

June SWNI News Jim Diamond, retiring chair of CVNA

The NW Examiner's recent story ("Broken Brand: Neighborhood associations [NAs] may be on way out as city favors diversity, equity)

<http://nwexaminer.com/1393-2>

seems dark and threatening, with quotes like these: "This is dire stuff," "going back to the Dark Ages", or this: "In the past, it's been abundantly clear that people who are renters, people of color, low-income residents and others have not felt welcome at neighborhood association events."

And of course, there was Steve Novick's criticism in Willamette Weekly:

<http://www.wweek.com/news/city/2017/03/29/steve-novick-was-kicked-out-of-portland-city-hall-now-he-offers-his-boldest-ideas-to-shake-up-a-broken-council/>

"They're [NAs] fine people. They just aren't very representative, and are becoming less so in an increasingly diverse city.

Since there are nearly 100 NAs spanning a wide range of density and development, I suppose one must say that there might be some truth to these claims, but in my personal experience, I have found the citizens active throughout the city and the Southwest are pretty supportive of diversity, the needs of renters, and appropriate development. And these people volunteer a lot, not just in NAs or district coalitions, but working at food banks, Neighborhood House, or the community recycling events, planting native species in Riverview Natural Area, training community responders for the next big earthquake, preserving Portland's urban forest, cleaning up common use areas like Greenwood Hills Cemetery, an off-leash area popular in Collins View and treasured by the community, I saw these people myself digging strangers out of snow banks and helping them find aid during the harsh storms of this winter.

I recommend spending some time reading about NAs at the city's website, "History and Related Documents".

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oni/38585>

Of special interest is the link there to Carl Abbott's 1983 book, "Portland: Planning, Politics, and Growth in a Twentieth-Century City."

It is also worth reading the City Auditor's report, which does indicate some of the problems.

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/auditservices/article/597834>

I will say this: why is ONI responsible for weed? This makes no sense at all to me, and represents a significant diversion of resources. Here's the auditor's conclusion: "Portland has dedicated volunteers in neighborhoods, business districts, Diversity and Civic Leadership organizations, and many other community groups. These volunteers give significant time and effort on projects ranging from advocating for improved City services to responding to land use proposals to hosting movie nights in local parks. Improving accountability and updating the code and funding models would help ensure their work leads to meaningful results and that the City's funding is well spent."

Who can argue with that?