

Mayor May Not

Reacting to the news that Sam Adams won't run for re-election



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BY MARTY DAVIS

In the later hours of Friday afternoon, July 29, I was out and about tending to my daily assortment of *Just Out* tasks. As I pulled into the post office my phone chirped, reminding me I had emails that hadn't been checked for at least 45 seconds. Safely off the street, in a parked car with the ignition off, I hit the email feature. As per the previous 143 times that day, I was rewarded with a variety of invites to a host of fundraisers, combined with the never-ending, ever-thoughtful offers from folks concerned about the size of my penis and its performance.

As I deleted my way through this messy morass, my eyes focused in on one jarring subject line from Sam Adams, "Portland's future—and mine."

Good gawd almighty, Portland Mayor Sam Adams had just announced that he was not going to run for a second term.

I did not see that coming.

For months I had assumed that Sam would run for office again. My speculation was never on "if" but only on "when." I knew he couldn't put off the decision much longer, mid to late August at the latest. I knew a run for re-election would be hard. The biggest challenge, to my mind and to many others gathered around the proverbial water cooler the last few weeks, would be his ability to raise money. Money, as in who would give it to him and could he possibly bring in enough to mount a successful campaign.

On Friday afternoon, July 29, raising money ceased to be a concern.

As I read and reread the email, I was filled with a myriad of emotions—each with a life span of about four seconds, one quickly replaced by the next. First, of course, was the sheer surprise of it all. Then came sadness, which I'll explain later, then relief, which I'll also explain later, all accompanied by a jumble of questions.

As of today, one week later, I have not spoken personally to the mayor about his decision. Amanda Schurr had a brief phone conversation with him on Tuesday, a conver-

sation from which we garnered, as expected, nothing that hadn't already been asked and answered by the mainstream media. She reports on her conversation on p. 5. There's a lot I'd like to ask the mayor, but I don't think Portland is going to see much more in the next 17 months than a heavily focused and concentrated effort on getting the work done. At this point in time, Sam Adams doesn't really have to answer any more questions.

As the word started to spread via electronic messengers, my next emotion was again

surprise—surprise at how little reaction there was on the blogs and Facebook. Granted, it was Friday afternoon, it was sunny, everyone was at Sauvie Island or hiking in the Gorge, but it's not like we're ever completely turned off from the news. And yet there it was, pretty much nothing. One or two mentions on Facebook and that was about the sum of it. As soon as the word went up on OregonLive, its readers crawled out from under their rocks to comment, but other than that... The average cute kitten video would have received more attention than the news that the first gay mayor of a major American city would not be seeking a second term.

Why did I feel sadness? Why did I feel relief? The sadness is simple. I feel pain and empathy—and sadness for the promise lost. I was among the most ardent supporters of Sam Adams as he transitioned from city hall staffer to city commissioner and then to mayor. In this very space some years back, I outlined my vision for his future. A term, maybe two, as commissioner. A term, maybe two, as mayor. A term, maybe two, as governor, followed by years of remarkable statesmanlike leadership as the U.S. Senator from the State of Oregon. And then, gray-ing, aging and ready to be home, I had him

retiring to his Oregon coast sanctuary with his cats and his longtime partner. But here's the good news in all of this: Sam will still have a rewarding career and a fine life. Retiring to the coast with a loving partner, likely legal husband by then, is still on the table. The trip may have encountered a detour, but the journey, and the adventures, are far from over for Sam Adams.

Why did I feel relief at the news of Adams not seeking a second term? Well, because it wasn't all going to be fun. And lord knows I'm all about the fun. As the publisher of this paper, it's my job to lead the endorsement process for local races. *Just Out* would, will endorse a candidate for the office of Portland



mayor in 2012. Had Adams run it would have been 17 months of hell. Adams would have been beaten up daily. So would I. Am I a coward to admit I wasn't looking forward to this? So be it. Reactions to the word that Adams wouldn't run brought comments like, "Now what will Marty Davis bitch about? I am sure she'll find another male to hate." And 17 months of this? As a comic says, "You just can't fix stupid." And that's what this race would have likely turned out to be, 17 months of contentious name-calling, nastiness and mean-spiritedness. And that, folks, would have just been the LGBTQ community. So yeah, I'm not sorry we're not going to have to go through that.

Would *Just Out* have endorsed Adams? I have no idea. We would have evaluated his performance as current mayor and, yes, we would have posed a few other questions, too. It was not a given that we would have endorsed him, it was not a given that we would not have.

Now, with Adams out of the race, *Just Out* will turn its attention to the other candidates. We'll ask where they stand on our issues, where they've been in the past and what can we expect from them in the future. It's business as usual here. ☺

just out

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