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Pending Eliot site betrayal threatens conflict

The Portland School Board and its administration has raised community disgust and anger as it continues to spend valuable staff time and money studying potential sites for the new Harriet Tubman Middle School—the school developed at the demand of the community to serve students of King, Eliot and Humboldt attendance areas.

For the past ten years the upper grades, varying from grade 3 to grade 8, have been removed from majority Black schools. Students were then scattered throughout the school district for what was called "desegregation." The spaces left by these children's removal were filled by four- and five-year-old white children—mostly from the West Side—in another effort at "desegregation."

Two years ago the community—led by the Black United Front—demanded that the 3rd through 5th grade classes be restored and that middle schools be provided for 6th,

7th and 8th grades. Middle school children were assigned to Columbia/Whitaker, Fernwood and Beaumont. The district also agreed to develop a middle school in the community for the students of King, Humboldt and Eliot. This school was to be housed in the Eliot building, currently a "Follow Through" program drawing children from other areas but having few resident children.

Other promises made by the School Board to avoid a school boycott were that none of the elementary schools in the community—including Boise—would be closed.

After the agreement was made changes took place on the Board: Dean Givold replaced Wally Priestley; Charlotte Beeman replaced Sarah Newhall. The political influences shifted—giving Frank McNamara, Bill Scott, Lee Rieke, Givold and Beeman the opportunity to change those portions of the agreement that they do not like.

There has been frequent discussion, and rampant rumors, that Tubman will never be housed at Eliot. Among these rumors, which have not been presented to the Black community, are that the site is not safe, that expansion is impossible, that costs are prohibitive. Although all of the Black and civil rights organizations continue to support the Eliot site, the district has never come to their spokesmen with this information or entered into discussion about alternate sites.

Board member Herb Cawthorne said the Board seems suicidal in its insistence on looking at options that are impossible. "They are going through the same process they did with school closures, getting people all riled up beyond what is necessary. To get the Jefferson community riled up, thinking they might lose a high school to gain a middle school, doesn't make sense. And there is no reason to talk about Washington/Monroe or Monroe."

Cawthorne believes Eliot, Boise and Adams are possibilities, but the Board is badly split on Eliot, split on Boise, and now the possibility of Portland Community College using Adams has been raised. The community would not support putting the school at Boise and that option would also cause much disruption for children.

Cawthorne said he had never been provided with information showing that the Eliot site is unusable. "I think they have some question about the soil at Eliot, about the school sliding into the freeway. But they have used that building for years and I'm sure that if they want to there is a way to ensure its safety."

"This playing with options that are not options will only cause problems for the district. The people of the Jefferson district came out and voted in numbers greater than ever before and they voted to support the

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SCHOOL BOARD CHAIRMAN FRANK McNAMARA



Otto Poticha, of Unthank, Seder and Poticha, architectural firm; Bobby Davis, DAK Construction; Commissioner Charles Jordan; and Rich Wiley, Minority Business Enterprise Coordinator

for Cablesystems Pacific, reviewing building plans for the company's headquarters.

(Photo: Cathy Cheney)

Cablesystems meets hiring goals

Cablesystems Pacific, which is franchised by the City of Portland to provide cable television in the city east of the Willamette River, has reported that it exceeded its minority business requirements during its first six months of operation.

The company is required by its contract with the city to meet a 20 per cent Minority Business Enterprise utilization goal.

For the first quarter, ending August 31, 1981, the company fell short in MBE utilization with 10.6 per cent but the deficit was overcome by minority utilization in the renovation of new facilities on Northeast Sandy Boulevard.

A contract was negotiated with the MBE architectural firm of Unthank, Seder and Poticha, which not only secured the talents of this firm but included their assistance in securing additional MBE participation. They retained the engineering company of Morrison, Funatake, Inouye and Andrews.

With the assistance of Batiste Managements Systems, Cablesystems ensured that minority contractors were informed of the bid process. The prime remodeling contract went to DAK Construction, Inc., and they sub-contracted to Christian Electric, Inc. The finishes and carpet installation were done by R. P. & I General Contractors. The

majority of the \$690,200 building renovation went to minority companies.

"Our success to date with the MBE program has been possible because of the number of competent, qualified and well-equipped MBE's willing to compete for and perform the services required," Frank Nuesle, Cablesystems' general manager, said. "We recognize that continued success is dependent on our ability to increase MBE awareness of the opportunities in the cable industry."

