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Two-alarm fire strikes Renner's Grill in Multnomah Village, bar closed indefinitely



A two-alarm fire hits Renner's Grill in Multnomah Village on March 28.
(Photo courtesy of Michael Wagner)

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

On a brisk, busy evening in Multnomah Village, a two-alarm fire struck Renner's Grill. A little before 7:00 in the evening on March

28, a grease fire began in the kitchen of the iconic neighborhood bar.

Michael Wagner, a longtime employee at John's Marketplace, was at the cash register when he suddenly saw smoke outside and ran outside to see it coming from Capitol Highway.

"I went up to Renner's and everyone had evacuated except for one cook still in the kitchen," he said. "I went inside and told him to get out. The fire department was there within minutes."

Fire engines from stations 4, 5, 18, and 19 were there as well as Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue.

Firefighters contained the fire by cutting through the roof and dousing it with a steady stream of water. There were no injuries and no other businesses were damaged.

Zach Horowitz was having dinner at Tastebud with his family. "Tastebud provided the firefighters with free pizza," Horowitz told this reporter who was on the scene.

Several village merchants received texts that a fire was happening in the village and they immediately dropped what they were doing to check out the situation.

Lisa Jones, Portland Fire and Rescue public information officer, said it could have been a lot worse.

"It was hard to get in to the Vil-

lage with all the parked cars," she said. Some cars were stranded for hours but no vehicles were damaged.

According to a recent post on the bar's Facebook page, the place is pretty much gutted.

"Front to back, top to bottom," the post reads. "Even though we want to install chandeliers and marble floors we're gonna put everything back as close to original as humanly possible. It'll be New Old."

Established in 1939, Renner's Grill and Suburban Room has been a cherished part of Multnomah Village for decades.

Owner Steve Potter said he doesn't know when Renner's will reopen. People can donate to a GoFundMe account, Renner's Save the Staff Fire Fund. Renner's is seeking a help in order to make payroll and pay their utilities.

"We're grinding away over here. Keep your eyes on Facebook for updates," said Potter.

State economist discusses Portland housing issues at Hillsdale meeting

HILLSDALE NOTEBOOK

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

Nearly three dozen people attended the April 4 Hillsdale Neighborhood Association meeting to hear about economic and housing issues affecting Southwest Portland.

Josh Lehner, an economist for the state of Oregon, was the keynote speaker. Lehner began the meeting with a presentation entitled, "Portland and the Housing Trilemma."

Lehner explained that the "trilemma" for housing issues lies in the contents of the Hillsdale Town Center Plan drafted back in 1997. These issues include affordability, quality of life, and economic strength.

"Only eight of the 100 largest metropolitan areas in the U.S. have all three of these traits," Lehner said.

"For example, Detroit has affordability only," he said. "Albuquerque lies on the border of affordability and quality. Affordability is about home ownership, vacancy rates, and rental affordability."

Lehner stated that Youngstown, Ohio is the most affordable city in the US.

"And when I speak about quality of life, I'm speaking about the arts, restaurants, and low crime rates. New England cities and Sacramento fit this trait.

"Economic strength relies on good, high paying jobs, available employment, and housing that these workers can afford."

Cities at the bottom of economic

strength, according to Lehner's analysis, are Denver, Boston, New York, Seattle, Austin, and Portland.

"These cities are not affordable," Lehner said. "Natural resources, like timber, have been replaced by human resources."

An audience member asked why there isn't a strong transportation infrastructure [in Portland].

"People are driving less, the gas tax has been losing funds over the last 30 years, and [construction] costs are higher," he said. "If you don't accommodate sprawl and density, there will be displacement. Economic growth will be restrained and choked off."

"The only people moving here will be the more affluent. Others will just leave and young people will not move here."

Frederiksen provides update on Residential Infill Project

"The city has been relooking at how single-family zones are being addressed," said Joan Frederiksen of the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. "A proposed draft [of the Residential Infill Project] has been released online and can also be found at local libraries. Public input is now happening until May 15."

Residents can write emails to residential.infill@portlandoregon.gov or use an online app that features an interactive map.

The city will hold a drop-in event at the Hillsdale Library on May 3, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., for people who have questions. Public hearings will be held on May 8 and 15 at 5 p.m. at 1900 SW 4th Ave., Room 2500 in downtown

Portland.

"After public testimony, the record is closed and there will be no more input," Frederiksen said. "The bureau will then hold work sessions to discuss the testimony and develop any amendments before they vote on their recommendations for the city council."

There will be more public hearings on the recommended draft in front of the city council this fall.

"The City Council is the final decision maker," Frederiksen said. "We encourage all to provide input. A lot can change from now until the City Council vote."

Hillsdale neighbor asks group to oppose Residential Infill Project

Vice President Leann Knapp, who chaired the meeting, then called for discussion

(Continued on Page 3)



Hillsdale resident Natalia Bronner discusses the neighborhood's stance on the Residential Infill Project as Leann Knapp looks on.
(Post photo by Erik Vidstrand)

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