



October 5, 2023

Dear Mayor Wheeler, Commissioners, and Mr. Jordan,

The board of Hosford Abernethy Neighborhood District (HAND) is writing to ask for a 30 day delay before asking City Council to adopt the proposed organizational chart, and that you include neighborhood leaders with practical experience working with the city from the community perspective when making decisions about the role of neighborhoods in the future of Portland.

Meaningful community engagement is a long held value of both the city of Portland and the State of Oregon. The implementation of the Charter Change presents a unique opportunity to strengthen and re-envision Portland's system of civic engagement, but the current placement of Neighborhood Associations, which are key community organizations on the proposed organization chart, does not take full advantage of this opportunity.

We understand time is tight, but moving ahead with an organizational chart that does not consider how to best engage the talents, skills and experiences of Portlanders in the ongoing governance of their city is selling us short.

We strongly support the recent request from the GTAC and 4 of the coalitions for a 30-day delay in the formal adoption of the organizational chart and a citywide Community Summit to capture ideas for addressing the needs and possibilities that an improved community engagement system could provide. A Community Summit could be the beginning of a long overdue conversation for Portland, but it can only be a first step in a larger process. We need a community conversation about where the primary responsibility for community engagement belongs on the organization chart. Experience with aspects of government that currently work well and those that fall short of community goals can be gathered to assist the new Community Administrator and elected officials.

If you are not willing to extend the timeframe for final adoption of the proposed organization chart, we are asking that you insert a placeholder indicating that the Community Engagement function will be added to the chart at a specified later date.

A key objective of such a new system should be to enable and support collaborative efforts among neighborhoods, civic and community organizations, business associations, and government agencies as they work to make Portland a better city with opportunities for all.

Thank you,

Chris Eykamp
Chair, Hosford-Abernethy Neighborhood District