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# Pinched by Development

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

building right up to the property line, which is compelling the Brames to move the meter. Due to regulations imposed by Pacific Power, the Brames must also rewire their entire building to meet current industrial and commercial standards. The current wiring dates back to the 1940s.

"It's considered industrial," explained Rickey Brame, who has nearly three decades of experience working as a professional electrician, "which means we've got to have sprinkler systems and everything. It's not just moving the meters, it snowballs."

Brian Alfrey, who co-owns the adjacent development site at 533 N.E. Killingsworth along with his business partner Mike Gadberry, says that he is just trying to breathe new life into an underutilized piece of land.

"It was a dilapidated old locksmith building. The roof was falling in, and it was just terrible," said Alfrey. "We bought it, and we wanted to do something better for the neighborhood."

Alfrey and Gadberry also own the Radio Room, a popular bar and restaurant on Northeast Alberta Street that is situated inside a repurposed gas station.

Rickey Brame says that he isn't opposed to the new development for the neighborhood, but is feeling forced out by the project.

"We welcomed them at first, when we got the notice from the city," he said. "We were tired of looking at that eye-sore too!"

Alfrey, who is himself a native of northeast Portland, says that he is simply trying to create

a space that will help to preserve the historic characteristics of the Killingsworth business corridor, which Rickey and Herman Brame describe as "the soul of the city."

"We opted not to do a \$2,000-a-month apartment complex," Alfrey says, "but to do something that's a little truer to the neighborhood."

Alfrey and Gadberry offered \$10,000 to help cover the cost of moving the meter; Rickey Brame, however, says that the cost of rewiring the entire structure would be substantially higher.

The Brames say that while some space between construction projects and property lines are required in residential areas, there are no such requirements in commercial zones.

Ross Caron, public information officer for the Portland Bureau of Development Services, says city regulators are aware of the situation involving the Brame's building. He explained that Pacific Power, and not the city, is compelling them to rewire the structure.

Pacific Power could not be immediately reached for comment.

The Brames add that while they understand that the developers are observing current regulations, say City Hall isn't going far enough to protect existing landowners and minority business owners from new developments.

"No matter what the code says," said Herman Brame, "the code is wrong."

Pointing to already-gentrified neighborhoods like Mississippi and Alberta, the Brames say that the burden placed on them is another obstacle to staying put in parts of the city that are rapidly

changing.

"I have a minimum of 5 employees here," said Rickey Brame. "These are minority workers trying to stay in our own neighborhood."

Herman Brame says that city leaders are ignoring the plight of black residents and business owners who are being forced out of inner Portland.

"You can cite codes and email back and forth, but that doesn't get anything done," he says. "At some point, they need to get out and walk around and see what's actually going on."

Herman Brame penned a letter to Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler asking him to review his family's case, and learn more about how Portland residents are being affected by the city's zoning rules.

"We hope that they can review their code, and take this into consideration," Herman Brame said.

For now, the Brames are preparing to shut down the barbershop as the new construction is ready to begin. He is hoping, however, that a salon that's attached to the barbershop can remain in operation for the foreseeable future. The salon is run by his daughter, who is the fourth generation of the Brame family to be successful in the beauty industry.

"The barbershop is going to be cut off," Rickey Brame says. "We're going to be shut down. We've got no choice."

The barbershop is scheduled to have its power cut on Friday, June 23.

"We will survive. We own this land," Rickey Brame said, adding, "But this could have us shut down three years."

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