

## CHAPTER IV

### EXPANSION AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION—1980s

Portland's community and neighborhood involvement system continued to expand and evolve during the 1980s. Witt (2000) characterized the mid to latter 1980s as a time of "institution building" for the system. He also described many of the power dynamics that shaped the system as it moved from the initial, more open creative phase to greater normalization and standardization. This chapter reviews a number of major system developments during the 1980s.

This chapter begins by offering some context for the system initiatives and changes implemented under the two ONA directors during the 1980s, Patty Jacobsen and Sarah Newhall. The chapter reviews concerns raised about the openness and democratic practice of neighborhood associations and 1980 ONA Review Committees review and assessment of the system that was initiated in response to these concerns. The chapter also reviews the creation, by neighborhood activists of a citywide body to allow neighborhood associations to work on city wide issues—the Association of Portland Neighborhoods. The chapter describes events that celebrated neighborhood associations and recognized the work of neighborhood volunteers through an examination of Neighborfair (1976-1990) and Bud Clark's establishment of Neighborhood Recognition Week and the Spirit of Portland Awards.

Despite the finding by the 1980 ONA Review Committee that formal standards for neighborhood associations were not needed, by the mid 1980s, a number of conflicts

within the system and concerns about openness and stability of neighborhood associations and the role of the neighborhood district coalitions led to the development of the first set of citywide guidelines for the neighborhood system. This chapter describes the more significant elements of the guidelines and perspectives on the guidelines from proponents and opponents.

The chapter closes with a brief review of the findings of the Tufts University research team that studied Portland's system in the late 1980s, a review of the formal mayor's budget messages that accompanied city budgets during the decade, and observations about the evolution of Portland's community and neighborhood involvement system during related to this study's three research questions.

#### The 1980s—Some Context

Portland's community and neighborhood involvement system continued to grow and change during the 1980s. ONA struggled to clarify its role after the end of the Goldschmidt and Pedersen era, and the City Council assigned new programs and functions to ONA. Witt notes that, under the leadership of ONA directors Patty Jacobsen and Sarah Newhall during the 1980s, ONA moved to formalize and regularize the system.

During the 1980s, ONA wrestled with questions about its role. Was its role to support or control the system and to what extent should ONA actively advocate for neighborhood issues and concerns versus staying neutral? Witt provided interesting descriptions of different conflicts and power struggles between ONA and the

neighborhood districts, between the districts and neighborhood associations, and between neighborhood associations and ONA during this time.

The mayor's led Portland during the 1980s. City Commissioner Connie McCready finished out Goldschmidt's term. City Commissioner Frank Ivancie won election to succeed McCready as mayor and served for one term. Community and neighborhood activist Bud Clark defeated Ivancie in the 1984 mayoral election and served for two terms. Neither McCready nor Ivancie had been supporters of community involvement. Clark, once in office, moved quickly to reestablish the City's commitment to community and neighborhood involvement and initiated a number of projects to raise the visibility and stature of neighborhood associations and community input in City decision making. While in office, Clark also championed the development of Portland's community policing program.

The 1980s also saw the beginning of major annexations by the City of Portland of unincorporated areas of Multnomah County east of Portland. These annexations would lead to the creation of many new neighborhood associations and two new neighborhood district coalition offices and also generate significant controversy for Portland's neighborhood system (described in more detail in the next chapter).

**New programs added to ONA:** The City Council expanded the number and type of programs at ONA during the 1980s. The *City Budget* for FY 1982-83 reported the development of a new crime prevention program at ONA (Portland. *City Budget* FY 1982-83 118). In 1983, the City of Portland and Multnomah County agreed to divide up responsibility for different types of urban services in an effort to “ensure the efficient use

of limited local resources by having each jurisdiction deliver those services that drew on their respective strengths” (Portland. Office of the City Auditor. *Urban Services Policy and Resolution A*, March 2013).<sup>23</sup> This division of services led the City to dissolve the Bureau of Human Resources and shifted some of this bureau’s functions to ONA. The ONA budget for FY 1983-84 announced the transfer of the Neighborhood Mediation Program, and its four full-time positions, from the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission to ONA (Portland. *City Budget* FY 1983-84 127). In FY 1987-88, a position that supported public safety services for immigrant and refugee communities was transferred from the Bureau of Human Resources to ONA (Portland. *City Budget* FY 1987-88 129). In FY 1988-89, the City Council transferred three programs from the Bureau of Human Resources to ONA—“ the Metropolitan Youth Commission, the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission and the City/County Commission on Aging.” The City Budget reported that: "These programs join the existing ONA programs of Citizen Participation, Crime Prevention and Mediation. 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" (Portland. *City Budget* FY 1988-89 167-170).

---

<sup>23</sup> This agreement was driven in part by the fact that the City was better able to provide urban services to people living in un-incorporated areas of Multnomah County to the east of the City of Portland (much of this area was annexed into Portland during the 1980s and 1990s), and by the County’s revenue short fall at the time. The County agreed to focus on its core services of assessment and taxation, elections, corrections, libraries, and health services. The City focused on police services, neighborhood parks, and land use planning, which allowed the County to reduce its spending in these areas (City of Portland, Office of the City Auditor 2013 3).

**ONA Directors Patti Jacobsen (1979-84) and Sarah Newhall (1984-1989):**

Pattie Jacobsen became the new ONA director in October 1979 after the departure of ONA's first director, Mary Pedersen. Witt reported that Jacobsen had worked at ONA under Pedersen and "would build on the program's initial accomplishments, maintaining a capacity building ethos while consolidating ONA's stature vis-à-vis" city government agencies (Witt 108). Witt noted that Jacobsen focused on "fostering greater administrative capacity among the District Coalition offices..." at the same time that some neighborhood activists remained leery of ONA control. Witt argued that Jacobsen needed to show the City Council and "ardently conservative" Mayor Frank Ivancie, that the neighborhood system could function "smoothly and accountably" (Witt 109). "District Coalition volunteers typically did not identify themselves with an administrative role" and viewed with suspicion ONA efforts to build ties with District staff and to shift administrative responsibilities and neighborhood association support functions ONA to the neighborhood district coalitions. Witt reported that, under Pedersen, ONA's primary focus had been on organizing new neighborhood associations and ONA picked up the "slack in administrative work, and [forgave] breaches in accountability among District Coalition boards and staff as a means for leveraging trust in ONA (Witt 110-111). As the number of recognized neighborhood associations grew "ONA needed to build District Coalition capacity in order to help spread the burden of accountability in the program." Witt maintains that building capacity among the District Coalition Boards also was needed to show the "City Council that the two-tiered, sovereignty model of neighborhood association governance was viable."

Witt reports that “shoring up faith in the neighborhood association ethos required that more attention be paid to downtown administrators as well.” He writes that “Jacobsen worked diligently to establish trust between ONA and other bureaus, especially the Bureau of Planning and the Department of Transportation. Under her administration, ONA sponsored workshops for downtown staff covering the skills necessary for successfully communicating with neighborhood activists.” Witt gave Jacobsen’s efforts a large part of the credit for the “esteem with which Portland [City] administrators would hold the neighborhood program by the time the Tufts [University] team held its first round of interviews in 1986...” (Witt 113). Jacobsen also oversaw the incorporation of two new programs into ONA—the crime prevention and neighborhood mediation programs.

The Crime Prevention program, had been a separate program, initially funded by federal dollars. Witt reports that district coalition board directors and staff had often “bristled “at the programs mandates. The City took over administration of the crime prevention program in 1984 and housed it within ONA. Witt reports that “crime prevention staff associated with ONA,” who were trained in community outreach, “cultivated an outlook distinctively separate from crime prevention efforts operating out of the Bureau of Police.” While the police focused on “‘target hardening’ workshops and school-aged programming,” ONA’s crime prevention efforts “focused on assisting neighborhood residents [to identify] crime and public safety issues, setting up block watches, and providing training in spotting and addressing neighborhood crime trends.” Staff “served as a bridge between beat officers and their police precincts, and

neighborhood activists.” Witt reported that the “neighborhood mediation program had been functioning under the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission.” The mediation program “focused on resolving disputes between neighbors that otherwise might have escalated to confrontation and legal proceedings” (Witt 113-114).

Witt wrote that Jacobsen and her staff achieved many of the priorities established when she became ONA director. Witt reports that one example of the strengthened credibility of Portland’s community and neighborhood involvement system was ONA’s successful effort to rally ONA supporters to lobby against “a proposal by Mayor Ivancie to cut the district coalition program in 1983.” Witt writes that Ivancie’s effort to cut the district coalition program “stemmed from residual skepticism and fear that the [neighborhood district coalition] level would detract authority from City Council” (Witt 115). Witt reports that one priority that Jacobsen was not able to achieve was to “codify the role of the Budget Advisory Committees through Council ordinance.” Although the BAC program was “expanded and in some ways strengthened under Jacobsen’s successor, Sarah Newhall,” the BAC program never would receive the formal stature of being established through ordinance. Witt reports that the City Council would recognize the program through a City Council resolution and that subsequent formal ONA “Guidelines” would refer to the program, as well (Witt 115-116).

