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Wapato – What could have been

On the Wapato site, the building AND 18 acres of land, great things could have been.

The BUILDING and LAND of Wapato could have provided:

Shelter for the houseless

RV Park with a sewage dump and RV washing area

Tent camping area

Affordable housing

Transitional and Permanent housing for people in various stages of recovery

A Tiny house development

Showers

Cafeteria

Food Bank drop-off center

Low cost/free grocery store

A Community Garden

Medical clinic

Dental clinic

Laundry

Storage

Sleeping bags and other items to keep warm distribution counter

Employment opportunities

Job Training and a Career Center

Help for Veterans with VA forms

Leadership programs

Career Center

Counseling and Psychiatry

Addiction Recovery

Conference rooms

Classrooms

Technology center

Amphitheater for speakers and other events

Areas for socializing

Basketball courts, etc

A drop-in center for youth

Amazing, innovative things could have been.

We need some commissioners to have an attitude change, a new perspective. Rather than saying “but it’s a jail, we’d be warehousing the homeless” think outside of your mansion, have some hope and creativity! Say “this was built to be a jail, but we can remodel and repurpose this building”

Everything does not have to be centered in the city core or downtown. Some people say that downtown is no longer the place where most houseless people gather anymore. Central City Concern built a new building for houseless people. It provides in one location housing, recovery and medical care. It exists on E Burnside and NE 122nd Ave. It is said to be only the 5th overarching facility in North America. Wapato could have been the 6th. A director of Central City Concern once said, "If you can combine the right combination of clinical, recovery, and jobs services. You can build people's resiliency to homelessness in the long term." And he would know.

Why was Harbor of Hope not given the time or approval to have a feasibility study done? They were willing to fund it themselves.

Why were previous bids not reopened for consideration? There were other bids that were higher than 5 million! All offers should have been considered. That makes no sense.

Why couldn't an RV park with sewage disposal have been created? It would be better than sewage running on the sidewalk. It would be better than people pooping on your lawn and peeing in the bushes. It would be better than Portland Police confiscating and destroying some people's last shred of shelter – their RVs - because they are unsanitary.

And finally, commissioners should recuse themselves of any vote that may appear to be a conflict of interest. We don't need commissioners that may make a financial gain from the sale of taxpayer's property especially when a family relative stands to profit.