing so--that its power to negotiate with City officials required a concentration of authority that a

patchworked, loosely knit confederation of NAs in North Portland would vitiate.²⁶ This outlook and legacy would be sustained after they left, but without the leadership capabilities the organization's key founders had brought with them to NPCC.

Although socioeconomic status (SES) differences within North Portland have been ongoing and distinctive, it is important not to assume a too monotonic relationship between SES differences and conflict in North Portland politics. Indeed, conflict in North Portland was triggered in part because its poorer neighborhoods did not feel helpless. The Kenton neighborhood, located in the northeast portion of the District, hosts one of the oldest recognized NAs in the city. Although it is a lower-income neighborhood within the coalition, Kenton has had strong leadership; this factor played a key role in bringing conflict to a

head at NPCC.

²⁶ Some, including Rush Kolmaine and others, claimed that NPCC regulars had actively thwarted neighborhood organizing efforts through intimidation. While it seems likely that some people may have *felt* intimidated by those in control at NPCC, it is not apparent that old guard regulars actively thwarted organizing on the Peninsula. On the contrary, there is some evidence that there existed little interest in forming new NAs until the late 1980s.

A house divided

The impetus behind Kolmaine's 1985 grievance—which alleged that NPCC sought to suppress dissent against its edicts--would persist to divide the NPCC through 1992, in spite of periodic mediation efforts undertaken by ONA. Kolmaine's unrelenting challenges of NPCC stemmed in part from Board divisions occurring in 1984 over the hiring of a new office coordinator. The Board had been split over the new hire. Several members--part of an old guard contingent--had preferred Toni Heverin, a candidate for the post who had previously been the administrative assistant under NPCC's first and long-time coordinator, Jerry Mounce.

Mounce had garnered a reputation for strong leadership among a core of NPCC regulars, who had come to depend upon her ability to take initiative when necessary, and who trusted her not to pre-empt Board authority. Her support of Heverin's bid for coordinator thus carried significant clout with certain Board members. But new members were eager for a changing of the guard. These members were joined by a portion of the NPCC old-guard leadership that had been concerned about Heverin's lack of supervisory experience. This group lobbied Sarah Newhall to

intervene in the hiring process. Newhall subsequently insisted that the hiring process be opened up to challenger candidates. Susan Chandler applied and, on a 7-6 vote of the Board, entered the new position initially unaware she worked for a seriously divided organization. She would stay only two years.

Kolmaine's grievance stated that one of his primary disputes against NPCC was that its Board members were suppressing the organizing efforts of residents along the Peninsula, particularly those living in the Portsmouth neighborhood. In fact, Kolmaine was dissatisfied with the lack of response he had received from NPCC regarding his contest with the Portland International Raceway over alleged violations of City noise ordinance standards. It seems probable that Kolmaine's primary interest was to garner power through NPCC more so than to form an independent NA. Still, others had also voiced concerns about NPCC's operating procedures, and, along with Kolmaine, would form a phalanx of dissent towards the Board's operations, particularly focussing on actions of its

Executive Committee.

ONA monitored this dissent but endeavored to keep out of the skirmish as much as possible. As discussed in Chapter IV, Newhall was at this time shepherding the 1987-89 Guidelines Review process, and was very leery of directly interposing ONA into the affairs of North Portland for fear of undermining her efforts to consolidate the NA program at-large. She did, though, attempt to court and appease Kolmaine through appointing him to the ONA Policy & Procedures Review Committee.

As mentioned in Chapter III, DCBs have historically, with a few exceptions, exhibited little interest in tending to nitty-gritty administrative matters. In NPCC's case, this would lead to a series of limited fiscal audits called for by ONA and carried out by the City's Auditor's Office between 1984 and 1988. For the most part these reviews revealed only sloppy record keeping. More ominously, though, the lack of attention paid to administrative issues indicated a power struggle on the Board and a subsequent tendency--not entirely unique to NPCC--for Board members to "micro-manage" office staff.