Cablesystems has surpassed its minority and female employment goals in some categories, but failed in others. Overall the goals have been exceeded.

Forty-three per cent of the officials and managers are minorities, far exceeding the 22 per cent goal. This has created a sensitivity to minority hiring on the department head level which assures growth of minority participation. The 20 per cent minority participation in office and clerical help also exceeds the 19 per cent goal; operatives, at 33.3 per cent exceed the goal of 20 per cent. Falling short of the goals are professionals and technical. The company explains that the shortfall in the technical department is due to a national shortage of minorities in cable television technology and the

fact the installers are not yet hired. Participation of women is below the goal in officers and managers and in professionals.

Because the numbers of minorities and women in the Portland area with skills needed for the cable industry are few, Cablesystems will develop an in-house training program to facilitate its affirmative action. Among the areas identified for early training are Customer Service Representative, Sales Representative, and some technical positions. The company also has a contract with the City of Portland agreeing to employ CETA-eligible residents.

Calling Cablesystems Pacific's performance a model for other business, Commissioner Charles Jordan praised the company's commitment to reaching its goals. "It is rather significant that Cablesystems has met the goals set by its franchise with the City. We have been told for many years that it is impossible to meet minority business enterprise goals and minority hiring goals and still come out ahead. Some have even said meeting these goals is impossible—that it is impossible to find qualified people.

"Cablesystems has proved it can be done and that it is important. Their success will be used as a model to show what can be done if there is commitment."

The lottery: Is it the answer?

Fourteen states supplement their incomes with state lotteries. For these states revenue ranges to \$23 million per year. In some states, as in New York, lottery profits are earmarked for education or other essential social programs.

Oregon has not seriously considered a lottery but declining revenues from income taxes resulting from a recessed economy and fear of a "property tax revolt" will combine to make it an option to be considered.

The raffle is part of American history; during the colonial period and the early 1800s raffles funded many public works. Anti-raffle laws

came in the 1830s when private raffles rivaled the state lotteries and absence of regulation led to corruption.

Lotteries exist even where illegal. The "numbers games" of the major cities turn over millions of dollars, all tax free. In Oregon, where all forms of gambling except non-profit organizations' bingo games are illegal, at any one time an estimated 1,000 illegal raffles are in progress—operated by churches, social and service clubs, youth groups.

Glenda Durham, a Portland attorney, proposes a small step toward legalization in Oregon. In

the 1981 legislative session she proposed legislation that would have allowed raffles by non-profit organizations and drawn strict regulations for charitable fundraising promoters. Non-profit organizations could organize their own raffles, but if they chose to use a promoter, that promoter would have to be licensed and his activities and commission would be regulated by the state. Recent investigations have revealed that unscrupulous charitable fundraisers often receive more of the profits than the charities to which the donations are intended.

The Reagan Administration's

cuts in budgets for the arts, humanities and social services spiked Mrs. Durham's interest in the lottery. "With the economic reality that we cannot depend on government any longer, the raffle is a good solution for the non-profit service agency," she explained. "And current Oregon law makes this illegal. It is a poor law that makes criminals out of Shriners attempting to raise money for their crippled children's hospital."

While many social agencies, especially churches, use Bingo as a fund raiser, Bingo has a high overhead—rental of space and equipment, personnel, etc. Raffles

have low overhead—some printing and possibly advertising, and the prizes if they are not donated.

Mrs. Durham found much interest and support in Salem but her bill failed to pass from the House Judiciary Committee. She now is in the process of circulating petitions to amend the state Constitution to allow raffles for non-profit organizations. (These can be obtained by calling 228-1393).

Mrs. Durham has set her sights high. She would like to raffle off a house—perhaps in Albina—and use the proceeds to develop

additional housing, using local contractors and employees. These, in turn, could be raffled with the proceeds used for further economic development—industrial buildings and job training facilities. Millions of dollars could go to all types of needed social services, all through voluntary participation.

"Raffles are completely voluntary," she explains. Unlike added taxes, no one is forced to participate.

Mrs. Durham is not ready to promote a state lottery in Oregon at this time. She believes in one step at a time—starting small and proving it can be done.