

Remarks of Robert Liberty to the Portland City Commission  
July 29, 2015

Mr. Mayor and Commissioners

I am Robert Liberty. I live at SE 35<sup>th</sup> and Tibbetts Street. I was born in Portland and have been a resident of this city for almost 50 years.

For four decades thousands of Oregonians and Portlanders have been working to carry out our plans and policies to create a livable city, with choices in housing and transportation, green spaces and clean water, a city within a region that has stopped sprawl and saved the forest lands and farmlands that make us the Eden of the West.

After forty years of work, the vision of 1975 is becoming the reality of today.

What many of us did not expect was that our values would become national values by the time our plans came to fruition and that as a result our city and region would attract national interest.

A half-century ago Tom McCall said, "Oregon queen bee that she is, is not ready for the swarm."

Ready or not Tom, the swarm has arrived.

I welcome these newcomers because of the talents and enterprise they bring, because of the way they have embraced many of our values and because they mitigate our Oregon provincialism.

But the inevitable impact of all the new arrivals threatens some of the cherished qualities of this place, including the affordability of housing and the income diversity and social integration that allows.

Yes, the market is now responding to high rents and high homes prices with an unprecedented wave of construction. In time the new homes and

apartments will moderate the surge in rents and soften the shrinking of the rental home market.

But experience in our sister cities on the West Coast shows that the market as currently shaped and structured, cannot assure the broad supply of housing available to families of modest means - and even middle incomes - we need.

Of course we should do what we can to build new affordable housing. But even if we are far more successful than we have been in the past, permanently affordable housing will never supply more than 3 or 4% of our housing stock.

We need mechanisms that are market-responsive and that produce large volumes of lower cost housing of different types. This is the middle realm between subsidized affordable housing and market rate expensive housing.

I suggest that you organize a contest or think-tank for ideas about how to create a system to deliver, say, 50,000 new lower-cost housing units around the city by 2025. This system should not require significant public subsidies. It should generate new housing in forms that keep the city green and livable. Finally it should ensure that the private investment in that new housing circulates within this region, not flows outside of it.

Unlike in 1975, today our city and region is blessed with many people with creative ideas and relevant expertise about how to achieve this outcome. And because our city has attracted such attention recently, we can expect national and international contributions to this competition or think tank.

I would expect the neighborhood associations and neighborhood preservationists who have opposed some infill and redevelopment projects, to participate in this effort because it might offer an alternative to forms of development they oppose. I would ask them to do it as part of their responsibilities as Portlanders.

Thank you for your efforts to create a livable and lovable city for all of us; please invite us to contribute to that essential work.

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Moore-Love, Karla

July 29

**From:** Robert Liberty <rliberty@pdx.edu>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 27, 2015 11:00 AM  
**To:** Moore-Love, Karla  
**Cc:** Dingfelder, Jackie  
**Subject:** June 17 agenda item

Dear Karla

Jackie Dingfelder suggested that I contact you about reserving a few minutes on the June 17 City Commission agenda for remarks under the heading:

"  
A Portland native's thoughts about addressing concerns about neighborhood change and redevelopment.  
"

I understand the session starts at 9:30 AM; is that correct.

Thanks,

Robert Liberty, Director  
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Toulon School of Urban Studies and Planning  
Portland State University  
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Portland, OR 97207-0751  
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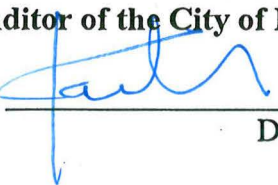
Request of Robert Liberty to address Council regarding concerns about neighborhood change and redevelopment (Communication)

JUL 29 2015

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MARY HULL CABALLERO  
Auditor of the City of Portland

By  Deputy

COMMISSIONERS VOTED AS FOLLOWS:		
	YEAS	NAYS
1. Fritz		
2. Fish		
3. Saltzman		
4. Novick		
Hales		