

INSIDE  p. 3 The silos are winning	 p. 9 Bear House lost to flames	 p. 24 Awards night date set
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From the jaws of victory

Why did Portland give PGE what it wanted?

BY ALLAN CLASSEN

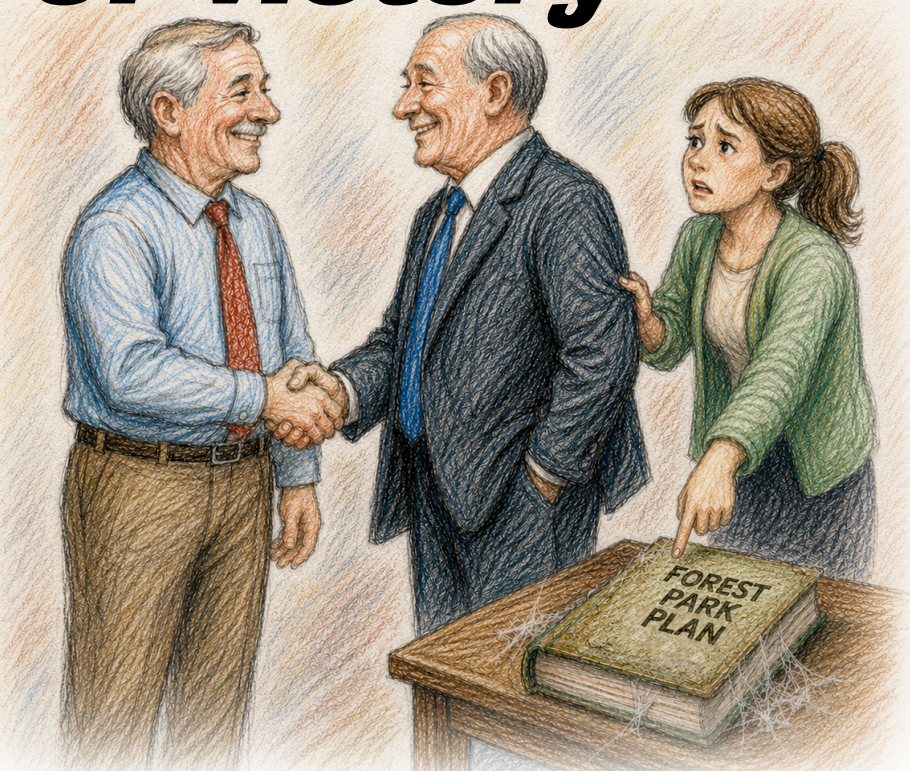
How did the city of Portland negotiate a clear victory over Portland General Electric's proposed power line extension across sacrosanct Forest Park and turn it into a defeat?

"This is absolutely devastating and so underhanded," said Darcie Meihoff, president of Oregon Wild and former president of Forest Park Conservancy. "How dare the city of Portland so blatantly cave to private interests over the public, our treasured Forest Park and the environment?"

Portlanders have been left to wonder because the man who signed the peace agreement, the city's new and first city administrator, Raymond Lee, isn't talking. Even local political veterans have no inkling as to whether Lee was acting on his own judgment or merely carrying out the will of his boss, Mayor Keith Wilson, or perhaps listening to City Council representatives.

Terms of the deal binding city staff to recommend approval is the product of a private mediation process in which participants are either legally bound to secrecy or are choosing to remain mum.

Continued on page 6



The agreement did not mention the Forest Park Natural Resources Management Plan, the city's primary policy document regarding the plan.

Who would sign such a deal?

Meet Raymond Lee, Portland's new city administrator

BY ALLAN CLASSEN

City Administrator Raymond Lee has been a difficult person for Portlanders to read in his first half-year on the job.

As a reporter, I have often found that things become more clear to me if I sit in the front row. That's how I got into a brief exchange with Lee at a City Club program in June.

Lee, who was to be the guest speaker that night, sat beside me, and we chatted about the generous severance packages recently given to departing bureau heads. We agreed that they were absurd. He called the practice unnecessary, as bureau chiefs serve at the pleasure of their employer, who can remove them when they choose and without cause, so large

payouts upon departure are neither required nor good for the city.

That candor changed when the program began. As if turning on a dime, the new administrator filled the air with platitudes, cliches and generalities. For the next hour-plus, Lee spoke of how he loved Portland, its people and its potential. Specifics were harder to come by.

Moderator Shane Dixon Kavanaugh of The Oregonian/OregonLive asked what it would take to turn Portland around. Moderator Shane Dixon Kavanaugh of The Oregonian/OregonLive asked what it would take to turn Portland around.

"When you have a change of form of government and a change of culture on top of

Continued on page 13



City repaves West Burnside Street to cries of 'not so fast'

Should public involvement consider long-range safety goals?

BY ALLAN CLASSEN

For those who waited decades for rutted Northwest 23rd Avenue to be repaved, the resurfacing of West Burnside Street came on suddenly—too suddenly for activists in the Better Burnside Coalition, who are calling for a major redesign of the city's primary east-west artery.

"The sidewalks are narrow, the traffic is fast, the crossings are dangerous and the bus stops are difficult to access," read a letter to

the city signed by Better Block PDX Chair Ryan Hashagen and a list of alternative transportation groups and neighborhood associations.

Repaving "is the ideal time to add improvements that would enhance both the economic vitality and the safety of the street. PBOT is planning on restriping West Burnside using the same lane configuration that it has now, without addressing the unpleasant and dangerous conditions," the

Continued on page 8



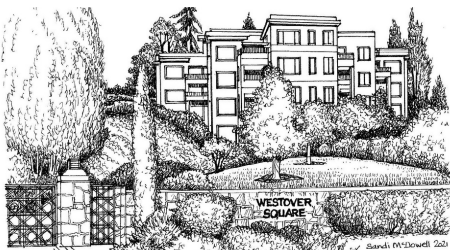
Intersection improvements at the St. Clair and Burnside intersection are under construction.