Witt concludes that Pattie Jacobsen’s tenure as ONA director primarily was focused on consolidating the early gains of the Portland’s new community and neighborhood involvement system. He argues that “the contradictions and embedded conflicts the program embodied were contained during ONA’s first decade” partly

because “few were willing to publicly gainsay the program during its infancy” out of a sense of “‘fair play’” that “necessitated that it be given a chance.” Witt also cited the importance of the still strong memory of the impact of urban renewal in Portland and role of the ONA program in “signaling the City Council’s good faith never again to impose a unilateral will upon the City’s struggling neighborhoods.” Another factor, Witt identified, is the deft management of Pedersen and Jacobsen in building “stakeholder investment in the program, thereby capturing insurgent dissent” and Goldschmidt’s role in leaving in “strong legacy of activist leadership” in Portland and a “halo effect” the “citizen participation” would retain “for the next several years” because of Goldschmidt’s “political presence throughout the 1970s” and his “close affiliation with the NA program, and vice versa” (Witt 116-117). Witt states that , “In sum, Portland wasn’t quite sure what it had done by creating an NA program; but whatever it was, or was to become, it had something in it for everyone” (117).

Witt reports that “forces were in motion that would have a lasting impact on the NA program,” including: an economic recession that started around 1982; Portland’s push to annex large areas of unincorporated Multnomah County east of the city limits and ONA’s involvement in trying to bring existing neighborhood organizations and structure in this area in the ONA system; and clashes within the North Portland district board that would lead to an ONA takeover of the management of that district office (Witt 117-118).

Sarah Newhall became ONA’s third director about the same time that northwest Portland populist tavern owner and community activist Bud Clark defeated incumbent

Frank Ivancie in the mayoral race in 1984. Witt reported that Newhall pursued several initiatives that would decisively shift ONA's focus (Witt 119-120).

Witt characterized Ivancie's defeat as the end of the City's "old boy's club" that the Portland's "1970s activist vanguard," including Goldschmidt, had mobilized against. Witt reports that Clark's decisive victory over Ivancie showed that "liberal populist sentiment was still alive in Portland despite the "conservative backlash" in many communities across the country during the Reagan administration (Witt 199). Berry, Portney and Thomson (1993) reported that when the Reagan administration took office in 1981, it quickly classified "citizen participation" "as part of the liberal agenda that it was elected to undo" and supported the dismantling of many community involvement programs across the country (40). In contrast, the *Oregonian* reported that Portland historian E. Kimbark MacColl said that "Clark's victory as a political novice is unprecedented in mayoral races in this century" and represented a "return to a trend toward neighborhood power" that began in the Goldschmidt administration (Painter. *Oregonian* 17 May 1984).

Witt reported that the major shifts under Newhall were driven in part by a number of intense conflicts within the neighborhood system during her tenure as ONA director. Newhall responded to these challenges by focusing on formalizing ONA/DCB relations through rule making processes (Witt 121). Newhall also would strengthen the BAC program. Witt wrote that "linked together, the BAC program and routinization of ONA/DCB relations would garner for ONA a fully manifest institutional profile in city politics" (122). Witt reported that, in 1988, Newhall also "would have to head off a

budget battle which, as with the Ivancie effort in 1983, threatened to halve the ONA program by doing away with the District Coalition offices” (120).

Witt also asserted that the shift of programs from the Bureau of Human Services to ONA, represented a shift in thinking by ONA Director Sarah Newhall and subsequent ONA Director Rachel Jacky about the purpose of the neighborhood system. Witt reported that, in the face of “continuing cutbacks in funding for social programs,” City leaders saw neighborhoods becoming “the ‘people’s safety net’” and that “Neighborhood groups are being drawn, sometimes in spite of themselves, into a wider range of self-help problems than has been customary.” Witt reported that, even though ONA BAC approved the move of programs from the Bureau of Human Resources to ONA, the move “elicited strong reaction from some [neighborhood district coalition] and [neighborhood association] activists fearful this move signaled a trend away from support for [neighborhood association] activism” (Witt 146-147).

#### 1980 ONA Review Committee

By the late 1970s, concerns had started to arise in the community that some neighborhood associations were not operating in open and democratic ways and were being dominated by small groups of people. In 1979, ONA’s Commissioner-in-Charge Charles Jordan impaneled a special citizens committee—the ONA Review Committee—to review aspects of the operation of ONA and neighborhood associations. He initiated this review partly in response to the concerns of a community member about “the quality of citizen participation and the conduct of neighborhood associations,” particularly the Northwest District Association. The central focus of the community member’s concerns

was the lack of adequate mechanisms to ensure that neighborhood associations would be accountable to their communities and would operate in an open and democratic manner. The committee gathered information during the fall of 1979 and submitted its report to Commissioner Jordan and the City Council in April 1980. This report offered interesting insights into how well Portland's neighborhood system was meeting the needs of some community members and included recommendations for system improvements.

The community member who had filed the formal complaint expressed concern that the City's standards for formally recognized neighborhood associations were inadequate and that the standards in the 1975 Ordinance and ONA's contracts with the district offices were too vague to hold neighborhoods accountable to their communities.

In a letter to the community member, Commissioner Jordan said he shared this view that the City should require the procedures and practices of recognized neighborhood associations to "encourage broad participation, the expression of diverse views, open decision-making, and the recording of minority positions." Jordan agreed that "any citizen participation process sanctioned by the City must be fundamentally democratic." Jordan disagreed with the community member about the "propriety and desirability of City control of the programmatic and policy directions of neighborhood associations." He stated that his opinion was that "the vitality of the City depends in part on a diversity of neighborhood interests, perspectives and organizational models" and that the City Council was responsible for fashioning "City-wide policies in full awareness of such diversity" (Portland. City Commissioner Charles Jordan. *Letter to Robert Butler 2 August 1979.*)

Jordan charged the ONA Review Committee members with developing recommendations in response to the following questions:

- “The adequacy of and the need for process standards in the ONA ordinance including but not limited to: bylaws, membership, elections, minutes, financial statements, meeting notifications, grievances, communications with the City, and conflicts of interest.”
- “The adequacy of performance requirements in the neighborhood office contracts, including but not limited to fiscal and work accountability to the City.”
- “An assessment of the public benefits and liabilities of contract and Civic Service employment arrangements for neighborhood office staff.” (At the time, of the five neighborhood district offices, only the office in northeast Portland still had civil service employees)

Jordan asked the committee members to confer with a city-wide sample of community members that represented businesses, neighborhood associations, the five area review boards, and the broader community.

Committee members began their work in the fall of 1979. They gathered information through “face-to-face interviews, a mailed questionnaire and a public hearing” (Portland. City Commission Charles Jordon. *Memo from Peter Engbretson*. January 28, 1980). The committee sent questionnaires to neighborhood association chairs and designated contact people and interviewed neighborhood activists, representatives of neighborhood business associations, Patty Jacobsen, the ONA director, and present and

past ONA staff members, City Council members, and the area coordinators from the district offices (Portland. Office of Neighborhood Associations. ONA Review Committee Hearing November, 7, 1979, meeting notes 3-4; from Carl Abbott personal file; and notes from Jacobsen interview and meeting with area coordinators).

**November 1979 Hearing:** Notes from a public hearing held by the committee in November 1979 reveal the nature of some of the concerns being raised at the time about neighborhood associations. Robert Butler, the original complainant, asked who was responsible for investigating and correcting a situation in which a neighborhood association was being controlled by “a specific interest group” that did not reflect the opinions and priorities of the broader neighborhood? Butler said he agreed with the committee’s view “that the City should require that recognized neighborhood associations’ procedures and practices encourage broad participation, expression of diverse views, open decision-making, and recording of minority positions.” He then asked how “neighborhood associations can be made sure of being democratic.” He then asked who would determine when a “specific interest group exists and controls a neighborhood association” and how would such a circumstance be corrected (Portland. Office of Neighborhood Associations. ONA Review Committee Hearing November, 7, 1979, meeting notes 1)?

Butler recounted his frustrations with the City’s response to his complaints about the NWDA. Butler had gone to ONA in 1978 with a complaint that the NWDA was being controlled by “a special interest group.” ONA said that NWDA was an independent contractor and was not controlled by ONA. Butler got a similar response when he took

his concerns to the Commissioner in Charge of ONA. He then took his complaint to the City Council asking that the NWDA be investigated and that the organization's city funding be revoked because it had violated the 1975 Ordinance. While supporting the need for and value of neighborhood associations to the City, Butler argued that given that the "City funds neighborhood associations" and that the City, therefore, had the "right to ask for standards, standards pertaining to quorum size, minute-taking, and public hearings" (2).

Butler specifically suggested that "[s]ome neighborhood associations are not democratic with their minutes." He recommended the adoption of citywide standards for neighborhood association minutes. He reported that ONA staff had told him that ONA did not want to require neighborhood associations to submit their minutes to ONA to avoid the impression that ONA was trying to "wiggle into their organization and make a City bureaucracy out of it" (2). Butler argued that neighborhood associations should be required to make their minutes public to provide a formal record when neighborhood association make decisions. One participant argued that making minutes public might subject neighborhood association members who make motions subject to personal retaliation (3).