Under continued intense lobbying by Kolmaine and others, Newhall issued a warning to NPCC in the Summer of 1988 to improve relations among Board members. By early 1989, Newhall had advised Mayor Bud Clark not to

renew the City's contract with NPCC unless ONA received clear indication that the Board was tending to maintenance issues, including curbing internal hostilities and sorting out administrative roles, duties, and lines of accountability. Kolmaine used this gesture by Newhall to issue NPCC an updated litany of complaints, wherein he cited in detail various administrative and operational violations.

It is difficult to judge the full validity of Kolmaine's allegations. The archival record is limited, and many of the participants at NPCC at that time have either moved or since died. Based on the evidence available, it appears likely that much of what Kolmaine alleged was true, only the motives and forces driving Board behavior were more complicated than can be gleaned from his criticisms. Kolmaine was, himself, a player in the process (he had been a Board member in 1983), and his close affiliation with Newhall appeared very suspect to many NPCC members. Though he would, purportedly, sometimes attempt to interpose himself as a mediator, his affiliations with Newhall tainted his actions in the eyes of some Board members.²⁷

²⁷ Kolmaine's mode of criticism--purportedly often bombastic and liturgical--marginalized his clout over the many years he jostled with NPCC.

It is clear that NPCC was very slow to adapt to new circumstances. Besides the historic, socio-economic and geographic factors affecting this, certain administrative structures impeded the organization's ability to change. Primary among these were Bylaws rules stipulating that the NPCC Board host ten meetings of its General Membership annually. No other DCB functioned through a General Membership, rather; all worked through Neighborhood Associations and often included at-large seats for business and various service organizations. General membership representation was (and still is) relegated to Neighborhood Associations.

This yoke to NPCC's General Membership was a vestigial feature of the organization dating to its origins and needs, discussed above, to cultivate and sustain a Peninsula-wide identity and viewpoint. But with the waning of urban renewal monies and programs and the onslaught of in-migrants moving to the wealthier neighborhoods located south of North Lombard Street, the yoke of past commitments and necessities hindered NPCC's ability to adapt to new and emerging circumstances.

It seems likely that power contests at NPCC were, from its origins, often exacerbated by the General Membership issue, since dissenting parties could always

invoke Bylaws stipulations requiring General Membership participation or sign-off to ratify Board initiatives. But the attention paid to the organization in its early days by strong and capable leaders, coupled with the extensive revitalization efforts undertaken prior to 1980, served to curb and chasten the tendency for dissension and rancor to root within the organization. Once this leadership left, and once urban renewal monies and attention paid by the Mayor's office waned and dissipated, NPCC fell vulnerable to petty in-fighting and mistrust. Kolmaine served as the catalyst that revealed and enervated this process.

The table turns

Chandler's successor, Nancy Barnes, lasted until December, 1989, at which time she left her post under duress stemming from ongoing Board divisions which scapegoated her, as well as the divisiveness in part fostered by Kolmaine's continuing harangues. Barnes was succeeded as staff Director by Michael Matteucci. Matteucci had previously been a planner for the City of Tigard, but had also been active as Chair of the Eliot NA (in Northeast Portland), and had served briefly as a Crime Prevention specialist for NPCC under the supervision of Vada Grimsrud.

Grimsrud, like Jerry Mounce, had been a long-time North Portland resident, and had served as the Coordinator for North Portland's crime prevention program for several years. This program had always operated somewhat separately from NPCC. This stemmed from the Police Bureau's historic control over the program and a lack of interest on the part of North Portland activists to fully assimilate the crime prevention program under a unified DCB purview. By 1989, "Neighbors Against Crime" (NAC) would thus still have separate letterhead from NPCC.²⁸ This separate status had garnered for Grimsrud a great deal of authority. The close working relationship she developed with the Police also played a part in keeping NAC separate from NPCC. Part of her motive in this regard stemmed from her intent to protect the crime prevention program from ongoing NPCC Board squabbles.