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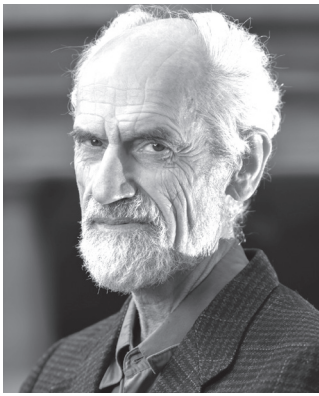
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The silos are winning

Charter reform washed in on a wave of voter disdain for Portland’s outdated commission form of government. The new charter was supposed to cure many ills, largely by breaking down the bureaucratic silos that insulated and isolated the entities running the city.

City commissioners defended and advocated for the bureaus assigned to them while generally tolerating whatever was going on in the other bureaus, a reciprocal understanding loosening accountability all the way around. At budget time, commissioners tended to seek funding increases in their own portfolios and sat still for such requests from their colleagues in quid pro quo fashion.

But nearly two years into the new system, silos are as impenetrable as ever. Bureaus rule themselves, and council members can do little more than talk about it. The mayor and city administrator should be providing direction—calling for audits in many cases—but they haven’t risen to the task. If they utter stern words in private, the department heads on the receiving end aren’t getting the message.

A few examples:

The park that never comes—the Slabtown Park at Northwest 20th and Pettygrove that was supposed to be built about a decade ago—finally got some attention. Portland Parks & Recreation now wants to form a focus group to guide the design of the park, to be followed by forums of the kind we’ve seen many times before. Highlights are displayed on easels at drop-in events. People can jot brief suggestions on sticky notes, which are later tabulated in some way. The connection between input and final decisions is nebulous.

A government committed to citizen participation would draw community members into deliberations at the onset to set goals for the project, setting the direction before city staff and consultants begin setting the parameters. In this case, a consultant was hired—without input from the neighborhood—to propose designs that citizens will merely react to.

This hasty process of circumventing neighborhood involvement was defended as a time-saving measure. After a decade of delay, the city now says no time can be spared to hear the community’s goals.



I have written many times about how the Northwest Parking Stakeholders Advisory Committee chases its tail while the Portland Bureau of Transportation picks the local improvement projects it pleases.

A couple of years ago, PBOT staff defined the roles of these citizen advisers:

Involve – Discussion is prioritized so concerns and aspirations are understood.

Consult – Feedback is collected on analysis, alternatives or decisions.

Inform – We will keep you informed by providing balanced and objective information.

In other words, the greatest weight the city will give citizen input is to understand the message. In other cases, citizens can do no more than listen.

Disrespect for citizen engagement starts with undermining Portland’s national model neighborhood system. The head of the Office of Community and Civic Life, responsible for what was once that neighborhood system, proposed abruptly dumping the complex relationship between City Hall and neighborhood associations for new rules dictated by the city administrator. Fortunately, that director is now gone.

But the city administrator now calls the shots on the future of Civic Life. City Administrator Raymond Lee has paused the unilateral reconstruction of the program, but its future is a mystery.

And the bureaus carry on in their silos beneath the kerfuffle. Deputy city administrators now oversee specific bureaus instead of a city commissioner, who was at least familiar with the departments and had to take the heat when things went sideways.

I had to look up the deputy administrator for transportation and for parks. That would be Priya Dhanapal, whose contact information is not on the city website. It took a 311 call to reach her assistant, but I have gotten no response to my questions as to how Dhanapal knows whether her bureaus are effective or responsive to community concerns. Her calendar is full of appointments with city officials, but I have never seen her at a neighborhood meeting.

We have replaced silos with a new layer of management, isolated from the public and insulated from accountability. At least, in the old system, we knew the names of the people in charge. We could vote them out.

What do we do with these midlevel managers we can’t find and who may never hear our grievances? ■

Readers Reply

Letters can be sent to: allan@nwexaminer.com or 1209 SW Sixth Ave., #303, Portland, OR 97204. Letters should be 300 words or fewer; include a name and a street of residence. Deadline: third Saturday of the month.

Shady Forest Park deal

After Portlanders registered their strong opposition to a PGE plan to destroy a major section of Forest Park, here come the axes. And the cuts won’t just be felt in Forest Park and the killing of some of the last remaining old growth trees in the city, but in Portlanders’ trust in their leadership to live up to their word and stand up for what’s in the best interest of the public.

In a disgusting display of political gamesmanship, a backroom deal was cut by the city that gives PGE the right to raze five acres of the park — even after the City Council voted the propos-

al down last year.

With this action, Portland officials have proven where their loyalties lie, and it’s not with their citizens. Knowing the strong opposition from the public, City Council and leading environmental groups, Portland City Administrator Raymond Lee signed the mediated settlement in secret with PGE anyway. City councilors Mitch Green and Steve Novick appear to have participated in the confidential mediation process.

What a blatant disregard of public process and trust. And it won’t stop here. Now that the city has signed over five acres of sensitive Forest Park habitat

for development, PGE plans to confiscate and destroy another 15 acres in Forest Park.

Portland residents are frustrated by city officials who are actively working against their interests. Portland once attracted outdoor recreation and athletic companies based on its environmental leadership. Now, with the city’s willingness to sacrifice places like Forest Park, it’s clear the green edge Portland once had can be bought and sold off for short-term gain.

This deal puts Forest Park and surrounding neighborhoods at risk for increased wildfires.

By disregarding things that make Portland desirable and set it apart, city officials have signaled that public priorities be damned in favor of private interests.

