

Trying to Get it Right

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

formed in northeast Portland's Cully Neighborhood which promotes the economic and environmental uplifting of low-income communities in the city.

The CBA, which will be legally binding, will be a first for the coalition, DeFalco said.

"The big picture is that this is an opportunity for us as a city to get development right by prioritizing racial justice, environmental justice and economic justice," he said.

The city caused great harm to communities of color in the past, such as the urban renewal of the 1960s and 70s that brought the construction of the Memorial Coliseum, the I-5 freeway, the expanded Emanuel Hospital campus that all but wiped out the thriving African American community of Albina, and gentrification in the 1990s and 2000s with the displacement of thousands of black residents. But now it's trying to correct previous mistakes.

The Healthy Communities Coalition was only created a few years ago, said DeFalco, and this is its first major development undertaking. Members of the coalition include OPAL Environmental Justice, O'Neill Construction, Main Street Alliance, Portland Voz, Metropolitan Alliance for Workforce Equity, Coalition of Communities of Color, Portland Firefighters Union, Oregon Tradeswomen, Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and several more unions and nonprofits.

DeFalco said he is "particularly excited" that the coalition is made up of labor, environmental and civil rights groups.

"Let's build on the painful understanding that we have of how urban renewal has not benefited our communities, to lift up something that really does benefit our communities," he said. "I see in this proposal a real desire to do that and now we have the hard work of committing to that and working through that over several months and into the coming years."

Coming to an agreement with the city between different community organizations was nearly impossible a few years ago, said Vivian Satterfield, deputy director of OPAL Environmental Justice, because many times nonprofits were at cross purposes.

"When it comes to big projects, our priorities would be pitted against each other," she said. "With (formation of) the coalition we learned how to come to understanding and have solidarity."

The coalition has come up with an 8-page platform that was presented to Prosper Portland, and the final three-way



PHOTO BY DANNY PETERSON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Dubbed the Broadway Corridor, 32 acres of prime Pearl District real estate will be redeveloped for new housing and retail under a Community Benefits Agreement, or CPA, a legally binding agreement between the city, developer and community advocates to make sure the project benefits Portland's diverse and disadvantaged populations.

agreement with the city, the developer, and the coalition will grow from that, Satterfield said.

The ideas presented in the coalition's platform are broad in scope, addressing affordable housing, job opportunities, community open space, disabled accessible units, child-care, grocery stores, business opportunities, and community programming with a permanent funding stream.

According to the platform, development on the Broadway Corridor site "should lead to long term, shared wealth creation for all Portlanders, starting with people and businesses who have been hit hardest by race and gender discrimination, and the corporate push to make work pay less for more hours."

The development will be years in the making, and will include moving the Post Office distribution headquarters to the Cully neighborhood, near Portland's airport. DeFalco said that neighborhood also deserves to be protected from any undesirable effects of moving the postal facility.

The coalition's platform addresses that by suggesting

that a mitigation fund be established to mitigate for carbon emissions from construction and increased traffic as well as for those displaced from housing or jobs.

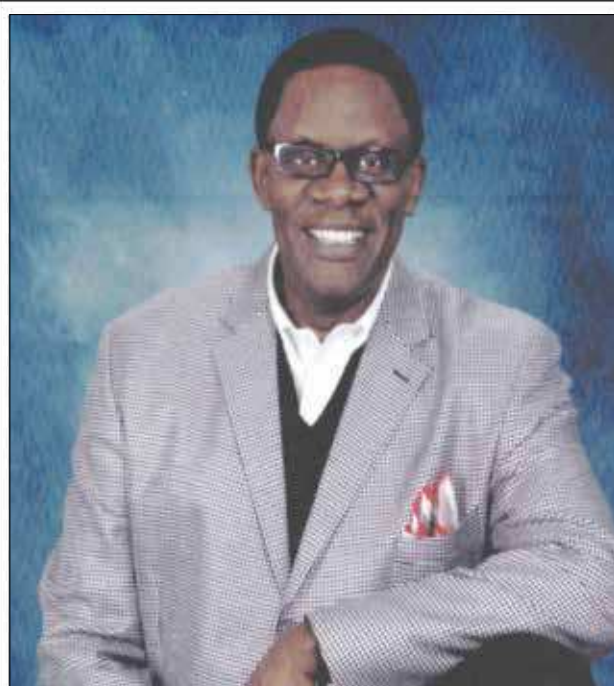
This is important because the Cully neighborhood will be getting more truck traffic and noise, vehicle pollution and increased danger to pedestrians, DeFalco said, "So we asked for a fund to be based on some analysis on how those things can be monetized in terms of negative impacts."

Just where that funding would come from is yet to be determined, DeFalco said.

"We're just getting started," he said.

Negotiations for the final contents of the CBA will begin next spring, said Kimberly Branam, executive director of Prosper Portland, but steering committee discussions began more than a year ago to bring community values into the process.

"When we began the process we knew we wanted to do things differently this time," she said. "We've starting early and are excited about what this means for our future."



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