The arrival of Matteucci signaled a shift in the balance of Board power at NPCC. Like Kolmaine, Matteucci also had close ties to Newhall, and he had garnered the support of key activists from NAs south of North Lombard Street, two of which--Arbor Lodge and

²⁸ It should be noted that both programs were housed within "Neighbors North", the title given to identify the staff office serving NAC and NPCC. Unlike NPCC, NAC operated without a Board of Directors.

University Park--had been formed in 1989. Additionally that year, the newly formed Hayden Island Neighborhood Network (HiNoon) joined NPCC as a new NA member. HiNoon included the almost exclusively middle and upper income denizens of Portland's boating community on Hayden Island.

These shifts ratcheted upward the pressure and contested disputes at NPCC. On July 5, 1989, the Board called an emergency meeting to discuss recent ONA edicts declaring that NPCC undertake to deal with the issues Newhall had first warned them of the previous summer, or face the imminent loss of their contract with the City. Jacky and her chief operating staff attended the meeting. As part of its intervention, ONA mandated that NPCC undergo supervised board trainings that would cover a full gamut of administrative and operational issues. In the meantime, ONA would take over all fiscal accounting operations for the Board during a limited time basis, pending demonstration of solid intent by NPCC to deal with its contractual obligations in a manner abiding the ONA Guidelines.

The on-going initiatives to micro-manage the staff as a way of staging power plays among Board members had been the primary catalyst for Jacky's decision to intervene. Taking Jacky's threats seriously, NPCC

commenced to overhaul their personnel policies and draft a new workplan. By this time, the organization had turned a corner towards at least going through the motions of change and adaptation.

By 1990 the Board had acquired a new President, Terri Kellner, from the University Park Neighborhood Association. Kellner had replaced former NPCC President and Kenton NA activist, Pam Arden. Kellner pushed hard to maintain the momentum of reform at NPCC, and garnered support from new membership, including Frank Howatt from HiNooN. Howatt had joined NPCC in 1989. With Kellner's support as President, he would take on revising the NPCC's bylaws, with the explicit intent to do away with the General Membership provisions which had encumbered the organization's

ability to tend to maintenance imperatives.

But these efforts triggered resentments from Kenton and Portsmouth NA delegates. In one instance, Kellner was harshly rebuked by Michael Vernon (Portsmouth NA member) and Reena Heijdeman (Portsmouth NA delegate to NPCC). The issue was over actions taken by the NPCC Executive Committee to preside over the selection of a committee member to serve on the North Portland Enhancement Committee. This Committee had been formed

through State legislation, sponsored by State Representative Mike Burton in 1985, to preside over the dispensation of monies acquired from a \$.50/ton surcharge on solid waste "tipping" fees at the St. Johns Dump until it closed in 1991. The amount of money that would be channeled from this fund into North Portland community projects was substantial.²⁹ Control over the fund by North Portland was therefore a significant issue for NPCC.

In two, separately authored, tersely worded letters, both Vernon and Heijdeman accused Kellner of commandeering a process that traditionally had been decided at General Membership meetings (both letters were dated January 15, 1991). Both noted they viewed this as a conspiracy between the Executive Committee and district office Director Michael Matteucci (whom they alleged played a major role in the selection process), and both derided what they viewed as a drift away from a community-wide stake in the NPCC towards narrow control by the organization's Executive Committee. Heijdeman

²⁹ The fund had been established in order to compensate the North Portland community for the many years it had incurred the burden of hosting the St. John's Dump. Allocations from the fund for FY 91-92 reached \$100,000.

stepped down as Portsmouth NA representative to the NPCC in protest.³⁰

The NPCC took up this matter at its February 19, 1991 Board meeting, voting 9-0 to support the selected committee members, "but in the future refer to the general membership for a vote until such time as the bylaws are changed."³¹ It is significant that the vote in this case was unanimous, for it signaled that the real issue was not *who* was appointed to the Enhancement Committee so much as *how* appointments were made. Process imperatives dominated concerns and channeled tremendous energy into power skirmishes at NPCC. An era that had fostered the evolution of informal powers of coercion to induce Board consensus was coming to a close. In-coming activists sought to formalize and rationalize NPCC routines in order to gain a solid stake in Board functioning, and in so doing set off a power struggle which, a few months hence, would bring the NPCC down.