Other hearing participants agreed with Butler. One said that standards are very important. "Lump groups of two or three people can control entire neighborhoods, just because people don't go to meetings, quorums aren't required, minutes aren't read and filed." He said the impression was that City government had "abdicated its responsibility" over "variances and condition use requirements" and had "dumped them

onto the neighborhoods.” Another participant charged that the NWDA often appeared to have made decisions in advance with fully reviewing and considering proposals before them and exercised its authority in very subjective ways—denying most land use process requests, but approving proposals submitted by a clients of the chair and a board member (5). Some participants charged that some neighborhood association leaders were abusing their power and acting in undemocratic ways. Another individual said that “Neighborhood associations have a lot of political clout. That’s ok only if those organizations are run with standards on a democratic basis” (5).

The committee chair noted participants concerns that some neighborhood association processes were not open and appeared to prejudge issues brought before them. He recognized that one suggestion was “quorum requirements for that kind of decision-making committee” (6).

One neighborhood leader reported that not all neighborhood associations handled land use issues the way NWDA was being accused of doing. He said when his neighborhood association gets a conditional use permit request “we poll [the] area about it, put out 100 forms, get [them] back, break down the response into majority and minority report[s]...” He said the neighborhood association included space on the form for “people to say why they voted the way they did.” Another participant suggested a “meeting of chairmen of neighborhood associations” to share outreach and input-gathering tools that work well (6).

Another testifier suggested that neighborhood associations sometimes are and sometimes are not representative, “because it depends on who’s willing to come. When

the issue is of wide interest, [a] really big crowd comes” and they get a fair opportunity to share their opinions. “Most of the time, day in and day out, [the] same people show up. That’s representative, because people are aware of [the] meeting.” If they come, “they are represented. If they don’t come, they are not represented. If you have a special interest, you can possibly stack the deck” (7).

The committee chair noted that the 1974 Ordinance had established a formal process for official City Council recognition of neighborhood association and approval of their bylaws. Objections from neighborhood association activists lead the City Council to delete the City’s recognition of neighborhood association bylaws in the 1975 Ordinance. Thus, the City currently did not require neighborhoods to record dissenting votes, record types of meetings at which issues were considered, and attendance (7).

**ONA Review Committee Findings and Recommendations:** The ONA Review Committee submitted its final report to Commissioner Jordan in February 1980. The committee found that people involved in neighborhood associations had high levels of support and/or satisfaction with ONA and that citizens increasingly supported neighborhood involvement citywide as they became “familiar with ONA and neighborhood associations.” They also found a “strong consensus” that any ONA structure must be designed to serve neighborhood interests and agendas, and that leadership must rest with neighborhood associations and not city staff.” The committee urged that the impact of citizen participation not be “measured simply by the number of people who attend meetings,” but in the impact of “the entire process of neighborhood associations,” which “raises issues,” “facilitates formal and informal discussion,” and

helps to train “large numbers of citizens in ways to influence city government,” not just in the “number of people who attend meetings” (Portland. Office of Neighborhood Associations. ONA Review Committee. *Final Report*. February 25, 1980 1).

The committee found “almost unanimous support” for the present contract approach between ONA and the four area offices. ONA staff, City Council members, and the citizens interviewed strongly supported neighborhood control of area coordinators. Committee members reported that they found a strong belief “ONA structures should be responsible to the associations and not the other way around” (Portland. Office of Neighborhood Associations. ONA Review Committee 1).

The committee recommended that the city “continue the contract arrangement with area review boards for the employment of staff for areas offices...” and that the central ONA office “develop a system for setting and monitoring work goals and objectives in cooperation with area coordinators.” The committee members clarified that their intention was that the central ONA office would assist the coordinators of the district offices “in self management of their time,” not “establish work program and priorities” for the district offices (1).

The committee did not support the adoption of more formal guidelines for neighborhood association recognition—such as those recommended by some of the participants at the November 1979 hearing—but rather recognized and supported the “trend in the evolution of ONA” which the committee noted had been, throughout the system’s early history, “away from specific structural requirements for neighborhood associations and toward looser performance guidelines and standards.” The committee

found that the current performance standards for the system were adequate “to assure democratic procedures if these standards are conscientiously followed” (2).<sup>24</sup>

*ONA Organizational Capacity Building:* The committee identified a number of ways ONA could assist neighborhood associations. The committee recommended that ONA develop a standard reporting form that neighborhood association could use to report “the results of neighborhood decisions to city bureaus, including data on the vote, attendance, character of meeting, and the like” and one or two templates for standard bylaws that neighborhood associations could “adopt or modify as they please” (3).

The committee recommended that ONA review neighborhood association bylaws and point out any violations of the 1975 Ordinance language that established eligibility requirements for formal recognition of neighborhood associations (these included: non-discrimination in membership and no dues, a formal process to document and transmit dissenting view, a formal grievance process, and filing of the neighborhood association bylaws with ONA (3.96.030)) (2).

The committee also recommended that ONA “educate” new neighborhood leaders “about their responsibilities to their neighborhood and to the city” and hold workshops for neighborhood leaders on techniques to solicit a broad range of public opinion (e.g. neighborhood polling) and procedures for neighborhood association elections that would expand participation in elections beyond those who regularly attend neighborhood meetings (2).

---

<sup>24</sup> It is interesting to note that calls for more formal standards continued to be heard, and led to the creation of the first version of the ONA Guidelines in 1987 (described below). Formal guidelines (later called “standards”) have continued to be an important element of Portland’s neighborhood system. Revisions of the 1987 Guidelines were adopted in 1992, 1998, and 2005. In 2013, ONI and the neighborhood coalition leaders again are preparing to initiate a formal process to review and update the ONI Standards.

Communication: The committee also recommended “a substantial increase in the ONA budget for printing and distribution of newsletters and other notification materials.” The committee found neighborhood associations depended on ONA assistance to produce and distribute “newsletters and notifications” and that communications could be “significantly strengthened at relatively small cost.” The committee members argued that “ongoing facilitation of intra-neighborhood and city-neighborhood communication is the most positive way to deal with the question of representativeness” of neighborhood associations (2).

Although the committee did not recommend formalizing additional requirements for neighborhood recognition, the committee did suggest that ONA “encourage neighborhood associations to include agendas and minutes of previous actions in their meeting notifications” and “encourage neighborhood associations to develop publicity and membership campaigns oriented to the needs and character of each neighborhood” (3).

Increase ONA assistance capacity: The committee recommended that ONA increase the capacity of ONA staff to provide organizational and technical assistance to neighborhood associations. Key areas for assistance included: communication, block organization, neighborhood surveys, retention of neighborhood association members, and technical advice on land use, economic development, the creation of community cooperatives, and local service provision. The committee urged ONA to make workshops “an ongoing part of ONA activities” and to develop a peer support system through which

“neighborhoods can borrow expertise from each other and from other voluntary sources through regular workshops and project consultation” (3).

The committee also suggested that ONA establish a “technical assistance fund” of about \$10,000 to \$15,000 to pay for technical assistance to neighborhood associations. The committee envisioned that the central office would administer this fund, “which area boards and perhaps individual neighborhood associations can use for short-term technical advice on questions of planning, law, economic development, and self help” (3).

Neighborhood Needs Process: The committee recognized that ONA already monitored and reported on city bureau responses to formal Neighborhood Needs Program requests from neighborhoods, but recommended that if would be useful for ONA also to report on the “actual implementation of these requests” by city bureaus (3).

ONA orientation—service to neighborhoods vs. city agencies: The committee raised a concern about the focus of ONA’s work, noting that ONA assistance to city bureaus could divert ONA’s attention away from ONA’s service to the neighborhoods. The committee recognized that ONA work with neighborhoods and citizens greatly eased the work of city bureaus. The committee cited citizen participation functions “performed for the Planning Bureau, the Neighborhood Needs process, which “several bureaus now rely on in their budget-making,” and “individual referral and assistance, which should property be a function of a general city information and service system” (3). The committee cautioned these activities and similar service to city bureaus could “absorb such a large portion of ONA staff time and money,” that they agency would not be able to “properly assist the activities of the neighborhood associations themselves” (3).

The ONI Review Committee examined issues of the accountability and openness of neighborhood associations and instead of formal standards what neighborhood associations needed was more support—training, funding for communications, and organizational support. The Committee also emphasized the importance of ONA remaining primarily focused on providing services to neighborhood associations not City bureaus. Many of these same issues would continue to come up throughout the history of Portland’s community and neighborhood involvement system.

Association of Portland Neighborhoods – 1984-1986

The 1972 DPO Task Force report discussed the value of having some sort of citywide body that would allow neighborhood association leaders to discuss and act on citywide issues. The task force members were not able to agree on a particular approach to recommend. In the 1970s, the Portland Association of Neighborhoods (PAN) organized a short-lived effort to convene neighborhood leaders from across the city to take action on city wide issues. In March 1984, a number of neighborhood association representatives met and founded a new city-wide neighborhood body that they named the Association of Portland Neighborhoods (APN). The *Oregonian* reported that the group’s interim purpose statement said “the organization is intended to promote stronger neighborhood associations and provide a structure for communication among neighborhood associations.”

Meeting participants discussed different citywide issues the group might work on. They agreed that when special-interest groups already were working on an issue the APN would work “with the existing groups rather than duplicate their work.” Some of the

issues identified by the group included: “budgeting for the [ONA] budget, transportation concerns, sign code enforcement, notification on land use issues to neighborhood associations, annexation, and development along the Willamette River” (“Citywide group ‘official.’” *Oregonian* 30 March 1984).

