

Business reps consulting China over free speech laws

Representatives from the Portland Business Confederation say that Portland should look to China to deal with free speech laws in public spaces.

"While we appreciate the idea of free speech and what it represents in our country's history, times have changed," says one suburban businessman who believes homeless people and free speech advocates are scaring away other suburbanites from downtown Portland.

"You don't see homeless people or beggars in downtown business districts when you travel to China," says a spokesperson for the hotel industry. "They just don't exist."

Currently, strict laws in China prohibit anyone at anytime from panhandling, gathering or voicing his or her opinion in public or private spaces. Punishment includes flogging and hard labor. Repeat offenders are unheard from — forever.

Representatives say that it's a new era in America and in order to attract new business and compete in a global economy, some people (certainly not the homeless) don't need to be in the way.

"Frankly, I blame City Hall for not evolving and, in fact, stymying business in Portland," says another businesswoman. "A year or two of hard labor would be good for the Road Warriors, who I think would appreciate the opportunity to work for us."

Water movement turns dirty

Water activists from Portland are hoping to obtain 50,000 signatures for a November ballot measure called, "Earth Water Portland."

The group is advocating for the community's right to access waterborne diseases caused by pathogenic microorganisms.

"The reality is that there is a war on water in Portland," said a part-time neighborhood activist named Feather. "We're opposed to any kind of chemicals in our water supply."

"We believe Portland residents stand in solidarity with our comrades in third world countries," said another full-time unpaid activist and intern. "We have every right to have access to dysentery and Typhoid Fever. How are we any better than anyone else? We're not."

The group said that if they are successful at breaking up the water monopoly currently owned by the City of Portland and taxpayers, that crazy-ass left- and right-wing conspiracy theorists could take over the water bureau by January.

"We're tired of junk science," said one mom. "I want my children to be safe and insulated from government water."

A spokesman for the group says that on the heels of the anti-flouride campaign, it's just a matter of time before we are able to restrict any chemicals from being used. The backers of the measure say if they are successful, they hope to return in 2016 with a campaign to end vaccinations.

Lord Charlie Hales and Water Dictator Nick Fish were seen screaming in the mirror at themselves shortly after hearing the news of the new ballot measure.

State of Metro raises familiar question among diehard fans

Metro Council President Tom Hughes gave the State of Metro address before a small but confused audience March 17. In his speech, Hughes outlined the work Metro has done this past year and hopes to accomplish looking forward.

At the conclusion of his 45-minute presentation, Hughes opened the floor to questions.

"What exactly does Metro do?" asked Sarah Milton, who said she attends the address every year with her husband, Charles. "I know Tom talked about it, but I can never remember."

The other two people in the audience, Steve and Suellen Winchell, were equally perplexed.

"I'm not saying it's not important, but boy if this stuff doesn't just whiz in one ear and out the other," Steve Winchell said. "For the life of me, it just doesn't stick."

The five of them left together, with Hughes pledging to help the region better understand the far-reaching powers wielded by his regional and largely unchecked layer of government.

"I know my job is important," Hughes told himself as he walked out the door. "Fortunately people don't need to understand government to support it."



St. Louis, Mo., which recently banned daytime cityscape photography to prevent people from documenting its homeless population, is one of many cities across the country taking a bite out of Portland's destitution destination status.

When a home is no object, what city do you choose?

A new report put out by a hobo consumer group in Austin says that Portland is no longer the most traveled to destination for train hoppers and homeless punks.

"Frankly, Portland has lost its edge this year," said a heavily tattooed man in a Black Flag T-shirt. "We might see a big rebound this summer though. It all depends on which way the wind blows."

After battling nearly 10 years with San Francisco and Seattle for the title of best travel destination, dirty hippies and abused runaways are apparently appearing in other American cities too.

One downtown business owner told Street Roots that he doesn't believe it. "They're everywhere, like locust swarming. I see them in my dreams, just sitting there on the sidewalk, begging and singing Pete Seeger songs with their pathetic looking devil dogs."

The report says that while Portland, San Francisco and Seattle are still known for attracting heathens in mass, homelessness among young people is skyrocketing in places like San Diego, Austin, Boulder, Denver, Madison, St. Louis, New Orleans, Chicago, Nashville, Boston and other cities with train yards and Greyhound bus

stations.

The National Chamber of Commerce issued a statement saying that the cities highlighted in the report were all liberal — democratic even.

A chamber spokesperson said that a more aggressive catch-and-release approach was needed. "We need to start putting booby traps on city sidewalks to catch these kids."

The hobo report also noted that kids from the West Coast were more likely to prefer vegan foods at local soup kitchens than their Eastern counterparts.

Mayor declares new project a success

Portland Mayor Charlie Hales has announced the completion of a new project benefiting Portlanders that hasn't even been identified yet.

"I've listened to everyone involved," Hales said, from a hotel room in the Himalayas.

"And I'm confident in saying this will be a boon to the people of Portland."

Details on what the mayor is calling, "The Project," are expected to be unveiled sometime in the future after community activists and City Council members weigh-in.

"The one thing we want to highlight is how great the communication inside City Hall has been on the project," Hales spokesperson said. "We really feel like after reshuffling all of the bureaus, that more than ever, commissioners understand their roles."

A unrecognizable staffer from the mayor's office told a group of neighborhood activists earlier in the day that he couldn't give specifics on the issue. "No, really, I don't know anything about it. I'm just here to listen."

The staffer told the group that depending on which way the mayor wanted to go on the project, the public would know the details soon.

"The public will have the opportunity to weigh in on the project after the mayor returns from a conference in India, where he's learning about the benefits of running a city from remote locations," says a spokesperson for the mayor.



Charlie Hales



COUNCIL OF BOOM!

"A paper that only delivers four times a week, now that's mediocre. You want to question our commitment to jobs? Seriously?"

— STEVE NOVICK

Saltzman + Fish + Hales + Fritz + Novick

Watch the award winning Council of Boom! every Wednesday 9:30a.m. and again at 2p.m. on City Net Live 30! and at www.portland.gov