Re-writing the script

³⁰ Her resignation was most likely planned to allow another PNA member, Lee Poe, to step up to the NPCC. Poe had garnered a reputation as a hard-nosed negotiator for her activist efforts to deal with odor issues affecting North Portland neighborhoods. She would come to figure prominently in the emerging battle at NPCC.

³¹ From Board Minutes, February 19, 1991.

On April 2, 1991, NPCC's long-gestating Bylaws revisions were finally brought before its General Membership for their first hearing. By far the most significant proposed amendments called for doing away with provisions detailing the role of the Board's General Membership.³² According to the proposed amendments:

The role that the general membership once played has changed significantly. A strong argument could be made that the necessity for a 'general membership' no longer exists given the formation and recognition of neighborhood associations. Residents, business owner (sic), and others can work with their respective neighborhood association(s) to enhance the livability of the community. Policy-making usually rest (sic) with the Board of Directors since they are the recognized legal body and are the individuals held accountable. The former general members now have the opportunity to participate with their neighborhood association and are represented by two association representatives who sit on the PN Board of Directors.³³

³² The NPCC Bylaws had last been updated in 1989 in response to Kolmaine's grievances.

³³ "PN" refers in this case to "Peninsula Neighbors", a title adopted by the NPCC beginning around the Spring of 1990. The name change was part of an effort by the organization to change and update its image. Jack Poe, Portsmouth NA member and delegate to PN/NPCC, would later file for ownership of the name and force PN/NPCC to desist from using it around June 1991. Knowing NPCC had not filed for ownership of the name with the Corporation Division of the State of Oregon, Poe did so, and used his rights of ownership to sabotage the Board's efforts to revise its Bylaws in May, 1991, insisting that the Board had illegally appropriated the PN title. Rush Kolmaine and former NPCC Board member Ed Ketzell

Before a crowd of about thirty people in attendance, NPCC Board member and Bylaws Committee Chair, Frank Howatt, commenced the proceedings with a major gaffe. He explained that the impetus for the Bylaws revisions had come from office staff, thereby eliciting strong objections from vocal dissenters, primarily from Portsmouth, who declared the impropriety of such an arrangement. Howatt was therefore lectured that staff served at the pleasure of the Board, not visa versa. Still, the proposal received measured support from those in attendance. Pam Arden of Kenton NA and 1989-90 NPCC President, noted that she felt the role historically played by the General Membership (GM) was no longer necessary given the extent to which NAs had organized across the Peninsula. Linda Krugel, 1986-87 NPCC President from the Overlook NA, concurred, but noted that the NPCC needed to retain authority on regional issues, and not rely solely on NAs to address issues--such as pollution--of Peninsula-wide scope. Others lamented that the proposed Bylaws spelled the end of an era whereby the NPCC served as a host for "town-hall" meetings that enabled the entire Peninsula community access to important issues and decision making

were also involved in this effort. Ketzler had been President of NPCC in 1980.

influence. Said old-timer Gene McLaughlin: "(A)ll the Board did was make recommendations to the general membership. It was like a Town Hall meeting. The old system had a lot of good points and should be kept." (Gates, 1991a)³⁴