The *Oregonian* ran an editorial criticizing the creation of the group and warned that the group could shift the “direction of issues and advocacy” from the “grass roots up” to a more top-down model. The *Oregonian* said the group’s promotion of a citywide organization for neighborhood associations “could end up diluting Portland’s growing and enthusiastic neighborhoods effort and support.” The editorial argued that the city’s grass-roots neighborhood program was “set up to be participatory, not representative.” “The City Council is representative” while “citizens serving on neighborhood associations are obliged to involve their neighbors in the issues that affect their neighborhoods, not purport to represent them on a citywide panel.”

The editorial also said the new group would shift emphasis away from “internal communication” between neighbors to “external communication” between neighborhood associations. Rather than creating a new citywide body, the *Oregonian* supported continued sharing of information by individual neighborhood associations “with members of other groups and through” ONA. The editorial also advocated for the restoration of “ONA sponsored citywide conferences, which offered additional opportunities for discussing mutual problems and sharing ideas for solutions.” The editorial noted that “City budget cuts ended those conferences.” The *Oregonian* supported continued funding for the ONA and “the local groups themselves,” but

opposed additional city funding to fund a new citywide group. The editorial recognized that “no such request for money” had been made, but argued that “organizations tend to want staff and, thus. New bureaucracies are established.”

The *Oregonian* concluded that “Citizens concerned about maintaining and improving their city and their neighborhoods have the tools at hand now: their personal energy and commitment, their neighborhood associations, the elected City Council, County Commission and regional Metro Council, and state and national governments. They do not need another structure—another layer of organization” (“Maintain neighborhood focus.” Editorial. *Oregonian* 28 March 1984).

A few weeks later, John Werneken, a representative of the Association of Portland Neighborhoods, responded to the *Oregonian* editorial in an “in my opinion” piece. Werneken chided the *Oregonian* for opposing the new group and argued that the new organization’s “primary goal is to promote stronger neighborhood associations” not to weaken them. He argued that the group would accomplish this by “providing a structure for communication and information sharing” that would “help community volunteers throughout the city” and would give “an opportunity to citizen volunteers from throughout the region to get to know each other face to face....” Werneken maintained that the “association is participatory and in no way another layer of organization.”

Werneken argued that the group specifically was working to “avoid duplication of effort” and the creation of “a cumbersome bureaucratic structure” and “seeks no city funds.” He maintained that group members “care about issues of city-wide concern, such as adequate public notice about upcoming hearings and decisions. It intends to pursue

these issues by providing a forum for citizens to work together on issue research and by providing a means of quickly informing all neighborhoods of research findings.”

Werneken further argued that neighborhood associations should continue to focus on their neighborhoods but that “citizen volunteers acting together to research and report on issues can provide more effective support for neighborhoods than citywide conferences held at public expense.” Werneken wrote that the group would complement the efforts of the district coalition boards and ONA to foster citizen participation, helping community members express their opinions, and to mobilize “volunteer energy to accomplish tasks which otherwise might have to be done by the city itself.” He argued that the new forums would work with ONA and build on “a system that works efficiently and effectively today at the area board level.”

Werneken concluded that the Association of Portland Neighborhoods would enhance citizen participation by “supporting neighborhood associations” and working “with [ONA] as the associations do with the city agency’s field offices.” He maintained that the “new association will be building more support for the heart and soul of all neighborhood associations: the concerned citizen who is willing to contribute his or her energies to the better met of the community” (Werneken, John. “In my opinion: Association to serve neighborhood groups.” *Oregonian* 24 April 1984).

Over the next two years, newspaper articles show that the APN held regular meetings at which its members discussed a wide range of issues, including: citywide public transit issues, noise issues, enforcement of outdoor sign regulations (“Community Calendar.” *Oregonian* 26 June 1984) and zoning code revisions, annexations and urban

services policies, “nuclear waste processing by the Portland of Portland, and other citywide neighborhood concerns” (Oliver. *Oregonian* 26 September 1984).

In August 1984, the APN co-sponsored the city’s second annual citywide neighborhood picnic along with ONA, the City Council, the Neighborhood Mediation Center, the Police Bureau crime prevention unit and the five district neighborhood offices. The event was intended to be a gathering of neighborhood volunteers and “anyone interested in meeting people.” The event included a wide range of entertainment and activities, including “a volleyball tournament featuring city commissioners on each of four teams....” (“Citywide neighborhood picnic on tap.” *Oregonian* 21 August 1984).

The APN also was called on to play a role in local elections. The *Oregonian* reported on an effort by community members to get the APN and ONA to join the League of Women Voters in sponsoring a public forum for candidates seeking to fill the city council seat being vacated by City Commissioner Charles Jordan, the long-time commissioner-in-charge of ONA. ONA Director Sarah Newhall said “she did not think it was proper for her agency to sponsor such an event” but thought the APN “would be an appropriate sponsor.” It’s not clear whether the APN did go ahead and co-sponsor this event, but the request from the community appears to show an interest in having a citywide neighborhood body have a voice in local politics (Painter. *Oregonian* 7 September 1984).

An interesting example of how APN saw its role occurred when the APN “tiptoed...into the volatile debate over a proposed Fred Meyer store” in northeast Portland in 1985, which was being challenged by nine neighborhood associations. The

APN maintained that it did not “take stands on specific neighborhood issues” and, instead, chose to “produce a statement generally supporting the city’s comprehensive plan and arterial street designation” and affirming “that neighborhood associations represent Portland’s citizens and support economic development....” The APN also chose to “send a summary of the evening’s discussion of the Fred Meyer proposal to the city’s 80 neighborhood associations, asking them to consider taking a stand on issues raised by the controversy.”

The APN’s major policy achievement was in 1986 when it got the City’s Bureau of Planning to research, develop, and adopt regulations for convenience stores in Portland—regulations that remain in effect nearly 30 years later. During the 1980s, neighborhood activists became alarmed by what they perceived as “a serious epidemic” of convenience stores being located in their neighborhoods. Neighborhood representatives charged that the stores degraded neighborhood livability. Key concerns included “traffic, noise, litter, loitering, crime, density, hours of operation, liquor sales, and community relations” (Bailey. *Oregonian* 27 August 1986). The APN’s effort led the City’s Bureau of Planning to create a citizens advisory committee, which studied the issue and recommended new regulations for the convenience store industry. These “good neighbor standards” required convenience store developers to “meet with delegates from interested neighborhood association before apply[ing] for city land use and business permits.” The standards also provided for the development of a good neighborhood agreement between “store operators and neighborhood groups on the issues of crime, alcohol sales, noise, litter, building appearance and maintenance, loitering and lighting.” The new regulations

also included provisions for “long-term communication between neighborhood associations and convenience store operators to monitor and enforce the good neighbor agreement...” (Oliver. *Oregonian* 24 September 1986).

The APN did not appear in newspaper accounts after the adoption of the new convenience store standards. Lee Perlman, long-time community journalist and former ONA employee, reported that he had volunteered with the APN and had helped them get out their mailings. He remembered that after the major effort on the convenience store regulations, the APN members “ran out of steam.” Perlman also noted that the group did not have any formal staff support putting all the burden of managing the organization and carrying out its activities on the members. Perlman noted that most APN members already were active in their neighborhood associations and neighborhood district coalition bodies and that this additional level of activity became too much for most of them.

Perlman also commented that he thought the inability of both the Portland Alliance of Neighborhoods in the 1970s and and the Association of Portland Neighborhoods 1980s to sustain their efforts was due in part to the fact that Portland neighborhoods already had some voice through the formal neighborhood system. Perlman suggested that similar citywide organizations in other cities had persisted because community activists saw them as critically important to protecting their communities. Perlman said that, in his opinion, neighborhood activists in Portland saw the PAN and the APN as something that was “nice but not essential.” The activists involved say these bodies as “a few priorities down from priority one.” Also “the same

people got kind of burned out” and there was “not enough replacement, so after a while they petered out” (Perlman. Conversation with Leistner. February 13, 2013).

The APN experience illustrates both the advantages of having some sort of citywide body to give neighborhood associations visibility and a voice in broader policy issues but also the difficulty of maintaining such a body without formal staffing support. Volunteers in such effort get stretched thin because they usually already are active with their neighborhood association and neighborhood district levels—involvement that grounds them in the issues of the neighborhood. However, volunteers find it difficult to sustain this high level of involvement over time, especially if they have other vehicles available to pursue their goals.

#### Neighbor Fair – 1976 to 1990

Neighborhood celebrations and festivals are an important way that community members engage in civic life and become aware of community involvement opportunities. Portland’s largest citywide celebrations of neighborhoods—Neighborfair—occurred during the early years of Portland community and neighborhood involvement system. Neighborfair was an annual event organized by KGW Radio and held for the first time in downtown Portland in July 1976 on the city’s newly reclaimed riverfront.<sup>25</sup> The event showcased local neighborhood associations, ethnic groups, and

---

<sup>25</sup> In 1976, the first Neighborfair was held on riverfront land in downtown Portland that had recently been reclaimed to build a public park after the decommissioning and demolition of the Harbor Drive freeway. The Congress for New Urbanism identified this project as the first major freeway removal in the U.S. Harbor Drive was closed in 1974 and the new 37-acre Waterfront Park was opened in its place in 1978 (Congress for the New Urbanism website, <http://www.cnu.org/highways/portland>, downloaded on 09/07/13ed). In 1976, ONA Director Mary Pedersen told the Oregonian that she thought “Neighborfair vindicated all those people who worked so long on getting that park down there” and clearly responded to

other community organizations. The event grew each year and drew more people, organizations, and entertainment. By the early 1980s, however, the event had grown so big that most neighborhood associations had stopped participating. KGW finally cancelled the event in 1990.

