

Nov 6, 2019

Dear Mayor Wheeler, dear City Council,

I am living in Portland for two years. The past 6 month I engaged in the Code Change 3.96 discourse through my involvement with SE Uplift. And: the disconcerting character of this discourse has startled me.

Today, I am speaking from my personal point of view as a recent immigrant with East German roots and as a resident without the right to vote in this country. Based on my own micro-history of being punished for defending democratic principles in East Germany and adjusting twice to completely different cultural and social settings, for me civic engagement is the backbone of a just, equitable, and democratic community. The proposed code change 3.96, however, casts doubt on its effectiveness for any bottom-up structure, namely that of a defined right-of-say; it rather seems to dismantle accountable structures in the name of plurality and does not implement updated ones.

Thus, I like to address two main points:

First, the lack of acknowledgement of standards to which any participating individual, group, and City Bureau is accountable to. The proposed paragraphs imply merely a self-referential engagement of the City of Portland with its communities in civic affairs.

Code, however, needs to define democratic standards for participatory interactions first and foremost based on ethical principles and independent of an economic approval system, such as the proposed budgeting process. To overcome historically inherited problems of inequality a self-reflecting understanding of social interactions is needed; one that avoids “Othering” and “Tokenism” and rather centers on human dignity – a concept that allows for mutual rights and mutual obligations, and furthers adjustments of our socially constructed conceptual categories and associations.

Second, the omitted proposition of a reliable and transparent organizational structure of representation that “serves people who live, play, worship, and work in the City of Portland”. Codes need to define social and cultural responsibilities of a community by outlining a tangible organizational structure, which will ensure a democratic decision-making process and counteract unreasonable interference of any interest group in city developments. The obscure code proposal most certainly does not guarantee a problem-solving for underrepresented groups, as the organizational structure of civic engagement becomes even more confusing. The logic behind underrepresentation rests upon insufficient means of participation. If skills and time to intervene in an existing power system are crucial, a reliable

system of participatory organization is imperative. The proposed code language without any structural stronghold to standards, rules, and accountability invites an uncontrolled influx of interest groups and will disproportionately assist persons, who have experience with, and speak the language of social and political power structures.

To summarize, the aspirations of the code change 3.96 are worthwhile to agree to but codes are not documents of intent. Codes are supposed to be systematic statements of a body of law, a system of principles and rules, for which the diluted language of the proposed code change 3.96 certainly does not qualify.

Thank you for listening.

  
Anna Weichsel

**From:** [anna weichsel](#)  
**To:** [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony code change 3.96  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 4, 2019 9:39:37 AM

---

Dear Karla Moore-Love,

I would like to speak about OCCL's proposed code changes to section 3.96 of the City Code, relating to questions of participation structure and equality of representation.

I am fine with either scheduled dates Nov. 6 or 13th.

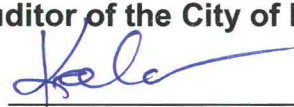
Thank you!

Anna Weichsel

Request of Anna Weichsel to address Council regarding proposed ~~Code~~  
changes to <sup>Code</sup> ~~Section~~ 3.96, relating to questions of participation structure and  
equality of representation (Communication)

NOV 06 2019

PLACED ON FILE

Filed OCT 29 2019  
**MARY HULL CABALLERO**  
Auditor of the City of Portland  
By   
Deputy

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