Recently outgoing Portsmouth NA delegate to the NPCC, Reena Heijdeman, reserved her dissent for a letter to the editor of the *St. Johns Review*. There she outlined the position her Board had recently taken to disavow the proposed Bylaws amendments. Heijdeman stressed that the proposed Bylaws breached a tradition of "democratic checks and balances" whereby North Portland residents not happy with NPCC decisions could garner support. She also criticized the PN/NPCC

³⁴ The 1979 report on NPCC from the National Commission on Neighborhoods helps put McLaughlin's comments in perspective. The following excerpt is derived from interviews with key NPCC activists in 1978:

Most of NPCC's achievements are attributable to the energy and creativity of a relatively small group. While being open to everyone, NPCC refrains from 'dragging people out' to meeting after meeting. They have never engaged in mass protest, and only rarely are large numbers required to accomplish their tasks. These factors, plus NPCC's refusal to become a poverty program, may explain why the active core of members is relatively small (about 30) and why most of the active members are more educated or affluent than the average North Portlander. (National Commission on Neighborhoods, 1979, p. 956)

These comments would seem to qualify claims made about "democratic checks and balances" and "town hall meetings". NPCC was fairly tightly controlled from its inception. By insisting it represented the entire Peninsula it could claim a scope of legitimacy--a monopoly of control--that hosting separate NAs would not enable.

Executive Committee, alleging it had fallen into a pattern of control and secrecy that belied its mandate to serve all North Portland residents. In total, Heijdeman's letter laid down the gauntlet which would irreparably divide new entrants to PN/NPCC from a host of Portsmouth, and later Kenton, dissenters.³⁵

A second reading and vote on the Bylaws was scheduled for May 7, 1991. A motion by Kolmaine to table the Bylaws pending further public review was voted down 38-48-4. A subsequent motion by Pam Arden of Kenton to vote on the Bylaws amendments one at a time also went down, 28-39-1. (Several attendees had by then already left the meeting.) Next, a motion to approve the Bylaws amendments in toto fell short of the two-thirds majority by one vote, 46-25. At this time, several more attendees left the meeting following a

³⁵ The Portsmouth contingent had also, around this time, circulated a petition for a recall vote filed against three of PN's Executive Committee members, including President Terri Kellner, VP Mike Salvo, and Treasurer Konrad Daae. The recall alleged that these three had sabotaged another Board committee process, this time involving recommendations of candidates to fill a Revitalization Task Force Coordinator's post. This post was to be funded through City money allocated through the Bureau of Housing and Community Development as part of a program first proposed by Mayor Bud Clark to target poor City neighborhoods for revitalization efforts. Vaguely stated mandates and unclear specification of authority by the City added to the confusion and mistrust that ensued between the hiring committee and the PN/NPCC Executive Committee. The recall effort was ultimately rescinded by the Portsmouth contingent, which claimed they never wished to carry through with it, only to provoke a response from the PN/NPCC Executive Committee.

period of pandemonium. Following a flurry of votes specifying procedure, PN/NPCC Board President Terri Kellner informed the remaining attendees that the Bylaws mandated that amendments had to be approved or disapproved, one way or the other, at their second reading, otherwise; the amendments process would have to start over from scratch. By this time, approximately one-third of the original attendees had left the meeting. The remaining participants then agreed to a roll call vote. The amendments finally passed, on the twelfth vote of the evening, 43-20, barely eking out the necessary two thirds margin (Gates, 1991b).

Jacky, who was in attendance, immediately thanked the participants of the now defunct General Membership. PN/NPCC Vice President Mike Salvo hailed the outcome and commended those who had participated in the process, noting that everyone expressed themselves well. Lee Poe, of Portsmouth, was quoted as saying, "Let them live with it." (Gates, 1991b)

Cinching the leash

The Bylaws fight was then carried to the local press. A series of tit-for-tat letters to the editor

followed the Bylaws vote, including first a letter from Ed Ketzal of Portsmouth, then PN/NPCC Vice President and University Park resident Mike Salvo, and then another letter from Rush Kolmaine. Never to be under-estimated, Kolmaine filed yet another grievance against the beleaguered Board, this time alleging the Bylaws vote be voided due to a procedural flaw in the voting process. Six months later, an independent arbitration panel (chaired by Frank Dixon, then Chair of the West-Northwest DCB), found in favor of Kolmaine. The vote was voided, and the Board commenced to undertake the process again.