Darcie Meihoff
Past president,
Forest Park Conservancy

Despicable vitriol

I wish I did not have to encounter the reactionary, solipsistic NW Examiner in my mailbox every month. While I found Mr. Classen’s obsession with the Food Front Coop tedious, it was preferable to the despicable vitriol consis-

The NW Examiner

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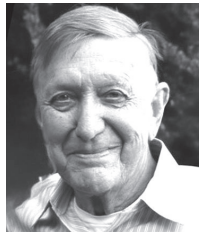
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Hal F. Broughton



Hal Fraley Broughton, who lived in Portland Heights and Goose Hollow, died June 26 at age 92. He was born on April 30, 1934, in Portland. He graduated from Ainsworth Elementary School in 1948. He attended Lakeside School in Seattle and attended Oregon State University, where he played on the baseball team. He earned an MBA at the University of California Berkeley. He had careers in finance, real estate and mortgage lending. He was a member of First Presbyterian Church, Multnomah Athletic Club and volunteered as a scoutmaster to Eagle Scouts. He married Sally Drinker in 1964; she died in 2022. He is survived by his son, Harold; daughters, Elizabeth Marsamane and Sarah Broughton; and one grandchild.

Robert H. McCall



Robert H. McCall, who lived most of his life in Portland Heights, died June 30 at age 88. He was born on June 6, 1938, in Springfield, Ore., and attended Ainsworth Elementary School and graduated from Lincoln High School in 1957. He attended the University of Colorado. He ran his family's multigenerational businesses, McCall Oil and McCall Real Estate. He married Carol Sawyer in 1961; she died in 2008. He married Dinah Hutchinson in 2010. He served on the board of trustees of Lewis & Clark College and was a

member of the Multnomah Athletic Club, Racquet Club, Waverly Country Club and Arlington Club. He is survived by his wife, Dinah; three children; and grandchildren.

Myra "Ann" Hudson



Myra "Ann" Hudson, a longtime resident of Goose Hollow, died July 6 at age 87. Myra Jared was born on July 30, 1937, in Brentwood, Tenn. She graduated from Tullahoma High School and attended David Lipscomb University in Nashville. She married Jerry Hudson in 1957, and they moved in 1980 to Salem, where he was president of Willamette University. She founded Millstream Yarns in Salem's historic Mission Mill complex. They moved to Portland in 1997. She is survived by her daughters, Judith Matarazzo, Laura Velgersdyk, Janet Crothers and Angela Doran; sister, Dorothy Holden; 11 grandchildren; and 16 great-grandchildren. Her husband, Jerry, died in 2024.

Joann Maletis



Joann Elizabeth Maletis, a Northwest Portland resident most of her life, died on June 5 at age 92. Joann Morrison was born on June 6, 1933, and grew up in the Northwest District. She attended Chapman Grade School, Lincoln High School and Catlin Gabel School. She graduated

from Monmouth University in New Jersey and taught at Raleigh Hills Grade School. She married James C. Maletis in 1956, and they lived many years in Sylvan Highlands. He died in 2019. She was a member of the Racquet Club and Waverly Country Club. She is survived by her daughters, Laurie Ware, Linda Poggi and Karen Graves; nine grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

Death notices

ANNE LAZAR, 66, member of the Multnomah Athletic Club.

DAVID BOSWORTH, 88, member of the Multnomah Athletic Club.

MARY ELLEN (EDE) BRILES, 88, 1956 Lincoln High School graduate.

DR. MARVIN A PEDERSON, 76, member of the Multnomah Athletic Club.

ROLAND RUSSEAU, 89, resident of Bethany.

ANTHONY W. "TONY" LABBE, 85, 1959 Lincoln High School graduate.

ANNA M. STIPE, 62, First Unitarian Church member.

RICHARD NEWMAN, 100, Arlington Club member.

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Light rail transit encourages infill development by providing rides in the opposite direction of the prevailing rush hour flow.

tently directed at the unhoused.

This time, Mr. Classen (the Examiner is less a newspaper than it is a personal blog on newsprint, with Classen writing almost all the “articles” himself) has taken to spurious attacks, including a borderline doxxing against Michael Gilbert, whom he describes in comically ominous language, all in the service of his larger, ceaseless campaign to demonize the least-fortunate members of our society.

Couching his allegations in conjecture and the interrogative form (kudos to his attorney), Classen all but avers that Gilbert is “financ[ing]” and “orchestrating” attacks on Portland residents by “street hooligans,” and then pouts that Gilbert has not responded to his phone calls.

Also, there is no acknowledgement that the Examiner has previously given an award to the Stadiumhood group championed in the article, but who cares about journalistic standards? The “Portland’s Paradox” op-ed gives away Classen’s game, which was never in doubt anyway, as he advocates for the elimination of social services with the hope that it will make homeless people disappear from his line of sight.

Of course, this seems to be the baseline position of many: “I don’t do anything productive to alleviate the condition of the homeless; my proposed solution is for ‘those people’ to go somewhere else.”

This heartless crowd has now gotten the shelter closures it wanted, and it’s gotten the county ordinance it wanted. So, what is this group going to do now to actually address issues of affordable housing, access to healthcare, employment that provides livable wages and drug addiction?

Allen Duarte
NW Lovejoy Street

Transit loops are key

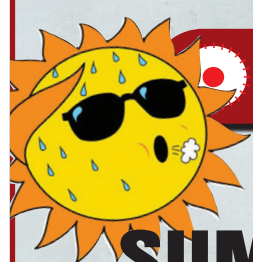
The term paradox—a seemingly absurd statement that proves to be well-founded—does not make a fair comparison between “induced demand” where road building worsens traffic and efforts to address our homeless crisis [“Portland’s paradox,” July 2026]. The two issues are almost entirely unrelated.

What they do have in common is housing. Freeway expansion began in earnest in the 1950s while building single-family homes in sprawling suburbs. More than freeway expansion, suburban housing development induced cross-country commuting and other travel demand that can only be met by driving.

