

Why is Paul Romain, lobbyist for petroleum industry, on the sideline for Portland street fee meetings?

Portland Business workgroup meeting

Paul Romain (in black shirt facing camera) at an earlier summer meeting for the Portland transportation bureau's business work group (Andrew Theen/The Oregonian).

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on August 26, 2014 at 4:21 PM, updated August 27, 2014 at 5:54 AM

Paul Romain, a lobbyist representing Oregon gas stations and fuel distributors, sat through the first of two business committee meetings this summer to discuss how Portland could tweak, improve or eliminate a controversial monthly street fee.

But Romain, one of the **leading opponents of a 2008 failed effort** to enact a street fee in the Rose City, was nowhere to be found for the most recent two meetings of the group of **20 hand-picked business owners and advocates**.

His absence, Romain said Tuesday, isn't accidental: "I felt it was sort of a waste of time."

After Portland Mayor Charlie Hales and Commissioner Steve Novick in May revealed, then pulled, their proposed monthly street fee on residents and business owners on the eve of a City Council vote, city officials set up committees to try and improve the plan. The business group pointedly included heavyweights such as Romain and **grocery industry lobbyist Shawn Miller**, who said voters should ultimately decide the issue.

Romain said he's tired of sounding like a broken record so he's considering opting out.

"We feel that people should vote on it," he said, adding that even if he ultimately approves of a reconfigured street funding plan he believes voters should have the final say.

"You need people to buy into this thing," he added, "especially the way they've mucked it up so far."

Romain skipped a meeting Monday afternoon that included a lively discussion about one of the latest concepts floated by the city, a six-year program with two project lists that will take three years each to finish construction.

Business committee members criticized the provision because it would give a City Council-appointed oversight body authority to "recommend" terminating the new funding source, rather than have it automatically sunset. Ultimately the council, according to the proposal, would either eliminate the program or refer it to voters after the first three years.

"That's like my kid deciding when the allowance is going to be cut off," Romain said.

On Tuesday at a separate transportation needs and funding committee meeting, chief administrative officer Fred Miller said the project list will allow residents to see how the city is spending its money. "Presumably if this program is done well enough voters would be sympathetic."

Novick, who wasn't at Monday's meeting, said he'd heard Romain didn't attend the previous two meetings he hopes he remains engaged in the discussion.

Romain said he hadn't made up his mind whether to attend the remaining two meetings.

The next **business workgroup** meeting is scheduled for Sept. 15.

-- Andrew Theen

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Parsons, Susan

From: Craig Rogers <craig.rogers1@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 01, 2014 8:24 AM
To: Parsons, Susan
Subject: City council...

Good-morning Sue, well here I am. Can you sign me up to speak on September 3 before City Council, subject; Citizen Committees. Thank you...Craig Rogers

Request of Craig Rogers to address Council regarding Citizen Committees
(Communication)

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Filed AUG 29 2014

LaVonne Griffin-Valade
Auditor of the City of Portland

By 

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| 1. Fritz | | |
| 2. Fish | | |
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