In fact, though by no means Rush Kolmaine fans, some Board members noted that this final chapter in his reproaches (Kolmaine had recently moved to California) presented an opportunity to finally iron out wrinkles in the Board's procedural approach. In one view, Kolmaine had served as a kind of taciturn coach in rule making that had helped to condition the Board in how to run meetings effectively, thereby, hopefully, thwarting more attacks on its legitimacy.

Ultimately, this hope would not prevail. The reconstituted Bylaws Committee would never finish its work. Concurrent with the Board skirmishes over the previous several months, PN/NPCC Board members (not including those from Portsmouth and Kenton) had been meeting outside the auspices of the Board to discuss ways of breaking with the organization and starting afresh. This group was convinced that a hide-bound approach to community involvement had been fostered through the unrelenting skirmishes carried on by Kolmaine and the Portsmouth contingent. Deciding "enough is enough," these dissidents mobilized to explore ways of developing an independent organization they hoped to immunize from the negativity and petty infighting they associated with the PN/NPCC.

They dubbed this group "River City North", and developed a detailed mission statement and set of guidelines. The chief difference between the River City North (RCN) organizational model and the City's standard DCB structure was that the RCN plan called for establishing a set of "Advisory Committees" that would function analogously to DCB sub-committees. Thus,

whereas most DCB sub-committees were ad hoc, the RCN Advisory Committees were given specified definition and functions. The RCN envisioned eight Advisory Committees (ACs) that would focus on particular topic areas, including (as defined by RCN): land use and transportation, business and employment, housing, education, public safety, senior and youth services, community image and character, and environmental values.

Like standard DCBs, RCN was to have had NA delegates who formed its "Advisory Council", from which a "Steering Committee" would be formed. The Advisory Council and Steering Committee would serve functions analogous to a DCB and its Executive Committee. In total, the primary functional difference being proposed in the RCN model was that it shifted District Coalition focus from administrative and operational issues (the standard purpose for DCBs) towards more of a topical, action orientation. Under RCN Guidelines, Advisory Council members were required to serve on at least one (but not more than two) Action Committees. In this way, the RCN model would, purportedly, maintain a task focus of district-wide scope on substantive issues.

Notably, RCN established procedural rules "for dealing with disruptions within committees", thereby specifying that certain powers repose with citizens which most DCBs typically lacked. Among various remedies for disruptive behavior was "expulsion of the disruptive member." This provision marked a major deviation from standard DCB bylaws. Such power also breached ONA Guidelines and state law requiring open meetings and membership.

RCN would never fully get off the ground. The group of NPCC dissidents who wished to form RCN ran afoul of Portsmouth and Kenton activists at a fateful NPCC meeting on February 18, 1992. In fact, the RCN group had been meeting in secrecy from Kenton and Portsmouth. This gesture could alone be considered a violation of open meetings law, since it had the appearance of conspiracy.³⁶ Kenton and Portsmouth would probably never have found out about these meetings had the dissidents not undertaken two momentous gestures that evening. First, brandishing the voting power they had, the group voted to disperse all then existing

discretionary NPCC funding (totaling just over \$12,000) to three separate projects. The vote was in fact out of order, since it had not been preceded by standard Board procedures requiring that dispensation of discretionary funds could be made only to organizations recognized by NPCC as "Special Interest Group Subcommittees". Immediately following the vote to dispense these funds, all but one of the dissident NA delegates in attendance resigned their posts en masse.³⁷ Mike Salvo of the University Park NA, who had been voted in as interim Board President, would stay behind.