As for public transit, both rail and bus “commute” systems likewise create an overwhelming demand for rush hour commuting that they cannot handle, the overflow always falling to automobiles. Light rail, however, can be considered an “anti-commute” system because MAX train sets run 18 hours a day in both directions, inducing demand to fill their seats in the reverse commute direction, whereby local travel serves infill, mixed-use transit-oriented development that suburban housing sorely lacks.

Since the 1980s, I have promoted a transit system design dubbed “loop oriented transit intermodal.” A single LOTI loop can usually direct transit-oriented development to integrate bus routes to MAX lines for reliably convenient transfers. In sum, two convenient transfers make a more effective transit system than those with one inconvenient transfer.

Art Lewelllan
NW Ninth Ave.



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5



District 4 City Councilor Mitch Green participated in confidential negotiations with Portland General Electric officials that resulted in a promise of city staff support for expansion of power lines through Forest Park.

"Jaws of victory" cont'd from page 1

Portland City Council voted 12-0 in April 2025 to reject PGE's application. This from a deeply divided council that rarely agrees on anything of high consequence or deep controversy. Even though PGE appealed that decision to the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals, environmental and neighborhood groups on the other side were not that worried. LUBA does not reevaluate the general merits of cases but merely determines if policymakers followed laws and procedures, and considered evidence to back its action.

We may never know the strength of its case for appeal because PGE sought mediation, which brought the mayor, the city administrator and two members of the City Council into closed-door talks. Other parties to the case—the Forest Park Conservancy, Bird Alliance of Oregon and Forest Park Neighborhood Association—participated only in earlier stages of mediation and were not in the room when Lee signed the agreement on July 2.

City of Portland Media Manager Chenoa Philabaum told the NW Examiner that Lee made the call.

"Neither members of the council nor the mayor were decision-makers or signatories to the settlement agreement," Philabaum wrote. "That agreement was made between the city's executive branch and PGE."

Lee has not responded to the Examiner's request to comment. Some readers are troubled by the thought that a newcomer to the city would be allowed to make such a pivotal decision.

"He has barely lived in Portland months," wrote Joni Johnson. "I don't think his mandate is to overturn previous policy approved by the council. I'd like Raymond Lee to get the budget under control and demonstrate he has the fortitude to make hard choices to reduce the cost of city government. Then let him flex his muscles."

"We have a carpet-bagging (see "Who would sign such a deal? Page 1) city administrator who is wasting no time in leaving his mark," Paul Douglas wrote. "I thought the city administrator worked under the mayor under our new, so-called charter reform. Is the mayor culpable for allowing his underling to set policy like this?"

Who chose the players?

Bob Weinstein, the former mayor of Ketchikan, Alaska, and a Portland District 4 council candidate in 2024, has a lot of questions about how the agreement came to be.

"The council voted 12-0 to reject this project," Weinstein wrote. "Twelve to zero. Neighborhood associations, the Forest Park Conservancy, Bird Alliance of Oregon—and even city

staff's own testimony—opposed it. Yet now the city administrator secretly signs an agreement committing staff to recommend approval of essentially the same project.

"The deal is bad, and the process, which involved the city and PGE cutting the environmental intervenors out of the discussion, may be worse.

"This is the culture critics have complained about for years: Unelected staff deciding they know better than the council and the public, and simply working around a decision until they get the outcome they wanted all along. If a 12-0 vote isn't 'policy direction,' what is?" Weinstein asked.

As to the role of City Councilors Mitch Green and Steve Novick and how they got in the room, Philabaum wrote, "All of council, including Councilors Green and Novick, were invited to participate in any portion of the mediation."

District 4 Councilors Eric Zimmerman and Olivia Clark say they were not invited and have no idea how the two men were chosen from their midst.

Green and Novick's participation in the process may be the murkiest part of the whole deal.

Philabaum said the topics discussed in mediation were:

- The project's compliance with

- applicable approval criteria,
- Ecological impacts within Forest Park and
- Potential additional mitigation and restoration measures.

According to Philabaum, "Under city code, councilors are required to avoid receiving information from interested parties on a pending land-use application that could be appealed to the council and to avoid saying or doing anything that could demonstrate bias."

If that rule were applied, Green and Novick should not have been within earshot of the mediation. But Philabaum drew a different application to the "hear no evil" proscription.

Having collected a large volume of information during hours of mediation, Green and Novick are then expected to act as if they know nothing. "As a result [of the city code stricture], the councilors aren't able to share opinions on the matter at this time," she wrote.

Whether Green and Novick eventually share what they learned in secret or not, the situation creates complications, particularly for their council colleagues. The next time either speaks publicly or privately on the PGE subject, will council members detect a change in tone or thought? Will they wonder if Green and Novick now see the situation differently as a result of their immersion in PGE's uncensored arguments?

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That is the corrupting influence of ex parti contact, which eats away at the assumption of a level playing field for all. Disclosure and recusal can limit the damage of inappropriate contact with one side, but denial and silence about actions possibly crossing the lines only incubate further distrust.

Why Green and Novick?

“The biggest unanswered question is why Councilors Green and Novick were selected,” Weinstein wrote. “Was that the mayor’s decision, the council’s or the city administrator’s? The public has never been told.

“We know it was not the council’s decision as a body. It was never on an agenda, and a couple council members have reportedly said they knew nothing about it. If it were Wilson’s call, that’s a meaningful detail, especially if he’s seen as sympathetic to PGE’s position, as it would suggest the choice of participants wasn’t neutral.”

“My assumption is that the city administrator would not have signed an agreement of this magnitude if the participating councilors had strongly objected.

“They have information the other council members don’t have, so they are in a unique position to explain and perhaps advocate for the agreement when it eventually comes before the council. Also, I don’t think this agreement would have been signed without the mayor’s OK, since the city administrator reports to him.”

Out in the cold

The three nonprofits left out of the process have no confidence in the path taken.