First Neighborfair was held in 1976. The event originated with KGW Channel 8 staffer, Joan Biggs, who had been had been “working on a series of news reports about Portland communities.” During her research she had learned about the many community organizations and program in Portland at the time. Biggs told the *Oregonian* that she thought ““Wouldn’t it be nice if all these people could come together at the waterfront some Sunday and display what they have to offer?”” (Stickel. *Oregonian* 20 July 1981.) The event was combined with the already planned Portland Folkfest, which was organized by ethnic and cultural organizations in Portland to intended to showcase their “cultural, historical and folk life traditions” (Pihl. *Oregonian* 25 July 1976).

Neighborfair included a wide range of activities including ethnic food booths, musical performances, booths and activities sponsored by neighborhood and community groups, speeches from politicians including Portland mayors and city council members and Oregon’s governors and often closed with an evening concert and fireworks.<sup>26</sup> In

---

people who had raised questions about “who would use a waterfront park and why anyone would want to go there...” (Goetze. *Oregonian* 1 August 1976).

<sup>26</sup> Neighborfair in 1979 featured the first release of what would become the world famous “Expose Yourself to Art” in which Bud Clark, community activist, local bar owner, and co-founded of the *Northwest Neighbor* community newspaper, appeared from the back to be wearing only a trench coat and was exposing himself to a statue of a nude woman on Portland’s bus mall. The photo was taken by *Northwest Neighbor* staffer Mike Ryerson and was sold at Neighborfair in 1979 to raise funds for the newspaper. By 1984, when Portlander’s elected Bud Clark as their new mayor, Ryerson reported that over 250,000 copies of the poster been sold to people all over the country (Hayakawa. *Oregonian* 17 May 1984; Wikipedia article, “Expose Yourself to Art,” downloaded on 09/07/13).

1977, the *Oregonian* described Neighborfair as a “chance to stroll, munch, hum and meet your neighbors,” listen to “music from every land on three stages,” and enjoy “folk dances, gospel singers, clowns, jugglers and circus stunts.” The paper noted that “Everywhere there was dancing: Belly dances, African hat dances, Swedish, Norwegian, Greek and Oriental dances.” “Visitors could take a Cook’s Tour of the world” sample food from many different countries and cultures (Ruble and Leverett. *Oregonian* 18 July 1977.)

Neighborfair was very popular, and attendance grew each year. Between 50,000 and 75,000 people participated in the first Neighborfair In 1976, according to the *Oregonian* (Olmos. *Oregonian* 19 July 1976). In 1980, the *Oregonian* reported that 250,000 people attended the event (Goetze. *Oregonian* 17 July 1981). In 1981, the *Oregonian* referred to Neighborfair as the “country’s biggest block party” and noted that 250 non-profit organizations participated, including “Neighborhood associations, scout troops, school organizations, church groups, and social service agencies (Goetze. *Oregonian*. 17 July 1981). In 1982, the *Oregonian* anticipated that 500,000 people would attend, which, the paper noted, would qualify Neighborfair as the “biggest city in Oregon” for the day (Hortsch. *Oregonian* 16 July 1982).

In the early years, many neighborhood associations participated and had booths from which they “offered information about their organizations and activities for fair-goers” (Goetze. *Oregonian* 20 July 1979). In 1979, the *Oregonian* reported that at least eighteen neighborhood associations were among the more than 200 organizations expected to participate in Neighborfair that year. Neighborhood associations booths

offered activities that included: “a bean bag toss—with caricatures of city commissioners as targets,” “face painting and a balloon dart game,” “arts and crafts and peanuts,” and beer gardens, and offered “fruit drinks and sausage,” “lemonade...and jogging maps,” “hot dogs and coffee,” and “watermelon slices.” Some neighborhood associations sold t-shirts with their logos, while another neighborhood association operated a dunk tank for local leaders and celebrities as a fund raiser (Goetze. *Oregonian* 19 July 1979). ONA had a booth and gave out bumper stickers that read: “Neighborhoods: A Renewable Resource” (Goetze. *Oregonian* 20 June 1979).

Neighborhood association participation in Neighborfair began to drop off in the early 1980s as the event got much bigger and the focus on neighborhoods was overshadowed by all the other activities at the event. Neighborhood associations said they stopped participating because the cost of having a booth were too high for many neighborhood associations and because the large size of the fair made it difficult for neighborhood associations to compete for visibility with all the other activities and commercial food sales at the fair. Some neighborhood leaders said the high amount of volunteer effort required for them to participate in the event was not worth it. Many other community non-profit organizations continued to participate in Neighborfair and used the event as a major fundraising opportunity.

By 1990, KGW decided to cancel Neighborfair because the cost to the station of producing the event had risen dramatically over the years and neighborhood associations—one of the original focuses of the event—had stopped participating. Also, while Neighborfair originally had been the “only festival of its kind held in Portland’s

riverside park,” by 1990, the event was competing with a number of other similar events and was no longer unique (Gilbert. *Oregonian* 3 February 1990).

The *Oregonian* reported that an ONA representative said that the “neighborhood flavor of the fair and its benefit to neighborhood groups” had been “lost years ago.” She said that neighborhood associations believed that “their efforts are better spent organizing their communities around issues that affect them in their own back yards and prefer to organize their own smaller festivals....” “It outgrew itself as a neighborhood event. It just got too big.” ONA had dropped out of the “fair after finding that the event was “not a good place to recruit volunteers or deal with issues” (Gilbert. *Oregonian* 3 February 1990).

A number of neighborhood associations and neighborhood district coalitions focused instead on developing community festivals at the neighborhood or neighborhood district level. One neighborhood district coalition that refocused its efforts on a local district festival was Southeast Uplift. In 1981, Southeast Uplift decided to hold its own district festival in August—The Southeast Summer Festival. Several community and neighborhood organizations participated. One of the event coordinators told the *Oregonian* that “The festival is planned ‘to generate revenue for the community associations and to be an information exchange between people who ought to work together....” The event is “patterned after the downtown Neighborfair....” “The event will have good and information booths, a beer and wine area, as well as softball and volleyball events.” The *Oregonian* reported that “The idea for the festival started with the Buckman neighborhood, which has sponsored a flea market in past years....” Other

organizations involved included “the Mount Tabor, South Tabor, Kerns and Richmond neighborhood associations and the Southeast Uplift office.” Other organizations that signed up to have information booths include: “Responsible Urban Neighborhood Technology (RUNT), the Oregon State University Extension Service and Sunflower Recycling....” The southeast Portland community organizing group PACT hired a PSU work-study student to coordinate the event. She told the *Oregonian* that “one of the purposes of bringing social action groups together with neighborhood associations is to promote the idea of solving problems on a neighborhood or personal level.” “We have been trying to get an emphasis on self-reliance; neighborhood self-reliance is basically the theme.” She asserted that the “Southeast Summer Festival will help neighbors meet each other.” “It’s a good idea in these days and times to get to know your neighbors....It’s like turning a big city into a bunch of small towns. It gets people out of their houses and lets them explore food-buying clubs, recycling, solar energy, tool banks and crime prevention”(Dolan. *Oregonian* 25 August 1981).

While, no citywide neighborhood festival has been held in Portland since the cancellation of Neighborfair, a number of individual neighborhood associations and neighborhood district have continued to organized and host community festivals in their own areas of Portland.

#### Mayor Bud Clark—Community and Neighborhood Celebration and Recognition

Mayor Bud Clark, populist candidate and long-time community and neighborhood activist took office in January 1985. Clark had a strong reputation for having fun and focused on bringing the community together to celebrate and to recognize the work of

community volunteers and community organizations. Clark hosted a number of community recognition events during this time in office, which are described below.

**Bud's Ball:** Clark invited the entire community to his inaugural ball, which became known as Bud's Ball and was billed as "Portland's biggest party." The event included 28 bands playing an eclectic mix of "everything from big band swing to new wave to reggae to Dixieland to honky-tonk tunes," a "Bud's Beer and Shooter booth" and an "international food fair." Oregon Symphony Director James DePriest served as master of ceremonies for the first half of the event, followed by Darcelle, Portland's well-known female impersonator, who hosted the second half. The finale included a fireworks display from the Steel Bridge. The proceeds from the party went to help retired Clark's campaign debt (Painter. *Oregonian* 3 January 1985). Clark continued to host "Bud's Ball" in subsequent years. The events continued to serve as big community parties and, in later years, as fund raisers for the Oregon Food Bank and other organizations. In 1986, the *Oregonian* announced Bud's Ball for that year and quoted Clark as saying: "Life is more meaningful if you're having fun" (Tomlinson. *Oregonian* 8 February 1986).