Kenton and Portsmouth delegates immediately cried foul, reporting to the *St. Johns Review* that they believed a conspiracy had been laid by the dissidents to bankrupt and break up NPCC. Within a few weeks, Jacky had stepped in, issuing a "Corrective Action" whereby NPCC would be required to regroup immediately and develop a workplan for the following fiscal year—

³⁶ Participants claimed in depositions during legal proceedings that the meetings were social gatherings.

³⁷ Both Overlook representatives to the NPCC, Julie Ann Rogers and Nilesh Patel, had resigned in December 1991. NPCC President, Sharron Ray of the Cathedral Park NA, resigned two weeks

all of which were logical impossibilities.

Thus began a long spiral towards oblivion for NPCC. The next several months included ill-fated efforts by ONA to bring the dissidents to the bargaining table with Kenton and Portsmouth. Finally, Kenton and Portsmouth walked away from negotiations, pledging to make good on threats to take legal action which, ultimately, would name the dissidents and staff Executive Director Michael Matteucci, as well as Commissioner Kafoury and Rachel Jacky in a lawsuit alleging conspiracy to defraud NPCC of its financial resources and contractual relationship with the City. The lawsuit was waged from the Spring of 1994 until being dismissed by the Oregon Supreme Court in the Fall of 1997.

The role ONA played in this saga was deemed suspect by Kenton and Portsmouth, who believed that Jacky had been fully briefed on the dissidents' intentions, and that the dissidents had in fact courted ONA in hopes of obtaining a contract to serve as de facto DCB following NPCC's demise. There were several factors contributing to this perception. ONA did recognize RCN, but not

previously. All resignees claimed that internal Board strife and

formally until months after the February 18 meeting, whereas Kenton and Portsmouth claim Jacky had full knowledge of RCN actions long before that date. These suspicions would be somewhat validated by the deposition taken by their attorney of Mike Salvo, who testified having seen Jacky at an RCN meeting occurring around the time just prior to the momentous mass resignation on February 18, 1992. Although Jacky disavowed this in her own deposition, many other factors suggested a pattern of actions garnering the appearance of having been orchestrated with the intent to break up the NPCC and position, if not sanctify, RCN as the heir apparent to NPCC's function as DCB for North Portland.

ONA received harsh criticism from Portsmouth and Kenton activists for its efforts to sort out the fracas over the next year and a half. Claiming that ONA was encouraging the dissidents by providing ongoing funding during the negotiation period, Kenton and Portsmouth persisted with claims that ONA had ulterior motives to foster the dissolution of NPCC. These suspicions

personal threats influenced their decisions.

spurred Kenton and Portsmouth to bring the matter to a lawsuit against the City, ONA, and the dissidents on the matter.

With the lawsuit dismissed by the Oregon Supreme Court in 1997, ONA was able to firm up arrangements that Jacky had first begun cobbling in the Spring of 1992 to establish a hybrid organization for North Portland NA participation. Under arrangements that eventually became codified with the City, ONA would serve as staff administrator, while leaving policy setting direction up to whatever NA delegates chose to participate. These essential parameters remain in effect today.

CONCLUSIONS

It is difficult to distinguish the farcical from the tragic in NPCC's story. It seems that many opportunities to build trust were squandered by all parties to NPCC's various disputes. On the one hand, ego-clashes were a major catalyst and sustaining factor in this saga. To the extent these were dominant, NPCC's

story seems farcical, its fate written in folly. But the tragic dimension of this story should not be obscured by petty ego-clashes. Prior to the early 1980s, NPCC had undertaken and achieved major accomplishments. But collective action problems, chronic among all of Portland's NAs, seem to have been particularly acute among NPCC's poorer neighborhoods. These would eventually clash with an increasingly mobilized middle-class contingent residing in the southern portion of the District.