“The city and the conservation advocates agreed to enter into mediation with PGE to attempt to agree on an alternative to PGE’s proposal,” according to a Bird Alliance of Oregon newsletter. “After four months of mediation, city leadership entered into bilateral negotiations with PGE, cutting out the conservation partners from the negotiation.”

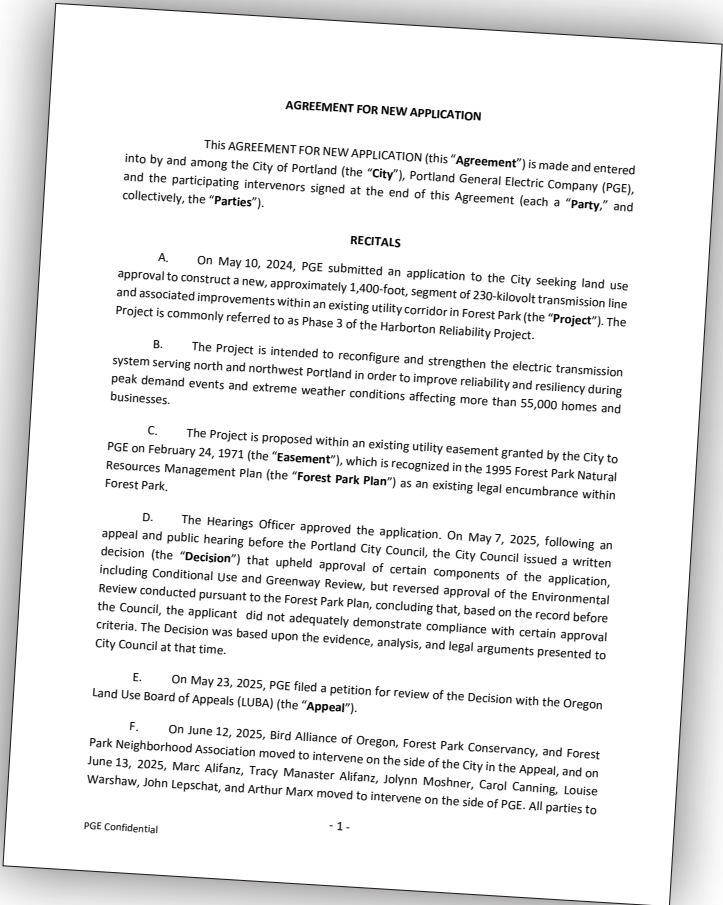
“We are frustrated that the city has caved to PGE’s pressure campaign, and is poised to approve their destructive project in Forest Park,” wrote Micah Meskel, director of urban conservation for the Bird Alliance.

“We were asked to sign this agreement but declined,” wrote Carole Hardy, a Forest Park Conservancy officer who was participated in the mediation.

Hardy said PGE brought nothing new to the table, particularly regarding energy demand forecasts or alternative routes outside the park.

“What is odd is that staff is directed to write a favorable report” on matters they so recently rejected, she said. “How can they now write a favorable report?

“This agreement threatens to turn public review into a formality. We urge Portlanders to make their voices heard and tell City Council not to give away critical park resources, pre-determine the outcome of a future application or



sideline the public input that helped protect the park in the first place.”

And future applications are likely to follow.

“This decision isn’t just about a single transmission project,” Hardy continued. “This is just one example of PGE attempting to bypass local conservation and land-use policy ... PGE plans two more development projects in the same sensitive area of Forest Park over the next 10 years. As planned. These projects would harm more than 15

additional acres of the park. We have to consider the precedent we are setting by allowing a deal made outside of public view to stand.”

Hardy emphasizes that the agreement settled nothing. A new application will come back to the council, which is free to evaluate it on its merits.

“We need the public to know that this is their chance to speak up,” she said.■

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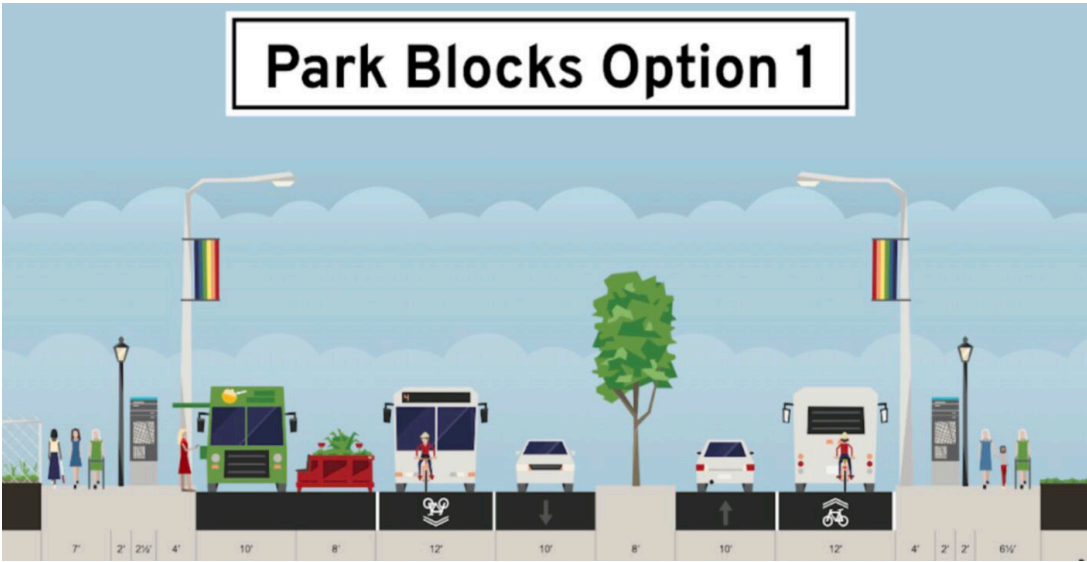


The most concentrated changes in the Portland Bureau of Transportation plan will be east of Interstate 405.