**Neighborhood Recognition Week:** Soon after taking office, Mayor Bud Clark had his staff begin working with a committee that included representatives from the mayor's office "and each Commissioner's office, [ONA], and many volunteers" to plan a series of activities for what he called "Neighborhood Recognition Week." In a March 1985 memo to city agency directors, Clark announced that the week's activities would include his presentation of "the first annual 'Spirit of Portland' Awards to twelve outstanding citizens...selected by a committee appointed by the City Council with

recommendations from Neighborhood Area Boards.” The awards were to be presented at a City Council hearing on May 9, 1985, followed by a City Council hosted reception for the award recipients. Neighborhood Recognition Week also would include “‘The City Listens’ a one-day gathering of neighborhood representatives and city personnel.” Clark reported that the purpose of this event was to “strengthen communication and develop greater understanding between Portland government and its citizens.” He asserted that the “information obtained from this session will be utilized for developing a format aimed at improving services.” Clark invited bureau directors and their staff to “participate in the ‘City Listens’ by facilitating workshops, making presentations, providing tours of city buildings/offices to assist citizens in getting better acquainted with us and the services we provide” (Portland. Office of the Mayor. Memo from Bud Clark to Bureau Managers. “RE: Neighborhood Recognition Week May 6-10, 1985” 8 March 1985). The *Oregonian* reported that the “City Listens” program would be the primary event for Neighborhood Recognition Week and would allow “neighborhood representatives, city personnel and interested residents” to open “channels for two-way communication.” The *Oregonian* reported that “Mayor Bud Clark, [ONA], and numerous citizen volunteers” were using the event to “develop a hearing aid for city government...one they need residents to speak into if citizens are to play a greater role in determining the future of Portland in coming years” (“Learn to talk to your city.” Editorial. *Oregonian* 25 April 1985).

Clark continued to host annual “neighborhood recognition weeks” for at least two more years. In 1986, the *Oregonian* reported that Neighborhood Recognition Week and the “City Listens” program included the Spirit of Portland awards and reception, and a

series of workshops “on seven topics of community concern” including: “neighborhood traffic management; communicating with City Council; land-use planning; the Portland Development Commission and small business; neighborhood nuisances; police and crime prevention issues; and neighborhood associations.” The week’s activities also included informal meetings between commissioners and citizens in which groups of community members met with individual city commissioners or the mayor. The *Oregonian* reported that Clark said that, in 1985, community members had “emphasized improved communications and understanding of land-use planning.” Clark had reported that “communications between the city and citizens had improved” and that the “Planning Bureau developed a training program for neighborhood groups and added a neighborhood planner position” (“Citizen concerns object of ‘City Listens’ program.” Editorial. *Oregonian* 29 April 1986). In 1987, Neighborhood Recognition Week, included the third awarding of Spirit of Portland Awards followed by a dessert reception with the City Council, the first time city offices held open houses “to acquaint citizens with bureaus,” and a parade of community members, led by Mayor Clark and the city commissioners, from City Hall to Pioneer Courthouse Square for a brown bag lunch and dessert and musical entertainment (“Council ceremony to honor volunteers.” *Oregonian* 10 May 1987).

The Spirit of Portland Awards have become an annual tradition in Portland since Clark initiated the first award ceremony in 1985. This city-wide recognition process continues to honor community members and community organizations that have made exceptional contributions to the community. Many of the neighborhood district coalitions

have recognized the importance of awards ceremonies in encouraging and support community and neighborhood activist and volunteerism and hold their own awards ceremonies in their districts as well.

**Neighborhood Flag Project:** Starting in 1984, Clark also supported the “Neighborhood Flag Project.” This project encouraged each of Portland’s neighborhood associations to design and produce its own neighborhood flag. Two women from Portland, on a trip to Sienna, Italy, had “observed that each of the city’s 17 political districts” had its own flag. They came back to Portland and proposed that each Portland neighborhood be invited to design and display its own flag. Mayor Clark agreed to support their effort, and ONA, the Junior League of Portland, and the Historic Preservation League of Oregon signed on as co-sponsors for what came to be known as the Neighborhood Flag Project.” ONA coordinated the project and sought funds to help neighborhoods “unable to finance a flag.” The *Oregonian* reported that the sponsors believed “the flags will symbolize the uniqueness of each of the city’s neighborhoods” (“Neighborhood groups sew up banner designs.” *Oregonian* 26 November 1984). Clark said he intended to “display the banners at his office on a rotating basis” (“Neighborhood banners.” *Oregonian* 2 March 1985).

More than 35 neighborhood associations took advantage of the project to produce their own flags. The flags all had original designs. Some were “created by volunteer artists within the neighborhoods or by hired professionals. Some neighborhoods held flag-design contests in local schools.” Nike donated “50 yards of nylon taffeta in four different colors.” Kitty Wheeler, originator of the project, said “each of the flags has a

design that reflects something unique to or of historical interest in the particular neighborhood.” “Some designs are silk-screened and some are appliquéd.” One neighborhood painted their flag with outdoor point, while another needle pointed their neighborhood name on their flag. All flags were 2.5” by 3.”. ONA Director Sarah Newhall said the “flag project was intended to build neighborhood pride.” She envisioned them “being used to brighten business districts and neighborhood parades, hang at City Hall when neighborhood residents visit the City Council, and fly at neighborhood fairs and other special events (Falk. *Oregonian* 2 May 1985).

Neighborhood flags were displayed in the foyer of City Hall during Neighborhood Recognition week in May 1985 (Falk. *Oregonian* 2 May 1985) and were flown again at Pioneer Courthouse Square (the “living room” of Portland) in August after a “special flag-unfurling celebration (*Oregonian* 23 August 1985). Some neighborhood associations mass produced and sold their flags and some printed their flag designs on T-shirts (Falk. *Oregonian* 9 May 1985).

Mayor Bud Clark marched in the Rose Festival Star Light Parade—in both 1985 and 1986—and was followed in the parade by community members carrying flags from the Neighborhood Flag Project. (*Oregonian* 31 May 1985, and *Oregonian*, 29 May 1986). During the summer of 1986, the Portland neighborhood flags flew at the Multnomah County Fair at Portland’s Expo Center (Erickson. *Oregonian* 23 July 1986).

The practice of unfurling the neighborhood flags at City Hall along with the Spirit of Portland Awards ceremony in the spring continued until 1992. In 1993, both the awards ceremony and the neighborhood flag unfurling was moved to the fall to coincide

with the 1993 Neighborhood Congress. ONA Director Diane Linn remarked that “some people really like the awards and flag ceremony in the City Council Chambers” and noted that the events got better press and generally more attention being located there (Portland. Office of Neighborhood Associations. *Memo from Diane Linn to Sam Adams* 18 February 1994).

The neighborhood flags were removed from City Hall when the building closed in 1996 for an extensive renovation. Long-time ONI Staff person Brian Hoop, reported that the flags went into boxes, and later ONI Staff send them back to the neighborhood associations. The neighborhood flags have not been flown together since that time (Hoop. Conversation with Leistner. December 3, 2012).

#### 1987 ONA Guidelines

Witt noted that the 1980 ONA Review Committee had supported “the historical trend in the evolution of ONA” “away from specific structural requirements for neighborhood associations and toward looser performance guidelines and standards.” Witt reported that this view had “shifted dramatically by 1987 when the City Council approved the first ONA Guidelines for the neighborhood system.” Witt noted that the 1987 Guidelines formalized “conventions that had guided Portland’s NA program until that time” and did so during a time when “several threats were challenging and eroding the institution” (Witt 135). Witt noted that “from another perspective, the Guidelines process signaled the end of the era captured in the 1980 ONA Review Committee report” and “heralded a shift in focus from a relationship building ethos dependent upon close ties between ONA and neighborhood associations, to the full enfranchisement of the

District Coalition model—a feature the City Council, and many activists, had found so problematic at the outset of the program” (Witt 136).

Witt reports that the 1987 ONA Guidelines “set out in painstaking detail the various types of relationships and responsibilities” of neighborhood associations district coalition boards and ONA (Witt 135). The 1987 Guidelines included requirements for neighborhood associations to receive formal recognition from ONA and to be eligible to receive services from ONA and neighborhood district coalitions. The 1987 Guidelines also established formal roles and responsibilities for neighborhood district coalitions (“district coalition boards” or “DCBs”) and ONA. The 1987 Guidelines also established specific guidelines for designating and resolving disputes over neighborhood boundaries, grievance procedures, neighborhood newsletter policies, and the process for future amendments of the ONA Guidelines.

Witt argued that the 1987 Guidelines “signified more than merely formalizing relationships among ONA participants already in operation at the time.” He wrote that “Several provisions of the Guidelines significantly altered the terms for engagement within the NA edifice,” primarily “the explicit delineation of District Coalition Board functions.” Witt noted that duties assigned to neighborhood coalitions included requirements established by ONA that neighborhood coalitions developed annual work plans and submit mid-year progress reports to ONA. Witt emphasized that these provisions “quite clearly laid down the need for [neighborhood associations] to establish a basic consensus in order to acquire yearly contracts that would pay for district staff and office resources” (137-138). Witt noted that the 1987 Guidelines also “stressed the

importance of full NA involvement at the DCB level” by including, in the section on requirements for neighborhood association recognition, the statement that:

To have a voice in setting goals and priorities for a District Coalition board, and to determine the allocation of that DCBs resources, a Neighborhood Association must participate as a member of its District Coalition Board (Portland. Office of Neighborhood Involvement. *Guidelines for Neighborhood Associations*. 1987 2).

