

# Mayor brings community together for second meeting to address homelessness in Southwest

By Jack Rubinger  
The Southwest Portland Post

After three articles, three meetings, numerous interviews, edits and rewrites on the subject of the Sears Shelter and homelessness in southwest Portland, this reporter has come to the following conclusion:

The struggle continues but the city and neighborhoods are making progress in the exceedingly polite manner that characterizes our community.

Ironically, when concerns are aired, many are paranoid about the presence of the media, showing a reluctance to be quoted and downright fear of being photographed.

When this reporter first visited the Sears Shelter located on Southwest Multnomah Boulevard, the care, concern and compassion the staff showed was impressive.

The neighbors who live near the Sears Shelter do care about the homeless; they want to help and contribute with donations of food and clothing.



Mayor Charlie Hales discusses the Sears Shelter noise with a concerned neighbor. (Post photo by Jack Rubinger)

They're also wary of strangers on their streets, frustrated about excessive noise from shuttle buses that transport people to and from the Sears Shelter, and angry about people loudly arguing across the street from the facility.

A community forum on Feb. 16 at the Multnomah Arts Center featured an all-star cast including Portland Mayor Charlie Hales, his chief of staff Josh Alpert, facility manager Bob Kieta, and Stacy Borke from Transition Projects, the agency that runs the shelter.

The community came together to get a status update about the success of the Sears Shelter, the mayor's plans to deal with homelessness on a wider scale throughout Portland, and the future of the building now housing the shelter.

Neighbors also collected socks and canned goods for the shelter.

Greater clarity — and some tensions — were released at the community forum.

Here are some of the highlights:  
The Menashe family opened up a temporary men's shelter on a whole floor of one of their buildings.

A former strip club on 162nd and Stark is now a family shelter. The city now offers about 1,000 shelter beds and 695 homeless veterans are housed.

An online homelessness "tool kit" from the Mayor's Office will go live soon.

The Multnomah Neighborhood Association and the Sears Shelter are drafting a memorandum of agreement, which will address who to call for emergencies, what the police will agree to do, and what neighbors will agree to do.

"We have an increased budget for housing and homelessness as our city and county budgets have grown modestly and we're in the market to purchase buildings or land or both in Southeast Portland to accommodate our homeless population," said Hales.

"We want to bring order to the chaos of people camping and we're also working on changing zoning laws. But, homelessness has grown more visible because more people are sleeping in tents on the streets vs. being curled up in doorways."

Stacy Borke, from Transition Projects, the organization that manages the Sears Shelter, reported that things are operating swimmingly. "Possessions, pets, and partners ease the pain of homelessness," said Borke.

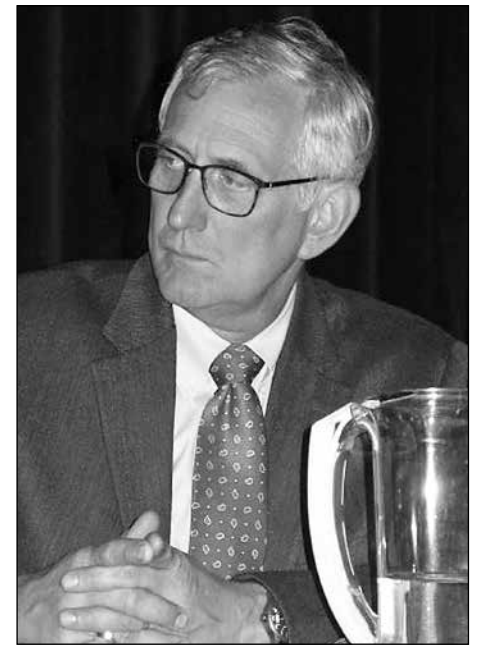
Neighbors and volunteers have provided more than 8,000 sack lunch since opening in November. Residents are saying that they have gotten the best night's sleep in a long time.

People are getting jobs and moving onto permanent housing.

"While it may seem that people are choosing Portland as a destination to be homeless, of the thousands who are homeless, only dozens came to Portland homeless. Most are longtime residents of Multnomah County. The large majority of people that are homeless are from here," said Hales.

"The ability to sleep is a basic human right," said Hales. "For the 1,800 or so people sleeping outside, we want to give them a constructive answer with a basic approach to camping because it is legal to camp on some sites if you roll up your stuff and move in the morning."

As to the future of the Sears Shelter,



Mayor Charlie Hales listens to a panel member during the community forum on homelessness. (Post photo by Jack Rubinger)

which transitions into an emergency management facility in May, crews are working on heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems, and upgrading elevators.

By the end of the meeting, the mayor and the woman who lived across the street from the shelter were putting their heads together to come up with a solution to the noise and the beeping from the shuttle buses.

## POLICE BLOTTER

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After being struck by Yam, Baranow was struck a second time by an eastbound 2015 Toyota Rav4, driven by 57-year-old Carolyn Smith. Both drivers stopped at the scene and cooperated with authorities. Neither driver was impaired by alcohol or drugs.

The investigation is continuing and, once complete, it will be presented to the

Multnomah County District Attorney's Office for review.

The Portland Police Bureau is committed to working with our partners in government and the community to create safer streets and work towards reducing, and eventually eliminating, traffic fatalities as part of Vision Zero.

To learn more about the city of Portland's Vision Zero effort, please visit: <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/40390>.

## Westside Candidates Forum



Get to know Portland's candidates for Mayor and City Council. Let them know your concerns.

**Tuesday, March 29, 2016**  
Multnomah Arts Center 7688 SW Capitol Hwy.

**6:15-7:00 pm** - meet-and-greet with the candidates  
**7:00-8:45 pm** - Forum

We have invited ALL the Mayoral and City Council candidates and have confirmation from the campaigns of Ted Wheeler, Jules Bailey, David Schor, Amanda Fritz, Steve Novick, Susan Stahl and more!

### As of press time:

#### Candidates for Mayor

- David 'The Ack' Ackerman
- Jules Bailey
- Sean Davis
- Bim Ditson
- Steven J. Entwisle
- Deborah Harris
- Lew Humble
- Sarah Iannarone
- Trevor Manning
- David Schor
- Jessie Sponberg
- Ted Wheeler

#### Candidates for City Council Commissioner, Position #1

- Amanda Fritz

#### Candidates for City Council Commissioner, Position #4

- Chloe Eudaly
- Fred Stewart
- James Bernard Lee
- Joseph Puckett
- Michael Darrow
- Shannon Estabrook
- Steve Novick
- Stuart Emmons
- Susan Stahl



Contact SWNI with questions - 503-823-4592 or [www.swni.org](http://www.swni.org)



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