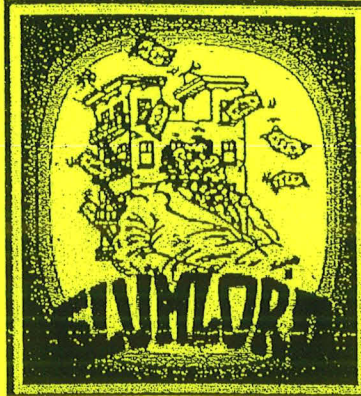


TENANT ACTIVISTS BERATED BY PORTLAND CITY COUNCIL

From the open publishing newswire: Four organizers with Tenant Rights Project used their allotted 3 minute time slots at this week's Wednesday morning Portland City Council meeting to criticize a local slumlord housing corporation and housing commissioner Nick Fish. The council objected to the "harsh rhetoric" of tenants.



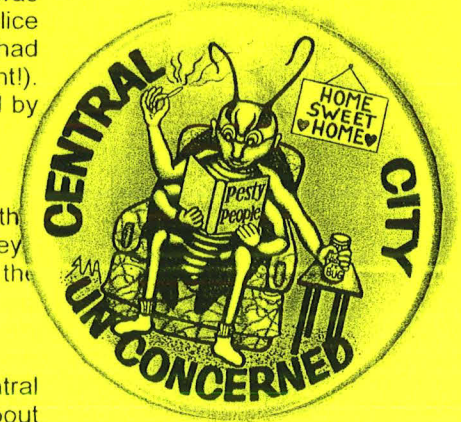
Four organizers with PSU Progressive Student Union's TRP (Tenant Rights Project) talked at Portland City Council's regular Wednesday council meeting, protesting the lack of accountability by local landlord (a 'nonprofit') Central City Concern, and housing commissioner Nick Fish, one of this landlord's biggest boosters in the city. (Fish spoke at CCC's Nov. 2008 fundraiser at the Governor Hotel, helping to raise \$400,000 and asking donors to 'dig deep' to fund this landlord corporation).

Joe Pierce, who is a CCC tenant (for almost 20 years) spoke first, criticizing Central City for transferring, instead of firing, a building manager, Greg Green, who was accused (in a written statement given to council members, and against whom a police report was filed) of sexually harassing a Biltmore tenant, Anthony Anderson (who had previously testified, last March, before City Council, against CCC mismanagement!). Joe compared Central City's transfer of this manager to priests who get transferred by the Catholic Church for pedophilia, rather than being terminated.

Nick Fish immediately interrupted Joe's talk (after 30 seconds), suggesting that this might be slander (Fish says he used to be an organizer and was a civil rights attorney). Joe said he would use the First Amendment and continued with his critique of the landlord.

The three other tenant organizers who spoke (a) backed up Joe's criticism of Central City Concern over the 'transfer' of former Biltmore manager Greg Green, (b) about housing problems that Central City creates for tenants, and (c) the history of Central City and Nick Fish stonewalling against meeting with, or addressing, tenant concerns.

Tenant Rights Project started organizing CCC tenants in the fall of 2008. CCC is a \$33,000,000 annual budget nonprofit, with 23 buildings and 1400 tenants. There are persistent pest control (cockroaches, mice and bedbugs) problems in several buildings, crime (drugs, prostitution, sex harassment) that has moved into some of the buildings (aided and abetted by CCC managers in some buildings), and lack of transparency: the CCC board of directors has an 'oral preference' that tenants aren't allowed to attend board meetings or to speak at board meetings. Tenants are also forbidden to get copies of board minutes -- a practice that Community Alliance of Tenants (which TRP has been talking with since November, 2008) says may be illegal, under Oregon Attorney General John Kroger rules regarding transparency and nonprofits.



SR Fish report a campaign piece of "hagiography"

BY LEW CHURCH
CONTRIBUTING COLUMNIST

Four organizers with Transit Riders Union (Jason Barbour, Dennis Priebe, Guy Berliner, and myself) recently talked with Street Roots Executive Director Israel Bayer regarding a front-page-with-photo, lead story in the paper titled, "Nick Fish - man of the hour." (Street Roots, Nov. 27, 2009)

We believe the Fish article appeared to (a) have no news angle or content (aka, hagiography), and (b) appeared to be a donated ad for Nick Fish's reelection campaign to Portland City Council in the May, 2010, elections.

Since one of us, Jason Barbour, has filed against Nick Fish, in the upcoming City Council race, we asked about getting a similarly-located, front page with photo, three page article about Jason - obviously, that article hasn't appeared, so far. Instead, we'll submit this article, and see if it makes it into the paper.

Bayer did note, in talking to the four of us, that had the paper run that long, pro-Fish article any later, it would have been problematic because of the upcoming election. We believe this confirms our thoughts that it was mostly a PR-blurb for the incumbent city council member, Nick Fish.

