

# Ruth Ann Barrett

[PDXDowntowner.com](http://PDXDowntowner.com)

October 18, 2021

Commissioner Mingus Mapps  
City of Portland

Re: Behavioral Police Unit

Your recent attention on the Behavioral Police Unit is greatly appreciated and I am sure will result in something tangible happening sometime in the future, I hope. I offer some background.

Old Town Chinatown Community Association, Letter, Old Town Chinatown Community Association's Response to PDC's 5-Year Action Plan for Old Town Chinatown (May 2014)

This letter from May 2014 (download <https://bit.ly/2014Please>) captures a moment three years before my neighbor, Jacob Shroyer was brutally murdered in our lobby of the Pacific Tower Apartments at NW 4th and Flanders. He died a few days later on May 15, 2017.

It says "Old Town is a neighborhood on the brink of great progress." It turned out to be more like the brink of incompetence in leadership at multiple levels; madness on our streets; and for too many residents, assaults.

Certainly not the solutions that then Mayor Hales called for, a call that was demanded back then and, recently by the local neighborhood leadership, as a prerequisite to even speak. Certainly dampened citizen engagement back then and continues to do so today!

Two points need to be highlighted from this May 2014 letter from the Board of the Old Town Chinatown Community Association to this list of leaders: Scott Andrews, Commission Chair/John Mohlis, Commission Secretary /Commissioner Charles Wilhoite /Commissioner Aneshka Dickson /Commissioner Tom Kelly / Patrick Quinton, Executive Director Portland Development Commission and Mayor Charlie Hales / Commissioner Nick Fish / Commissioner Dan Saltzman/Commissioner Amanda Fritz/ Commissioner Steve Novick.

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- We request increased funding for the Mobile Crisis Unit and the Police Behavioral Unit.

I included this request in my May 22, 2017 memorandum on Safety and Livability just after Jacob's murder. Addressed to Jacob Brostoff, ONI crime educator it was copied to Peter Englander on the Board of the Association, Ann Sanderson of Venture Portland, and Annie Campos, resident. I brought up the role of Clean and Safe in our neighborhood. I also mentioned that businesses were hiring private police services in record numbers, but such services are used sparingly by residential property owners (weekends in Pacific Towers), if at all. A police officer at that time reported there were six police officers covering Downtown and Old Town. SIX.

- We request that PDC and the City coordinate with Multnomah County to increase funds for drug and alcohol rehabilitation services (including recovery beds) and mental health services for individuals residing in Old Town Chinatown.

In March of 2018 the Governor signs Executive Order No. 18-01 declaring Alcohol and Substance Abuse Addiction a Public health Crisis in Oregon. In October 2018 a Substance Use Policy Agenda is published: *Creating Change through Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery*. Things appears to be rolling along.

Then in 2020 it was reported "Oregon is poised to slash \$69 million from the state's 2021 budget for behavioral health services. In December of 2020 the Governor puts off the \$57M that was to be part of a decriminalization two-step approach - now but one step (unmonitored) - with the other shoe to drop in July of 2022 - so says the Governor. She didn't want to siphon money away from other priorities, saying "that timeline is too hasty." Then there is "*From Sewers to Golf Courses, Cities See Green With New Federal Covid Relief Dollars*" Kaiser Family Foundation article that points out "Duluth, Minnesota, is hiring a social worker to help people with addiction and mental health problems. Pueblo, Colorado, started paying homeless residents to clean city streets.

And Portland?

Finally, there is this promise of \$350M and where exactly is THAT?

Charles Boyle, an aide to Gov. Kate Brown, says she worked with lawmakers this year to secure \$350 million in new behavioral health funding and additional dollars for substance abuse disorder but, he acknowledges, “much work remains to be done.”

<b>OREGON DRUG OVERDOSE DEATHS</b>	
2019: 628	2020: 872
INCREASE: 39%	
<b>OREGON ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION DEATHS</b>	
2019: 197	2020: 337
INCREASE: 71%	

Drgy/Alcohol Death Chart

I don't know what else you need to know.

Cordially,

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