The narrow West Burnside sidewalk unbuffered from traffic lanes is a safety concern.



West Burnside storefronts are largely vacant around Fred Meyer and 20th Avenue.



The Better Burnside Coalition wants to reduce the street to one auto lane in each direction east of Interstate 405.

"City repaves" cont'd from page 1

letter continued.

"This is a huge missed opportunity that threatens to lock Burnside in as a high-crash corridor for the next 20 years. It's also a departure from PBOT's cost-saving practice of leveraging funding to address ongoing maintenance and safety goals together.

"Even worse, PBOT is planning on starting this restripe and associated ADA ramp upgrades in the very near future, essentially preventing the community from having any say in the future of this major corridor."

The coalition seeks to pause the project for "a community conversation that ensures that West Burnside works for everyone."

Coalition members are also suspicious as to how the repaving project rose above earlier prioritized transportation projects: "How did this project get identified and moved to the top of the project list?"

District 4 Councilor Olivia Clark, who chairs the council's Public Works Committee, has gotten the message.

"We need to stop and have PBOT take another look at it for a more comprehensive approach," Clark told the NW Examiner. "I believe safety considerations should be our No. 1 concern."

The next day, she added: "while being conscientious about asset condition."

The amendment was a nod to her core principle that the city's physical assets must be managed for long-term stability and financial prudence.

PBOT answers

That is PBOT's justification for acting now.

"This project was added to our paving list as part of a broader PBOT effort to resurface important corridors—such as the recently repaved segment

of Northwest 23rd— where we have struggled to self-perform pavement maintenance in the past," wrote PBOT Communications Director Hannah Schafer.

Schafer said the paving "will not preclude future safety or transit priority work on the corridor" and "we are considering additional community input" on later phases of the project coming next year.

PBOT breaks the project into two phases:

- Phase I, to be completed by mid-October, includes repaving and new ADA ramps between 15th and 20th avenues
- Phase II, in 2027, involves repaving and new ADA ramps between 22nd Avenue and 24th Place.

"We share the community's assessment that West Burnside has many needs beyond the pavement condition," Schafer wrote. "While this maintenance project is not scoped to address all of them, the bureau has made meaningful investments in safety, accessibility, and bicycle and pedestrian connectivity on the corridor."

Those improvements include extending the eastbound bus lane from Fifth Avenue to the Burnside Bridge and extending bike lanes in both directions between Fourth Avenue and the bridge.

Further plans involve extending the eastbound transit lane to 10th Avenue.

Better Blocks

Many of the Better Burnside Coalition forces were also behind the Better Naito Project of 2015, which replaced vehicle lanes with protected bicycle lanes in downtown, Old Town and the Pearl District.

Both local campaigns have been fostered by the Better Block Foundation, an "urban design organization based in Dallas, Texas, that empowers communities to reactivate and re-

shape their built environments. It uses temporary, hands-on, low-cost demonstration projects to improve walkability, bike safety and neighborhood vibrancy."

A pause to consider more comprehensive approaches is also supported by urban planning graduate students at Portland State University, where a Better Burnside design workshop was held on March 11.

The Better Burnside vision for the Park Blocks area includes wider sidewalks, a food truck and "parklet" lane, a shared bike/bus lane but only one vehicle lane in each direction.

The Better Burnside Coalition is seeking:

- Project cost and schedules,
- Source of funding,
- Engagement of the public, neighborhoods and stakeholders.

Four Burnside-adjacent neighborhood associations have endorsed the coalition's position. Representatives of Old Town Community Association, Downtown Neighborhood Association and Pearl District Neighborhood Association were identified as initiators of the Better Burnside campaign by a PSU report on the March workshop.

PDNA has not yet endorsed the plan, though the Goose Hollow Foothills League and Northwest District Association signed on last month.

The city of Portland Pedestrian Advisory Committee also supports the Better Burnside Coalition goals.

"We were surprised and disappointed to hear that the city is moving forward with a major investment in repaving West Burnside without a public input process [or] a presentation to the PAC," wrote the body's co-chair, Tabitha Boschetti.

By allowing higher driving speeds, smoother paving may even work against safety, in her eyes.

"Ironically, bad paving works to slow traffic, whereas new paving is

often associated with higher speeds. West Burnside is already an unsafe and uncomfortable street for people walking, bicycling, riding motorcycles and driving," Boschetti wrote.

Though making a passing reference to "economic vitality," the Better Burnside Coalition is not focused on the declining state of retailing along the street or on the impact of crime or people sitting/lying on the sidewalk.

NWDA President Todd Zarnitz made those points in a separate letter in support of a pause for community input.

"Currently, the corridor is configured solely to prioritize vehicle speeds at the expense of safety, economic vitality and neighborhood cohesion," he wrote. "As a direct result of this design, local businesses struggle to survive, and the corridor invites disorder and crime that further widens the division between our neighborhoods."

Update

On July 27, PBOT Director Millicent Williams was interviewed on Oregon Public Broadcasting's Think Out Loud.

"We were just going to repave Fourth Avenue, and then we saw an opportunity to create a bike boulevard, we had an opportunity to work with the transit system to enhance how transit moves through that corridor, we saw the opportunity to create greater access to pedestrians in terms of wider sidewalks and upgrades to all the ADA ramps," Williams said.

"We cobbled together local funding, as well as partner funding, as well as state funding, as well as some grant funding to make a complete project. We're working to make sure we're doing that in as many instances as we can.

"To just pave is not quite enough. To just put in a new signal is often not enough. How do we marry the paving, how do we marry striping, how do we marry pedestrian access together with bike infrastructure to ensure that we're creating a complete project." ■

Bear House burns, leaving only a story



Left: The bear pit was a memorable attraction in the old zoo.
Above/right: The derelict Tudor house, known as the Bear House, was completely destroyed by last month's fire.

