



Making a dream reality

A rendering of what Right 2 Dream Too could look like created by a local architecture firm. Below, an overhead shot of the camp.

Right 2 Dream Too's success flies in the face of skeptics — and city policy

BY JOANNE ZUHL
 STAFF WRITER

It was supposed to be about the city's new plan to allow limited car camping for people experiencing homelessness. But testimony at Wednesday's City Council meeting became an extended appeal for another camping option, one that's been, almost unanimously, highly successful for nearly three months.

During more than an hour of testimony, a series of people — many homeless — testified in defense of Right 2 Dream Too, a structured camp at the corner of Fourth Avenue and Burnside that is home to about 70 people experiencing homelessness.

The group has a year lease for the property, tacit support from leaders in the neighborhood and no problems with law enforcement. It has a board of directors, regular meetings and is pursuing its own nonprofit status. It has received financial support from the community and has its own portable toilet.

It is also under the city's screws for code violations.

On Dec. 20, Right 2 Dream Too filed a request with the city to waive penalties against its camp while it works to address code violations issued by the Bureau of Development Services (BDS).

The group was cited in November for establishing an unpermitted recreational park-campground and for having a fence greater than six feet in height, also without a permit.

The document is as much a statement on the

condition of homelessness in Portland today as it is an argument against the pending penalties, which could amount to nearly \$600 a month.

"We're trying to cooperate to the extent that we can," says Michael Moore, one of the site's organizers. "The director of planning has the ability to (waive penalties) in special circumstances and we're making the case that these circumstances warrant these considerations."

In its appeal, the group says it believes the code being applied is overbroad, and that their site isn't a "recreational" camp at all, but a facility for sheltering people who are homeless. The group says it is willing to work with the city to begin the permitting process on bringing the fence under code or finding a variance.

Unlike other tent cities of years past, Right 2 Dream Too has signed a one-year lease with the owners of the property. In addition to donations, it received support from its parent group, Right 2 Survive, which recently received a \$6,000 grant for general operations from McKenzie River Gathering.

"The extent and severity of the economic crisis that has led to a severe shortage of affordable housing and shelter space warrants consideration for a hardship waiver while we undertake this process," the group wrote in its appeal to the city. "We have achieved more than many of us expected in terms of the impact we are having on the lives of Portland's most disadvantaged and disenfranchised residents, those whom BDS's mission to "Maintain safe and livable



neighborhoods" is failing. We ask that the bureau work with us to help extend this mission to all of Portland's residents."

Ross Caron, public information officer with the Bureau of Development Services, said the group missed the deadline to file its request for the waiver, and the property owners will be fined \$614 as of Jan. 1 for noncompliance. After three months, that figure doubles. Caron said he could not speculate on what the department's response will be to the organization's appeal, which can then follow with another series in the appeal process.

Photos by
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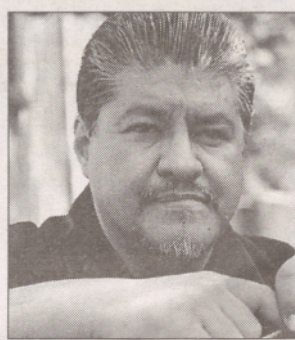
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