

Thursday, May 18, 2017

**Mayor Wheeler,**

Helpful: I think I can be helpful to you and the entire city of Portland.

My initial understanding, based on only 4 months of observations, is that you are a better overall manager than the previous 6 mayors. More about that below.

I see lots of evidence of problems with Portland City building contractors. I would like to help you by doing more research about that, and giving you a report.

There is plenty of evidence that contractors are making recommendations that benefit the contractors, but are bad for the city.

I deal with complex issues every day. After 40 years of experience, it has become easy for me.

How did the Portland City government arrive at that disorganization? Previous mayors had some strengths, but none of them were good overall managers. Areas that didn't get their attention became disorganized.

One indication of the confusion: The previous 2 mayors each had 3 chiefs of staff. There were many other areas of unstable city management. For example, the Chief Auditor complained about insufficient management of money. See below for quotes.

As a speaker at the City Council meeting on May 17, 2017, I mentioned evidence of incompetence of *FFA Architecture and Interiors* concerning the renovation of the parking structure at SW 10th and Yamhill. I've found much more incompetence than I mentioned.

**Managing a city successfully requires dealing with huge intellectual challenges.** Managing a city requires resolving conflicts; many people have habits of avoiding conflicts.

When there is insufficient management, people begin to dislike their jobs. They react partly by arranging ways to take as little responsibility as possible. I've seen a lot of that behavior during my months of research.

**I can send you this document:** *Seismic Retrofit Cost Estimate for Garage Building at 730 SW 10th Ave, Portland, Oregon*. It was written by Franz Rad. He is a very well-known local expert. See this video, for example: [Franz Rad: Seismic Vulnerability of Portland Buildings](#).

From his report about that parking structure: "*Total cost of retrofit is estimated [to be] in the range of 5 to 9 million dollars.*"

What is the reason FFA, the contractor, didn't mention the seismic upgrade? FFA is trying to stay under a cost limit for doing the entire renovation by hiding part of the cost, I was told.

**My suggestion: Stop ALL planning for a renovation until:**

- 1) Seismic upgrades have finished.
- 2) There is a thorough review of both the needs and plans.

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**The Portland City Auditor complained  
about sloppy management.**

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I've written about the problem of insufficient management since last year, and have received no replies. For example: [Proposal: Audit and Re-structure the Portland Development Commission.PDF](#) (PDF file, Sept. 19, 2016)

An excerpt:

**The report was covered by the local media:**

[Auditor Slams City Hall for Tens of Millions in Uncompetitive, Untracked Grants](#) (Willamette Week, Jan 21, 2016) Quote:

“City gave money away without criteria or accountability, audit finds.”

[Audit: City Council awards millions in grants with no competition and little oversight](#) (Portland Tribune, Jan 21, 2016) Quote:

“According to the audit, although all grants over \$5,000 must be approved by the council, requesting them is an informal process between the mayor and commissioners and not always accompanied by self-explanatory paperwork. In addition, once grants are approved, they are frequently added to the base city budget and the expenditures continue for years without further review.”

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This is my best understanding and my opinions. I've talked with others who also have more information.

**Michael Jennings**

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