BY ALLAN CLASSEN

A rson allegedly destroyed what Arlington Heights neighbors called the Bear House, a vacant city-owned structure on Southwest Wright Avenue at the edge of Washington Park on June 12.

"Thanks to a quick response by Portland Fire, damage to nearby trees was limited," wrote Darcy Wheelles, president of the Arlington Heights Neighborhood Association. "The old structure is a loss. The neighbors' homes were unscathed. Were it not for a neighbor who was up for an early flight and called 911 and alerted the neighbors, this

could have been much worse."

The house is gone, but local folklore was revived.

Longtime neighborhood resident Phyllis Reynolds recalls what some might call a close call with the namesake bears.

"The old bear pit in the old zoo. Yes, I knew about it. As a matter of fact, I fell into it once, but was able to get out before the bears got me.

"The poor bears were in no shape to get me, I'm sure," Reynolds wrote. "The poor bears had no vegetation, no nothing—just cement to walk around in."

Kathy Goeddel wasn't sure of the house's connection to bears at first.

"It has always been called the Bear House," Goeddel wrote. "I am suspicious that it ever housed bears. Info on the internet says it was a 1926 or 1927 Tudor shed. It is very likely located in the original location of the bears after they were moved up to the park from down on Burnside."

Goeddel dug deeper into the story.

"The original zoo in City Park was moved to where the Japanese Garden is today in 1926. The bears were in a pit close to where the waterfall is in the Japanese

Garden today until the zoo moved from there in 1959.

"A guess is that when the zoo moved to the site where the Japanese Gardens are today in 1925, the Tudor shed was built to store equipment for parks at the site where the original bear pit was located and was therefore called the Bear House."

Robert Butler was thinking more about the fire.

"Pure city negligence to let this fire trap accumulate several inches of fir tree needles on an ancient neglected wood shingle roof," Butler wrote.

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‘Get rich or die fryin’ slogan sets the tone for 23rd’s latest attraction



Dave's Hot Chicken adds a bright attraction, replacing the long gone Santa Fe Taqueria.



BY MICHAELA LOWTHIAN

“Hi, welcome to Dave’s!” someone hollered as other staff wearing “get rich or die fryin’” t-shirts moved around, cleaning windows with teenage alacrity. Some of the kids wore Dave’s bandanas, like Ralph Macchio as the Karate Kid. Others wore red trucker caps. Everything, including the napkins, is branded with fry puns. Dave’s, Dave’s, Dave’s. The walls are loud with faux graffiti; I didn’t try to decipher its message.

“Should I use those screens, or can I order with you?” I asked a young woman working there. “With me is fine!”

I liked her right off the bat. I requested the simply named No. 4, medium spice level. According to a graphic behind her, No. 4 is a chicken slider and fries, with a zippy-looking condiment for the fries. The same condiment zig-zags back and forth all around the fried chicken as if to say, “Step back, I’m spicy!”

I asked for a beer. “Sorry, we don’t have that,” she said and gestured toward some brightly colored liquids behind her. “Water’s great!” She handed me a buzzer that glowed with a

small red No. 4. and said her name was Sofia. Later she told me the milkshake machine will be running soon, and that the pickup window opening to the sidewalk is just for people running deliveries for the apps.

A man speaking loudly in Russian into his cellphone paced around by my table waiting for a delivery. Two massive bags of food in thick plastic bags with handles were handed to him, and he left. Just then, a Dave’s employee sprinted past, running like the wind to chase the man down with something left behind. Like Steve Prefontaine of Northwest 23rd, he got cheers from people on the corner for the nice save.

My buzzer went off. I eyed the crinkle-cut pickles on the side. They were good. This is a giant slider. Can I eat all this? Yes, I can. There’s a little bit of kale in the slaw, that’s good. Look at all those fries dusted with paprika, damn. Also crinkle-cut. A lot of feelings swirled around me. Sofia came by and asked, “Is everything tasting all right?”

Everything was very all right.



NOBBY NEWS

Vol. 32, No. 7 “News You Can’t Always Believe” August 2026

Taking you back 40 years

The Nob Hill Bar & Grill turned 40, but some things never change. You may have to look twice at the photo of owner Greg to notice that it was taken in the 1980s.



Many customers have also been putting on the years, but they keep coming back for the same reasons they came in 1986.

To celebrate the Nobby’s 40th birthday on Sunday, Aug. 2, cheese-burgers and fries will cost \$5 all day, the same price as in 1986. Tall boys for \$2 will be honored all day. Sunday hours are 9

a.m.-midnight. If you remember nothing else from 1986, Nobby’s has always been a good deal and a good place to meet old friends.

BURGER COUNT
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An old-time photo booth was too much for reporter Michaela Lowthian to pass up.

Hoxton Hotel hosts rare old-time photo booth

By Michaela Lowthian

One of perhaps 300 working analog photo booths on the planet is in Old Town.

The Hoxton Hotel in Old Town, 15 NW Fourth Ave., has an analog photo booth with real film and a photochemical development process. There are only about 300 such booths left in the world. One reason analog booths became scarce is that the special paper they require is made in Russia, and the war with Ukraine disrupted its production and export.

Scarcity became an issue even before then, says Jocelyn Dean, otherwise known as Photo Booth Chick. Dean owns and oversees maintenance of 38 photo booths in Portland, plus three in Astoria and one in Troutdale. A Pacific Northwest College of Art graduate in film and photography, Dean got into the photo booth business approximately 20 years ago, and all her booths were analog.

“At one time I had 23 analog photo booths,” she said. “I got chemical poisoning. I got electrocuted.” She has a worldwide, passionate subculture of analog fans who seek out machines that use the older technology. Dean in fact is rebuilding a few of the vintage booths she still owns. Finding parts for them is

tricky since they are all 40-50 years old.