While the 1987 Guidelines allowed neighborhood associations not to participate in a neighborhood district coalition, the document clearly established a preference for neighborhood associations to actively participate in their neighborhood coalition. The 1987 Guidelines also shifted administrative responsibilities from ONA to neighborhood district coalitions, including responsibility for orienting neighborhood association and neighborhood coalition members on the operations and procedures of the system. The formal grievance process requirements in the 1987 Guidelines also shifted formal dispute resolution responsibilities away from ONA and out into the community. Neighborhood associations and neighborhood district coalitions needed to sort out disputes “amongst themselves.” ONA only was to be involved in grievances that pertained to a violation of the 1987 Guidelines. This was a major departure from the early system in which ONA could be involved helping to resolve a wide range of disputes and in which grievants could appeal “beyond ONA to the Commissioner-in-charge” and then to City Council (140). Additional provisions in the 1987 Guidelines responded directly to conflicts that

had arisen in the mid-1980s including provisions for “resolving neighborhood boundary disputes” and the establishment of explicit neighborhood association newsletter policies.

Witt asserted that the “substantive and symbolic effects” of the 1987 Guidelines process “constituted a major turning point for Portland’s NA program.” Supporters of the new guidelines saw them as beneficial and a necessary standardization of roles and responsibilities in response to stresses in the system at the time. They saw that the 1987 Guidelines “could serve to buffer the institution from scattershot and disabling claims made against its legitimacy” rising out of “squabbles and contention” within the system (140-1). Critics of the 1987 Guidelines saw them as a challenge to existing practices and power dynamics between neighborhood associations and neighborhood district coalitions in areas of the city, especially in north Portland and east Portland (141-143). While proponents of the 1987 Guidelines saw the shift in administrative responsibilities and direct support from ONA to the neighborhood district coalitions as a necessary shift as the number of neighborhood association had grow, critics were suspicious that ONA Director Sarah Newhall was attempting to “insulate ONA by off-loading administrative duties onto DCBs for which they were ill-equipped to deal” (144).

Witt reported that proponents of the new guidelines hailed “the process as a brilliant resolution to the problems that the program” had been facing, including “several forces threatening to pull the neighborhood association program apart from different directions.” Witt noted that the 1987 Guidelines stalled “criticism that the NAs were unaccountable and prone to self-destruction,” and that the codification “of the DCB structure” “purchased for ONA a new lease on consolidating a legacy of NA

involvement” in Portland. Stronger neighborhood district coalitions would allow capacity building at the neighborhood association level “with minimal intrusion from downtown.” Witt noted that proponents of the 1987 Guidelines hoped they would “finally head off suspicions that ONA was prone to pitting [neighborhood associations] against one another,” and that “a strong DCB network would enable ONA to mobilize and target resources in ways it had been unable to achieve previously.” This would free ONA from needing to provide direct administrative support to neighborhood associations, which would allow “ONA to focus its efforts on ‘watchdogging’ City Council and downtown bureaus to insure citizen involvement would remain a priority” (145-146).

Witt also noted that the City Council, in adopting the 1987 Guidelines, revised the City Code that established ONA and the neighborhood system (Portland. City Council. *Ordinance 159928*, July 29, 1987). The City Council gave ONA greater authority to enforce the formal requirements for neighborhood associations, but also deleted the reference to the role that neighborhood associations “would play in city planning efforts” and dropped the reference to neighborhood associations roles in “providing recommendations regarding zoning” (Witt 137).

### Tufts University Study

In the later 1980s, a research team from Tufts University—led by Jeffrey Berry, Kent Portney, and Ken Thomson—studied Portland’s citizen participation system and identified it as one of the best examples of participatory democracy in the country. The researchers happened to be studying Portland’s system during one of the high points in its

functioning. The strengths of and challenges for the system that they identified are summarized below.<sup>27</sup>

Berry et al examined both the “breadth” and “depth” of Portland’s system. Under “breadth” the authors noted the strong independence of Portland’s neighborhood associations and neighborhood district coalitions (Berry Portney and Thomson 59-60) and the value to community members of having an existing network of organized neighborhood associations in place (112). They found that the City encouraged neighborhood associations to work directly with city bureaus and the city council, and that individuals also had the opportunity to participate on bureau budget advisory committees and many other communities. They also recognized that the City of Portland provided funding to neighborhood associations and neighborhood district coalitions to communication directly with community members.

Under “depth,” the researchers noted that “One of the most direct measures of the depth of a participation system is its ability to grapple realistically with the city budget.” They noted the opportunity for community members to have some impact on the city budget through the bureau budget advisory committees, but also recognized that the “actual ability to affect budgets varies greatly from one committee to the next” (64). The researchers found that the Neighborhood Needs Process allowed neighborhoods to communicate their priorities to city agencies, but found that neighborhood groups were more likely to have an impact on small projects, rather than larger projects (65). They

---

<sup>27</sup> Berry, Portney, and Thomson’s findings related to Portland’s community and neighborhood involvement system are described in more detail in Chapter II.

also noted very high levels of “participatory planning” and community involvement in neighborhood planning and in larger planning processes.

Berry et al cautioned that, while Portland city government was very open and provided many avenues for community input and took the input seriously, providing more community involvement opportunities is not always better and can lead to confusion and uncertainty about who truly speaks for a neighborhood or group of citizens. They also noted that, despite high levels of community involvement in Portland, they had found more hostility between neighborhoods and city hall than in other communities (66). This suggested that expanding community involvement opportunities can raise expectations in the community that all city government decision making processes should involve community members in effective and meaningful ways.

The researchers recognized that even though “on the most critical development issues, the development side almost always wins” (142), on other “important but smaller projects and proposals, business is quite vulnerable” to neighborhood input and advocacy. They concluded that “More than anything else, the neighborhood associations give an institutionalized voice to residents at the early stages of the policymaking process when ideas are being formulated into proposals” (114).

#### Mayor’s budget Messages –1980s

Three Portland mayors served during the 1980s, including former city commissioners Connie McCready and Frank Ivancie, and community and neighborhood activist Bud Clark. Neither McCready or Ivancie had been strong supporters of community involvement as city commissioners. Clark, in contrast, was a very strong

proponent of community involvement in city government decision making. The community involvement references of their annual mayor's budget messages are summarized below.

**Mayor Connie McCready:** Mayor Connie McCready finished out Goldschmidt's second term and served as mayor for a little over a year. She presided over the development of only one city budget—FY 1980-81. In her nine-page mayor's budget message, McCready noted the continuing challenge of high inflation and identified major priorities for the city as including “our energy, housing, and economic development policies; major capital improvement programs in transportation and parks; major improvements in the way the City manages its resources” (Portland. “Mayor's Message. *City Budget* FY 1980-81 2).

McCready stated that the city budget is city government's “responsibility to serve the public good”(3). She mentioned the importance of the “integrity” of Portland's neighborhoods, the “economic vitality of downtown,” and the “maintenance of basic services.” She stated that “These values have been written into the City's future, because this City and its residents have accepted the age-old challenge of self-determination.”

McCready did not refer to community involvement in governance decisions or Portland's community and neighborhood involvement system in her introductory remarks. She introduced her “budget highlights” for individual city bureaus by saying that they “represent my view of the City's highest priorities in serving our citizens during the next fiscal year” (5). McCready did not refer to ONA or community involvement in any of her the budget highlights.

She concluded her mayor's budget message by stating that "This is a budget of public needs, conservative in outlay and mindful of the economic climate. Yet, it is a budget, developed through the partnership of this City with the people, to maintain the quality of life that we Portlanders value so highly. As mayor, I remain committed to that purpose" (10).

**Mayor Frank Ivancie:** Mayor Frank Ivancie wrote four mayor's budget messages during his one term in office. Ivancie kept his annual communication to the "Citizens of Portland" about the city budget to a brief two pages each. Like McCready, Ivancie focused his budget messages mostly on the delivery of city services. In his last two messages, he did recognize the work of the Budget Advisory Committees (BACS) in helping to prepare the city budget. Ivancie did not make any additional statements about the role of community members in city government decision making or the value of ONA or the community and neighborhood involvement system.

In his first budget message in 1981, Ivancie started out by mentioning that public hearings had provided "valuable input to the decision making process" and recognizing that the "interest and perseverance of City officials and citizens have resulted in a budget which maintains all basic City services, enhances the livability and progress of Portland, plans for the financial future of the City." Ivancie's brief budget highlights do not refer to ONA or community involvement activities (Portland. "Mayor's Message." *City Budget* FY 1981-82 1).

In his 1982 budget message, Ivancie noted the challenges of the "current recession, combined with reductions in federal and state programs" that impact "many of

Portland's citizens, as well as "high interest rates and declining [city] revenues." Ivancie stated that city resources must "be concentrated to provide those basic services citizens expect from their City government. He listed traditional city services—police and fire, streets, water, sewer, and parks—and additional services, which he says "are now considered to be basic," including: "land use, transportation planning and control, economic development, preservation of housing stock, support for the City's cultural needs and social services for youth, the elderly and disadvantaged").. Ivancie did not mention ONA or community involvement (Portland. "Mayor's Message." *City Budget* FY 1982-83 1).

