

Statement from Bill Dant 4-27-17

Dear Commissioners Fritz, Eudaly, Fish and Saltzman, and Mayor Wheeler,

Thank you for taking the time to read this submission.

My name is Bill Dant, and I have been a member of the volunteer group Connected for the last five years. Connected was formed six years ago this month following the shooting death of an innocent bystander in Holladay Park. His name was Shiloh Hampton. He was 14-years old and he attended Madison High School.

Members of Connected meet every Friday afternoon to walk Holladay Park for a few hours. In the first two years of Connected's existence, and persistence, violent crime and police calls to the park dropped significantly. Families actually began to bring their kids to play in the park and have picnics. Previous to that, drug dealing, gang activity, and human trafficking was blatant *and* rampant.

Which brings us to two weeks ago, when 17-year old Shawn Scott Jr. was shot and killed in Holladay Park in an apparent botched robbery attempt. Charged with the crime is an 18-year old male. Despite all the progress made in Holladay Park, it is a real punch in the gut to those involved in making it a safe and welcoming place. The gains made over the past six years are very fragile. Progress truly does "come in like a tortoise and leave like a hare." Street level gang outreach workers still cite the park as a routine trouble spot, and Connected cannot be there every day. That in a nutshell, is why I am addressing you.

During the past two summers, the Parks & Recreation Bureau has provided a Park Host and Park Rangers in the park. I am asking you as a member of Connected, and as a life-long citizen of this city, to find the courage and means necessary to make the Park Host *and* Park Rangers year round. They offer games and positive activities for kids. They give the park more sets of eyes and ears, and people do behave much better. I have seen this myself, firsthand.

According to Commander Robert King of the Police Bureau's North Precinct, the owners of the adjacent Lloyd Center Mall are already partnering with the city to improve security not just in the mall, but the park as well. Considering the park as "The Front Door" to Lloyd Center, the mall's owners are a perfect example of a Public-Private Partnership ripe to be nurtured and cultivated.

As tired and cliched as the term "Stakeholders" has become, there are other neighbors of note who can, and should be called in to help with some of this heavy lifting. For example, Senator Ron Wyden and U.S. Representative Earl Blumenauer both have offices kitty corner from the Park in the Federal Building, and The Bonneville Power Administration is in the building next door to them. To borrow another cliché, "Many hands make light work."

Far too much has been gained at Holladay Park to let it slip back to drugs, violence, human trafficking, and murder. Everyone has a right to feel free to use our parks without fear. It's a quality of life issue for the hundreds of thousands of people who travel through and/or use the park every year. It has been said Holladay Park is in many ways the Eastside equivalent of Pioneer Square. Please help it to rise to that status.

Sincerely,



-Bill Dant

Moore-Love, Karla

From: billdant@comcast.net
Sent: Monday, April 17, 2017 9:52 AM
To: Moore-Love, Karla
Subject: Testimony request

Good morning Karla,

Is there still time to be scheduled to make a three minute (or less) presentation to the Mayor and Council this coming Wednesday morning? If not, please let me know everything I need to do to be on next week's agenda.

I would like to make a request that they find the funds to install a year round Park Host, and Park Rangers in Holladay Park. Currently there is a Park Host in the summer months which is great, but with the sheer numbers of people traveling through the park, going between the Max stop and the Lloyd Center, we really need to have permanent eyes on the park. Loitering and drug use increases when the Park Host and Rangers are not there.

I am a member of the volunteer organization Connected. It was established six years ago after the shooting death of 14 year old Shilo Hampton in Holladay Park. For the last six years, members of Connected have met at the park at 4:30 PM every Friday to walk the park and engage citizens through friendly conversation. We also model positive behavior for youths. According to Portland Police Bureau data, calls to the park for serious crimes has decreased by over 50% since Connected started walking in the park on Fridays. We know the park, and many of the regular faces in it. When the Park Host and Rangers are there, we notice a very big and positive difference.

Thanks Karla,

Bill Dant
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Licensed in the Great State of Oregon
I'm never too busy to help you or people you refer to me. Thanks

Request of Bill Dant to address Council regarding funding year round Park Host and Park Rangers in Holladay Park (Communication)

APR 26 2017
PLACED ON FILE

APR 18 2017

Filed _____

MARY HULL CABALLERO
Auditor of the City of Portland

By *Suzanne Sansons*
Deputy

COMMISSIONERS VOTED AS FOLLOWS:		
	YEAS	NAYS
1. Fritz		
2. Fish		
3. Saltzman		
4. Eudaly		
Wheeler		