We have a digital photo booth at my other job. It’s so popular that we had to cool high spirits with a sign that says, “Cramming or packing-in not allowed.” During a cramming event, as many people as possible pack a booth. Or kids run in and out of the booth between shots so the strip includes a maximum variety of friend shots.

One young woman took a flying leap into the photo booth to capture a mid-air shot of herself. The photo booth rocked back and forth, and a basket of dried flowers atop it fell to the ground. We admired her daredevil spirit, but the stunt gave birth to the sign.

Dean says stunts aren’t uncommon but nine times out of 10 it’s wholesome. “It’s sweet, really.”

According to an article in the New York Times, couples are using photo booth photography to announce their engagement in a casual, cost-effective way.

Meanwhile, the Hoxton photo booth cost \$7 if using a card, but only \$5 if paying with cash. The four black and whites on my strip look almost like a tintype photograph, which only enhances the vintage, nostalgic feel.

Briefly . . .

A trip to the NW Library took us past **GASTRO MANIA**, 1986 NW Pettygrove. What started as a food cart, today has brick-and-mortar locations in downtown Portland, Multnomah Village and Slabtown.

This is a highly likable straight-ahead corner cafe and Greek deli. The menu fuses Mexican and Mediterranean standards. This means options: You can order a gyro; you can go for a burrito. You can have a surprising blend of the two. Enjoy any protein you want served over either saffron or squid ink rice. Most dishes are topped with Gastro Mania’s signature jalapeño aioli. Breakfast burritos (bacon or sausage) and breakfast gyros (brisket, veggie or lamb and pork) are available in the morning. Order at the counter, and your food is prepared quickly.

A few outside tables offer a desolate but also somehow pleasant view of an empty lot. A park is promised for the lot one day. A few potted flowers sit under the chain-link fence as a reminder.

My mom and I shared the tasty grilled chicken plate over saffron rice. It was plenty for the two of us, especially since she is a light eater, making her an ideal lunch companion. Plus she always picks up the tab.

A voyage to the gift shop **SPACE CAMP**, 525 SW Broadway, is like skipping the exhibit and heading straight to the museum shop. Intriguing wares are arranged (oracle cards, puzzles, games, incense and perfume) on motion-detector shelving. Everything, including the jelly candy display, feels a bit like the film “Gattaca.” I wanted the sunglasses but settled on a wide metal cuff hair tie.

According to commercial broker Kathleen Healy, a **VINTAGE CLOTHING RETAILER** will soon open in the Art Deco building at 1110 NW Flanders St.

After many years in Goose Hollow, **THE LEAKY ROOF**, 1538 SW Jefferson St., has closed.

GRITS N’ GRAVY, 215 SW Sixth Ave., has closed.

AVIATION GIN, backed by actor Ryan Reynolds, closed its tasting room at 2075 NW Wilson on June 28. Parent company Diageo relocated production to an out-of-state facility.

The former **HIGH NOON** space at Southwest 18th and Salmon streets is now an event space for the Multnomah Athletic Club.

SPARTACUS LEATHERS on West Burnside closed recently after 39 years in business.

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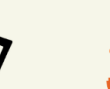
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NW Examiner Awards return to Ecotrust.



The Ecotrust Events Team has selected the NW Examiner for a 2026 Community Grant, resulting in cost-free use of its Irving Street Studio for this year’s Community Awards.

The grant program is intended to support nonprofits and community organizations bringing people together through events that foster connection, celebrate culture and strengthen community. We believe the Community Awards, a 30-year tradition honoring groups and individuals contributing to the welfare of the neighborhoods served by the NW Examiner, meet that goal.

Our awards program was held in this space once before, in 2019. We concluded that if we ever had the opportunity to return, we would be thrilled.

The 31st annual NW Examiner Community Awards night is Tuesday, Oct. 20 at 721 NW Ninth Ave. All are invited. **The deadline for award nominations has been extended to Aug. 4.**



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Nominee

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Person making nomination

Nominator’s phone or email address



Snapshots



Bridgcity Soul played to a crowd of 1,200 in Jamison Square July 17, a free concert sponsored by the Pearl District Neighborhood Association in partnership with the Portland Parks & Recreation's Summer Free for All program.



ADA ramps are being installed along Northwest 21st and 23rd avenues. The Portland Bureau of Transportation reports an average cost of ramps at nearly \$250,000 for the four corners of one intersection.



Pearl District Neighborhood Association Parks Chair Bill Truncali directs the new Pearl Patrol to concerns in Jamison Square Park.



Orofino & A Whimsical NW Duo will perform Tuesday, Aug. 11, 6-8 p.m. at Couch Park, 551 NW 19th Ave. Douglas Orofino is a countertenor who directs the Ida B. Wells High School choir and the West Linn Community Chorus. The free concert is sponsored by the Northwest District Association and Friends of Couch Park, with support from about 20 other local organizations and companies.



The River District Navigation Center on Northwest Naito Parkway is closing this month. The city may continue to use the 90-bed facility as a warming center during inclement weather.



Maureen Bradley led a four-piece band featuring the music of Patsy Cline at the Nob Hill Bar & Grill last month. Bradley, a longtime Northwest District resident who has been singing at the Nobby since 1991, was joined by Peter Frajola, Alec Burton and Peter Lampe.



The annual Friendly House Yard Sale is coming to yards and parking lots around the Northwest District on Saturday, Aug. 15. For information, visit <https://fhpd.org/>



What do you call news of civic importance from a grass-roots perspective? Well grounded.

The NW Examiner has been covering Northwest Portland (and a slice of Southwest) neighborhoods for 40 years, listening to the so-called “little people” whose concerns usually take a backseat in the larger world of citywide affairs. But when grand plans and schemes fail under their own weight, the cracks and consequences are revealed from the bottom up. In such cases, the little people are the first ones to see the problem and may become the best sources as to what went wrong and why.









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