Since Jason Barbour, an activist challenger to Fish for city council, filed many months before this story appeared in Street Roots we continue to believe that it was a PR-blurb, with everything but a halo around Nick's head in the photo! ('Why bother having an election, just anoint Fish now,' as unstated subtext).

Jason Barbour is a transit activist and organizer with Transit Riders Union, helped collect 1,400 petition signatures that we presented to the TriMet board of directors against their cutting Fareless Square (by starting to charge for buses in Jan. 2010), and Jason has attended 20 TriMet board meetings.

In addition, Jason has been involved with anti-poverty organizing in downtown Portland with Tenant Rights Project to hold a large, local downtown landlord accountable to tenants for persistent pest control problems, lack of repairs, management harassment of tenants, crime and safety issues, and a lack of transparency by that nonprofit landlord which prohibits tenants from attending board meetings and where the board minutes are secret (which is illegal).

Nick Fish, in contrast, has already received at least one corporate donation from the publisher of the Portland Tribune, (and owner of Ross Island Sand and Gravel), Bob Pamplin. Anti-poverty organizers have sent in an op-ed, somewhat like this one, to the Portland Tribune, but have yet to see that published.

While Nick Fish is the housing commissioner on the Portland City Council, some activists feel that Fish has been less than progressive - or accountable - regarding the tenant rights campaign organized by Tenant Rights Project, and that Fish (with the rest of Portland City Council) was silent in not supporting the grassroots effort to save Fareless Square.

Fish, during 2009, refused to meet (5 times and counting) with organizers from Tenant Rights Project - despite the city of Portland helping to fund the nonprofit landlord that has been the target of the tenant rights organizing campaign.

Street Roots executive director, Israel Bayer, on his business card, has the motto, "For those who can't afford free speech," (this would include low-income people as well as activist, progressive city council candidates like Jason Barbour), and we know that the primary mission of Street Roots is to sell papers through the street vendor program. That is: jobs!

With the advent of Facebook, Twitter, etc., we believe it is at the

local level especially, where new, alternate, activist candidates have the best chance of upsetting incumbents in office, or, at least, impacting such elections.

With the advent of the right-wing U.S. Supreme Court decision which essentially abolished campaign finance reform and gave even more power to corporations and monied interests in elections - it is more important than ever to preserve and promote real democracy.

In the upcoming May, 2010, election, for Portland City Council, many of us will be supporting a low-income, activist candidate, Jason Barbour. I also support, for Saltzman's City Council seat, Mary Volm. Along with Amanda Fritz, Mary will be the 8th woman, in 150 years of Portland City Council existence, to serve on the City Council. Mary has been active for many years in transit issues, as has Jason.

If we believe the mantra of "change" and "hope" that carried Barack Obama to the White House in the last presidential election, it is incumbent upon us, here in 'liberal, progressive' Portland, Oregon, to vote for hope and change, and elect Jason Barbour, man of the people, to Portland City Council - and send Nick Fish, a lawyer, back to private practice!

Lew Church is Coordinator of PSU Progressive Student Union and can be reached at www.trimetriders.com or 503-222-2974.

street roots

March 5, 2010

PORTLAND CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNICATION REQUEST
Wednesday Council Meeting 9:30 AM

5

Council Meeting Date: 3-24-10

Today's Date 2-16-10

Name Lew Church

AUDITOR 02/16/10 AM 10:25

Address PO Box 40011, Portland, Oregon 97240

Telephone 503-222-2974 Email lewchurch@gmail.com

Reason for the request:

ACTIVISM + SOCIAL JUSTICE

Lew Church
(signed)

- Give your request to the Council Clerk's office by Thursday at 5:00 pm to sign up for the following Wednesday Meeting. Holiday deadline schedule is Wednesday at 5:00 pm. (See contact information below.)
- You will be placed on the Wednesday Agenda as a "Communication." Communications are the first item on the Agenda and are taken promptly at 9:30 a.m. A total of five Communications may be scheduled. Individuals must schedule their own Communication.
- You will have 3 minutes to speak and may also submit written testimony before or at the meeting.

Thank you for being an active participant in your City government.

Contact Information:

Karla Moore-Love, City Council Clerk
1221 SW 4th Ave, Room 140
Portland, OR 97204-1900
(503) 823-4086 Fax (503) 823-4571
email: kmoore-love@ci.portland.or.us

Sue Parsons, Council Clerk Assistant
1221 SW 4th Ave., Room 140
Portland, OR 97204-1900
(503) 823-4085 Fax (503) 823-4571
email: sparsons@ci.portland.or.us

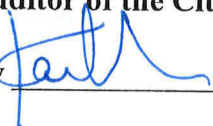
Request of Lew Church to address Council regarding activism and social justice
(Communication)

MAR 24 2010

PLACED ON FILE

Filed MAR 19 2010

LaVonne Griffin-Valade
Auditor of the City of Portland

By 

COMMISSIONERS VOTED AS FOLLOWS:		
	YEAS	NAYS
1. Fritz		
2. Fish		
3. Saltzman		
4. Leonard		
Adams		