In 1983, Ivancie stated that the city budget "continues to provide Portland citizens with basic services at generally the same level of the FY 82-83" budget. His budget highlights mentioned a plan to consolidate "small offices" in City Hall to reduce clerical support costs. The plan included co-locating the Office of Cable Communications and the Energy Office with the Metropolitan Arts Commission and Metropolitan Human Relations Commission in City Hall to allow them to share clerical support. Ivancie noted that ONA would remain in City Hall and "retain its one clerical position." He also reported the transfer of the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission Mediation Program to ONA to "more efficiently and effectively coordinate like activities" (Portland. *City Budget* FY 1983-84. Mayor's Budget Message 1). In closing his budget message, Ivancie thanked "the many people—Budget Advisory Committee members, interested citizens and City staff—who contributed their time and energy in the preparation of this document" (2).

"Ivancie's last budget message, in 1984, did not include any reference to overall goals and purposes, but did report a special appropriation to support city bureaus involved in the delivery of urban services to areas slated to be annexed to Portland. Ivancie's budget highlights referred to additional funds for the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission for a part-time "typist clerk" and to ONA to support "technical assistance" for neighborhoods. Ivancie again thanked the Budget Advisory Committees, city staff and the other members of the city council for their work on the budget, which, he said, "provides Portland's citizens with quality services, making Portland the most livable City in the nation" (Portland. "Mayor's Message." *City Budget* FY 1984-85 1-2).

**Mayor Bud Clark:** Mayor Bud Clark prepared eight mayor's budget messages during his two terms as Portland's mayor. For the first five years, he kept his messages to two pages, and then expanded to four to six pages for his final three city budgets. Unlike Ivancie, Clark did share some of his vision for the community and his priorities beyond basic delivery of city services. During Clark's time as mayor, he supported community involvement in the budget process and civic life in Portland, increased funding for the existing neighborhood coalitions and funded a new district coalition in the newly-annexed areas of east Portland. He also strongly supported the development and implementation of the city's new community policing program and a community visioning process for the city called Portland Future Focus (discussed in the next chapter).

In his first budget message in 1985-86, Clark pledged to the "citizens of Portland" to have an "open, honest administration" and to provide "responsive public safety

services and increased opportunities for meaningful citizen involvement in the affairs of the government. He also stressed his commitment to “greater levels of team management approaches” in City government to reduce costs, improve efficiency in city government, and explore new sources of revenue. Clark made a point of recognizing the “untiring efforts on the part of citizen advisory communities and City personnel” in helping to develop the city budget (Portland. “Mayor’s Message.” *City Budget* FY 1985-86 1).

In 1986, Clark again recognized the “countless hours” “City employees and citizen volunteers” put into the development of the City budget. He notes that the city budget stopped the drawdown of the City’s reserves, increased services to Portlanders, and utilized “a consensus-building process which ensures that the budget reflects a city-wide view of City priorities.” Some of the service highlights Clark mentioned included funding for additional police officers, expanded economic development efforts, “expanded City services to newly-annexed areas, to keep our promises to Portland’s newest citizens and ensuring their efficient service delivery,” funding for Clark’s “program for the homeless and disadvantaged,” and “additional counseling and employment services for our city’s youth” (Portland. “Mayor’s Message.” *City Budget* FY 1986-87 1-2).

In 1987, Clark’s budget message again thanked citizen volunteers and city staff for their work on the city budget. He noted that City revenues had fallen below projections, which required some cuts in City services. He noted that while some city services and programs were cut or deferred, the budget continued to fund increased numbers of police officers, maintained parks summer youth playground programs, and

ensured that fire and building inspection services would continue to “preserve the safety and well-being of our citizens. Clark described some steps to improve efficiency and reduce costs. He closed by affirming that he will “continue to foster a consensus approach to budget and policy decisions...and to explore and develop strategies to stabilize the City finances so that Portland’s citizens can be assured that they will be safe...able to find jobs, and that the services they expect from their City government (1-2).

In 1988, at the end of his first term as mayor, Clark stated that the city budget for the first time implemented a “program budgeting” program to improve the City’s ability to “monitor performance and direct City resources to our priority programs.” He identified the city’s highest priority as “public safety” and “the fight against crime” and reported the hiring of 22 additional police officers. He also reported the dedication of resources to “the restoration of abandoned housing, which is a critical first step in reclaiming our neighborhoods.” He reported the funding of “two more crime prevention coordinators and a street crime coordinator” in ONA. In his budget highlights, he reported increased funding for ONA to provide “operational support for the mid-county neighborhood office” and increased funding for the existing six district offices. Clark closes by thanking the “hundreds of volunteers who contributed to the development of the City’s 1988-89 budget, including those who participated on Bureau Advisory Committees and those who took time to testify before the City Council.” He stated that their dedication and credibility helped “ensure the tradition of citizen participation that is

an important part of our city” (Portland. “Mayor’s Message.” *City Budget* FY 1988-89 1-2).

Clark’s first budget message of his second term, in 1989, continued to maintain the primary focus of the budget as “preservation of public safety services.” He also reported on the City’s ongoing negotiations and cooperation with Multnomah County to implement the division of services between the two jurisdictions across a wide range of public services. He reported the elimination of City funding for the Metropolitan Youth Commission. He closed by thanking “the many citizens who participated in the City’s budget process, including those who testified at the hearings, and the hundreds who volunteered on Bureau Advisory Committees.” He wrote that their “dedication and insights help ensure that the people’s voices are heard” (Portland. “Mayor’s Message.” *City Budget* FY 1989-90 1).

Starting in 1990, Clark began to include much more detail in his budget messages about his goals for the City and specific program initiatives. In his 1990 budget message, Clark noted that, for the first time in his service as mayor, the City budget “substantially improves public safety without cutting other city services.” He credited this achievement to “tight fiscal management” and “an improved economy.” He also notes that, in November 1989, the City Council “adopted a resolution which made public safety, and in particular Community Policing, the City’s top priority” (1).

Clark identified four service priorities and budget issues, which included public safety, human development, emergency help for youth at risk, and affirmative action. He reported the full funding of the Phase I implementation of Community Policing, which

included increased funding for the Police Bureau, ONA, and the Park Bureau. He made the case that the “City must seek to address and abolish the social conditions that have left many of our citizens vulnerable to the scourge of drugs and crime” and encouraged “discussions in our community about a ‘human development agenda’ for Portland...” and a review of the “policy and service implications of this issue” during “strategic planning discussions” (1-2). The City budget also back-filled cuts in federal funding to support the continuation of summer youth employment programs, “especially gang-affected youth.” Clark also reported budget support for “continuing and new programs” to “achieve affirmative action goals” within City government (3).

Clark also noted that “Portland’s two most pressing problems in the 1980s—crime and a poor economy—have consumed most of the city’s attention and energy for a decade.” He reported that the City budget included funding for the “completion of the City’s first strategic planning effort, ‘Portland Future Focus: Bridging to a New Century.’” He stated that this “effort will create not only a vision of what our citizens want their community to be like in the next century, but also will identify changes needed to achieve that community vision.” He asserted that the “resulting action plan will be a foundation for future budgets and future City Council decisions” (4). He also advocated for more coordination of bureau planning in the face of major City bureau projects such as the development of a “new regional light rail agenda for the city” and proposed increased sewer rates to “meet new federal environmental regulation and capacity demand on the sewer system.”

Clark closed by recognizing that the city budget was developed “with the full involvement and cooperation of every member of the Council, and with the help and advice of the Citizens Budget Coordinating Committee and the individual Bureau Advisory Committees.” He also recognized the “time, effort, and insight” of city staff and citizens who participated in the preparation of the budget (5).

#### Observations from the 1980s

During the 1980s, Portland’s community and neighborhood involvement system shifted from its earlier more open and flexible culture to begin to institutionalize structures, roles and responsibilities and practices for the system. The adoption of the first ONA Guidelines in 1987 helped formalize many of these elements and helped protect the system against charges that neighborhood associations were not open and democratic and were unstable. Many of the system elements identified as important in the 1970s continued to be important, such as a citywide system of independent neighborhood associations and communication and organizational support for neighborhood associations. The role of the neighborhood district coalition offices as forums for discussion and vehicles for supporting neighborhood associations also was firmly established in the system. Bud Clark introduced a formal role for neighborhood association and volunteer celebration and recognition with Neighborhood Recognition Week and the Spirit of Portland Awards.

Change in the system was driven in large part by ONA Directors Jacobsen and Newhall. Studies again played important roles, both with the 1980 ONA Review Committee initially saying formal standards were not needed and then the 1985-87

Policies and Procedures Review Committee, which developed the 1987 ONA Guidelines. Political leaders also continued to play an important role in threatening and supporting the system. The addition of new programs to ONI, and a shift toward a greater focus on human services, was driven in large part by ONA directors and city council members. Mayor Ivancie was not a strong supporter of community involvement and attempted to defund the district tier in the system. ONA, however, was able to rally neighborhood and community activists and prevent this from happening. The election of Bud Clark as Portland's mayor, brought into office a strong supporter of neighborhood and community activism who refocused city government back toward the willingness to involve the community in city decision making that had started under Goldschmidt. Clark also championed the creation of Portland's community policing program.

The City Council's adoption of the 1987 ONA Guidelines was a major step toward further embedding the neighborhood system in Portland's government structure and practices.