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Watch What You Toss

Portland considers fines for putting trash in recycling bins

Helen Silvis
Of The Skanner News

When Portland's composting pilot was introduced six months ago, planners pledged to work with householders to help them solve their garbage problems. Nobody mentioned the possibility of punishment for putting your waste in the wrong bin.

But now planning bureau staffers are asking the city council to change the city code – opening the door to fining householders who toss garbage into recycling containers.

Portland City Council will take another look at the proposed code changes at its regular meeting June 21. In the meantime, the issue has raised hackles with some Portlanders, including right-wing radio shock jock Victoria Taft. Taft addressed city council June 13, on the topic of "garbage criminalization."

Two other proposed code changes came before council from the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. One of the three code changes resolves a longstanding issue between neighbors in Northwest Portland over trash containers on sidewalks. Another code change would keep confidential the identity of anyone who made a complaint to the bureau about another person's waste disposal habits.

Not so fast, was the reaction from Commissioner Randy Leonard, who said he was not willing to vote for a code change that could then be used to fine homeowners.

"I have concerns about having within our collections system a system of punitive fines, as opposed to other strategies we could use to encourage people not to inappropriately mix recyclables with garbage," Leonard said. "Back up, before amending city code. Because once amended the Bureau could adopt fines with or without council oversight."

At the meeting Anderson said both Seattle and San Francisco have made similar

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GOODBYE



PHOTO BY LISA LOVING

Humboldt K-8 school was shuttered permanently this week, but the school's annual carnival was held as usual Friday, June 8. This time, the school's walls were covered with historic photos of former students, staff and the surrounding community. Here John Canda, a longtime youth advocate, scrutinizes pictures from the 1970s – when he was a student at Humboldt. Despite driving rain and thunderstorms, about 400 people turned out for awards, carnival games and a huge barbeque with items donated from Franz Bakery.

Mayor Talks Violence Prevention

So far this year there have been 59 violent incidents; last year, 40

Helen Silvis
Of The Skanner News

Sometimes success is when nothing much happens. That was one of the messages from the Gang Violence Task Force meeting Friday June 8, at the Northeast Police precinct.

Royal Harris, who works with gang-affected young men, reported that regular basketball games at Peninsula Park have brought youth together to play without posing any problems.

Several months ago, Harris asked parole and probation officers to allow their clients to take part in the games.

"They've had no incidents, no problems in or around the center," Harris said. "Most of the youth are doing a good job."

Also good news was a report that Connected, the group of adults who walk weekly in Holladay Park, had interrupted a fight and prevented serious violence. Part of the Church-led 11:45 group, Connected reaches out to youth in the park.

Eleven:45 also is working with the DA's office to offer support to youth charged with a first crime.

But not all the news at the task force was good. With six incidents of gunfire in the last two weeks, and more than 300 over the year, the number of gang violence cases this year rose to 59. Last year at this time that number was 40. And it's a big rise from 2008 when the number of incidents for the entire year was 63.

Mayor Adams is slated to hold

a press conference next Thursday, June 14 to talk about plans for this summer. An increase in violence is often seen during the summer months. Police say they are beefing up their numbers on the streets, while other gang task force members, including outreach workers, nonprofits and youth organizations, are gearing up to offer activities, jobs and support to youth this summer.

Two new community violence prevention efforts are under-

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Jail Overcrowding, Negligence at Issue

Lawsuit filed in 2010 eye-gouging attack at Columbia County Jail

By Lisa Loving
Of The Skanner News

A former Columbia County jail inmate whose eye was gouged out during a 2010 jailhouse attack has brought a lawsuit against Columbia County; County Sheriff Jeff Dickerson, Sheriff's Deputies Derek Hibbs and Ryan Scholl; Emanuel Hospital; and Metro West Ambulance.

An attorney for Ray Batista, a local resident of Puerto Rican heritage who had been a career construction contractor, said he is now legally blind in his left eye.

Batista had been serving a 20-day sentence at Columbia County Jail rather than paying a large fine for a hunting-related gun violation; the story was reported by The Skanner News just after the attack, which was June 7, 2010.

The lawsuit alleges cruel and unusual punishment as well as negligence on the part of the Columbia County Jail; insufficient jail staffing which led to a six-minute delay in responding to the initial disturbance call; and delayed medical care.

"Columbia County compelled plaintiff to answer questions and complete paperwork

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