The desperate bid to control NPCC waged by the Portsmouth contingent seems likely to have stemmed in part from the susceptibility of that neighborhood to control by a very small clique. The fact that Kolmaine et al were able to maintain a dominant position in that neighborhood for several years seems to indicate that few others were either willing, able or interested in challenging them.

As Rich (1980b) notes, poor and rich neighborhoods suffer more acutely from collective action problems than do middle-income neighborhoods, if for very different reasons. In the case of the Portsmouth NA, long-

standing and chronic levels of poverty coupled with waves of in-migration of non-English speaking populations throughout the 1980s, greatly hampered that community's ability to garner a sense of identity and capacity. It is therefore of little surprise that Kolmaine and others would fill the breach. Nor is it altogether surprising that their antagonism towards other NPCC delegates would regress to such petty accusations and (purportedly) even personal threats.

As stated in Chapter II, Portland's NA program was never devoted to mobilizing working and lower-class interests. The Guidelines initiative engineered by Newhall was indifferent to class issues in a way that the NPCC saga depicts poignantly. Rules meant to provide a modicum of coercive power were, in Kolmaine's hands, blunt instruments of destruction. His actions ultimately served primarily to color viable complaints (some sloppiness around process issues) with a valence of righteous conceit that would distort class issues and turn NPCC, essentially, inside out. To the extent he had been a creature of ONA, then ONA deserves some of the blame for NPCC's demise. As Newhall's successor,

Jacky was largely constrained to follow a path laid for her in North Portland before she became ONA Director. Although she made mis-steps, her pioneering efforts to cobble a new service delivery program were laudable and, by many accounts, have curbed the incentives that led to the chronic in-fighting that had plagued NPCC for so many years.³⁸

As first established under Jacky, North Portland neighborhood associations no longer function with a DCB. Staffing and administrative responsibilities are supervised by ONA. Member NAs still serve a policy steering direction, but their relationships to staff are now much different. Under previous arrangements, staff became a battleground around which NPCC contestants fought for control. The DCB prerogative encouraged this. Under the current arrangement, such gambits are much less likely to occur. As a result, staff are, purportedly, much better able to encourage autonomy and capacity building at the NA level. Previously, questions about staff allocation dominated discussions at NPCC and triggered intense disputes. Under current

³⁸ The dissident faction which started the River City North effort was well intentioned. But their efforts to undermine NPCC, regardless of its chronic dysfunction, were a mistake. The lawsuit these actions triggered would be a painful and largely undeserved

arrangements, staff work more like consultants, aiding member NAs in identifying issues and formulating agendas. Since less time is spent dealing with DCB dynamics, staff are better able to tend to NA idiosyncrasies and challenges.

Jacky was accused of arrogating administrative control over North Portland Staff to ONA, mostly from old-guard DCB activists across the City. Given the contract skirmishes of 1991, Jacky incurred an uphill battle throughout her tenure in building a base of support for her initiatives. Her efforts in North Portland were therefore cast with the same valence as her earlier efforts to engineer reforms fitting the Future Focus agenda. But the altered arrangement she established in North Portland would, ultimately, serve as a mirror by which to gauge the DCB model, and would play an important role in framing subsequent soul-searching efforts.

In total, North Portland's experiences with NA conflict raise important questions about the conclusions made by the Tufts study that claimed NA's typically host hospitable venues for constructive dialogue. Should NPCC's experiences be taken as merely anomalous events? We believe that such a conclusion distorts the full

reminder of this. For her part, Jacky was confronted by a lose-

implications these events signify, and that the dynamics leading to NPCC's demise are much more endemic to Portland's NA program than we might otherwise expect. In this respect, NPCC's experience was merely more externalized than that of most other district coalitions. The following Chapter presents more evidence that the conflicts that rocked North Portland were not as exceptional as they might otherwise be construed.

As we have noted previously in this dissertation, Tufts did not examine relations between NA delegates at the DCB level. This omission may have prejudiced their conclusions. We shall take up these issues again in Chapter VII.

