

Issues Raised at Black Voices Candidates' Forum

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"It doesn't make sense that we have 88 people who have died in our streets last year when we have a building we spent \$100 million for and that we spend \$500,000 a year to maintain and has no one in it," she said.

Emmons said he agreed with Smith on Wapato, and doesn't think the city is doing nearly enough to ease the housing pressures. He released his own comprehensive housing plan last week, called the Portland Home Project.

"I don't think the mayor is prioritizing homelessness enough," he said, despite a recent bond measure that will create 1,300 more apartments.

"There are 25,000 people who are in need of affordable housing," Emmons said. "We see after four years hardly any change in homelessness and hardly any change in affordable housing," he said. "I want to turbocharge our bond dollars and our public monies to get as much housing built as possible."

Jo Ann Hardesty, a former state representative who stepped down from her role as president of the Portland NAACP to seek the city office, agrees.

"We have way too many people living on the streets, and our solu-

tion has been to criminalize them or warehouse them," Hardesty said. "We need affordable housing in every neighborhood in the city of Portland."

Felicia Williams, a history professor, said she has worked on a diversion program for the "hard-core homeless" and found after a survey that their greatest need was for medical care, followed by housing, substance abuse help and mental health treatment.

"So when we're talking about homelessness and housing issues, we need to understand that it's a public health issue instead of just a shelter issue," Williams said. "If we're going to be sending money from the city budget over to the county we need to make sure it's going to go into a position or the resources necessary to break the cycle of homelessness."

"That's our job: to protect our people," she said.

Williams said she grew up poor in South Dakota, one of 15 kids, and joined the Air Force after high school where she spent five years managing crisis situations. She's also been a neighborhood association leader, "in the trenches," for years, she said.

"I've seen what the city does well and what the city does very badly," Williams said.

"I know how to reach consensus. I know how to get unanimous

votes," she said. "There are things we need for fix. I want you to support me to get things done."

While Hardesty and Smith are both African American, Valderrama said she is a first-generation Peruvian American and is concerned about police racially profiling residents in her low-income neighborhood.

"I come home to an area where I don't see sidewalks and my own family is at risk of being profiled," she said, questioning what "equity lens" the city is using to keep itself accountable.

Emmons said one way that City Hall can help increase racial equity is to support training in the building trades in high schools.

"If we want to have more minority-owned businesses we need to support schools and support those projects," he said.

Hardesty said she was "very disappointed" with a lack of accomplishment from the city's Office of Equity and Human Rights,

which she was on a panel to help form a few years ago.

"What has happened in the city of Portland is they hired 1.5 staff persons and made them the equity coordinator so that the director, the elected official, is no longer accountable for eliminating racial inequitable outcomes that are systemic in the city of Portland," she said.

Hardesty also discussed gentrification and hate crimes.

She said gentrification was pushing black residents to the edges of the city who are then penalized with higher transportation costs. She said public transportation should be free.

"We'd rather criminalize people for not having \$2.50 rather than creating a world-class transit system that is made for the people who are most transit dependent," Hardesty said.

Valderrama said she's been the target of hate crimes, with white supremacists showing up at her school board meeting, receiving

death threats, and having her car vandalized.

"The fear is real and something I personally experienced she said. "I've also heard testimony from parents who are scared of being deported, and who are afraid to get medical services."

Hardesty claims there are white supremacists in the Portland Police Bureau and that city leaders have been "deathly silent" about racism in the ranks.

"As an African American woman, we need leadership that's not going to pretend that we're not living this reality," she said.

Hardesty also criticized leaders for not doing more to protect undocumented residents.

"Let's stop telling people we're a sanctuary city. There's absolutely nothing sanctuary about the city of Portland and Multnomah County. We have to fight this as a community and I would love to see us developing a new underground railroad," Hardesty said.

June Key Delta Candidates Forum

The Portland chapter of the historic black sorority Delta Sigma Theta and Portland's AARP invite the public to join them for a forum with candidates running for the Portland City Council on Wednesday, April 11 at the June Key Delta Community Center, located at 4940 N. Albina Ave. and Ainsworth Street, across from Peninsula Park.

The forum will begin at 6 p.m. and there will be a social time preceding the session at 5:30 p.m. All six candidates running for the post to replace current City Commissioner Dan Saltzman, who is retiring at the end of the year, have been invited. Candidates confirming their plans to attend are Jo Ann Hardesty, Loretta Smith, Andrea Valderrama, Felicia Williams and Stuart Emmons.



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April 2018 CALENDAR

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

1 Easter April Fool's Day One Cent Day	2 International Children's Book Day	3 Find-A-Rainbow Day First iPad sold in the U.S. in 2010	4 First U.S. flag approved (1818)	5 National Read a Road Map Day Educator Booker T. Washington born, 1856	6 North Pole Discovered In 1898 U.S. entered World War I (1917)	7 No Housework Day World Health Day, established 1948
8 Trina Schart Hyman born, 1939	9 Robert E. Lee surrendered (1865)	10 Encourage a Young Writer Day National Sibling Day	11 President Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act, 1964	12 Space Shuttle Columbia First Launched - 1981	13 3rd President Thomas Jefferson born, 1743	14 Webster's Dictionary Published, 1828