

# Plans for a Black-Owned Business Hub Have Fallen Through

By BEVERLY CORBELL

Dreams die hard. For Karanja Crews, the realization that his long-time goal of opening One Stop Plaza as a Black-owned business hub with food carts and a community gathering space is no longer possible, was a bitter defeat.

The basis of One Stop Plaza is a brightly mural-covered building at Northeast 15th and Killingsworth that would have been retrofitted to accommodate all its aspects.

Green Hammer Design Build, who designed the refurbished structure, stated on its website that One Stop Plaza was to be “a Black-owned business and cultural hub poised to become a beacon of community empowerment.”

One Stop Plaza would have featured 10 permanent food carts, and outdoor dining area and a covered stage. “One Stop Plaza will be equipped with a 1,200-gallon rainwater storage tank and a 36-kilowatt solar array, enabling it to double as an emergency shel-



Karanja Crews

ter during severe weather events and power outages.

For the past two years, Crews has been trying to get grants to fund the project, appealed for help from Prosper Portland and other agencies, and finally resorted to a GoFundMe appeal earlier this month, but it fell short.

The building, which Crews had been leasing, will now go

back to the owner, he said, and he has lost \$15,000 in the process of trying to develop it.

A photo on Crews’ Instagram site reflects his frustration with his plans’ demise, which is spelled out on his LinkedIn site:

“I made a bad call on this potential investment. Lost money. Thought Prosper Portland had my back on this project, but I was wrong. Trusting people too much is my bad. Lesson learned! Rolling the dice on this one was eye-opening. Each setback is a chance to grow. Big shoutout and thanks to everyone who had my back on this move!”

A long-time activist in the Black community, Crews is owner of Green Muse cannabis dispensary, and a former teacher and founder of Teaching With Purpose, for which he received the Martin Luther King Lifetime Achievement Award and the OnPoint Prize for Excellence in Education Circle of Excellence Award.

# Explore Local Entrepreneurship at the MESO Makers Market

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

11a.m. to 5p.m. The market also has several special events and new opportunities planned for 2024. This past February for example, the market honored Black History Month with a lineup of Black-owned small businesses. Women’s History Month in March featured a roster of women and non binary vendors and their arts-and-crafts-focused small businesses.

“As a community credit union, it’s our responsibility to support local small businesses and the people behind them,” said Rob Stuart, President/CEO, OnPoint Community Credit Union. “We’re proud to work alongside MESO in cultivating a community hub for creativity and entrepreneurship in Portland.”

Community partners like OnPoint have been key to the success of the market since it opened, according to Lewis. In addition to OnPoint’s generous support, MESO partner Prosper Portland made it possible for the market to make a retail space at the Alberta Commons its permanent home.

“With OnPoint Community Credit Union by our side, we’re gearing up to bring the Portland metro area an even more enriched market experience,” Lewis said. If you are a maker in the Portland metro area and are interested in showcasing your products and art at the MESO Makers Market Empowered by OnPoint, visit <https://www.mesopdx.org/meso-makers-market>.

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Photo courtesy of Walk for Recovery

# Promote Pride in Recovery!

Registration now open, 6 walks in 6 cities!

The Walk for Recovery is Oregon Recovers largest annual fundraiser. Each of the six Walks are designed to raise money, build community power, and promote pride in recovery.

Our goal is to raise \$100,000 to continue the fight to end Or-

regon’s addiction crisis! This year, a Walk for Recovery will be organized in Bend, Portland, Rogue Valley, Klamath Falls, Lane County and Eastern Oregon!

Each walk follows a two mile route past treatment providers, recovery houses, detox centers and MAT clinics. This is also a family friendly event; bring your children and pets. Please have leashes for the furry friends and please pick up after them.

Your participation not only helps to raise crucial funds for addiction treatment, recovery support, and policy change but also sends a powerful message of hope and resilience to those affected by the addiction. Connect with others who share a commitment to supporting recovery and building a healthier, stronger community. The walk for Portland is Saturday, September 28th.

