

Oakland Post

"Where there is no vision, the people perish..." Proverbs 29:18

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postnewsgroup.com

Weekly Edition. June 21-27, 2017

54th Year, No. 1

Oakland City Council Adopts New Department of Violence Prevention

The Oakland City Council voted this week to establish a Department of Violence Prevention (DVP) as hundreds of Oaklanders came to City Hall to support the ordinance authored by President Larry Reid and Councilmembers Lynette Gibson McElhaney and Rebecca Kaplan.

The passage of the ordinance means that the city will soon hire a Chief of Violence Prevention, who will be at the same level as the Chiefs of Police and Fire in the City's decision-making structure.

Advocates for the new



Larry Reid



Lynette Gibson McElhaney



Rebecca Kaplan

department believe that an empowered, executive-level leader is the next step in making real the city's commitment to a public health approach as an effective solution to reducing homicides, domestic vio-

lence and the sexual exploitation of children.

"I have been in office for 20 years fighting for public safety for this city," said Reid. "This legislation gives me a renewed sense of hope

that we will stop accepting the violence in our community as 'normal.'

"I thank my colleagues for taking this bold step to truly make Oakland safe and loving for everyone," he said.

In establishing the department, the council has set an aspirational goal to realize an 80 percent reduction in homicides and at least an 80 percent clearance rate for homicides within the next three years.

Richmond had realized a 71 percent reduction after

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Children help put finishing touches on a mural at a lot at 75th and MacArthur Boulevard in Oakland.

Movement for Black Lives Wants Communities to Reclaim Public Land

By Post Staff

Black Lives Matter Bay Area and other organizations gathered on Juneteenth with members of the community in a day of action at the intersection of 75th and MacArthur in Oakland as part of a nationwide call by Movement for Black Lives and Black Land and the Liberation Initiative to reclaim land.

About 80 people came out to the all-Black event after organizers spent time learning what the neighbors both wanted and needed.

The open lot has been transformed into a mini-park, something that brought joy to the community, which includes dozens of children.

"What we learned was that

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Over 150 Attend Interfaith Affordable Housing Luncheon on Warriors Parade Day



The Financial Resources panel, from left to right: SF Foundation FAITHS Program Manager Michelle Myles-Chambers, Oakland Housing Director Michele Byrd speaking, and Director Linda Gardner, Alameda County Development, along with Host Pastor Dr. Kenneth Anderson, at the Interfaith Affordable Housing Luncheon on June 15, at Williams Chapel Baptist Church. Photo by Sue Taylor.

By Sue Taylor

Underscoring the importance and dire emergency of finding affordable housing while 1.5 million people gathered in Oakland to celebrate the Warriors, over 150 people kept their reservations and attended the Interfaith Affordable Housing Luncheon panel discussion and networking on development held at Williams Chapel Baptist Church, the brainchild of the Rev. Dr. Kenneth Anderson.

"We're here to achieve the desired goal of faith-based leaders to partner with developers, attorneys, and architects to provide more affordable housing in Oakland," said Dr. Anderson, Oakland's "Millennial" pastor in his opening remarks.

Dr. Anderson, who leads Williams Chapel Baptist, is well under way on a development project on church land - 88 units of senior affordable housing, with parking, ground level retail and a medical clinic - currently the only senior affordable development in Oakland.

But he also wants to bring together other faith-based or-



The Interfaith Affordable Housing Luncheon hosted by 'Millennial' Pastor Kenneth Anderson on June 15, was attended by over 150 pastors, developers, government officials and individuals interested in affordable housing in Oakland. Celebrating the Warriors started after the forum! Photo by Sue Taylor.

ganizations to do the same and to share the necessary expertise.

Panel presentations included: "Financial Resources: What May Our Community Contribute?" by Michelle Myles-Chambers, of the SF Foundation, Oakland Housing Director Michele Byrd, and Linda Gardner, Director of Alameda County Community Development Agency were the presenters.

These officials are key to accessing necessary funding for affordable housing projects,

In another panel, "Where the Rubber Meets the Road: The Developers," developers with proven track records in affordable housing development made presentations.

Dr. Anderson unequivocally endorsed the panel for Oakland, which is experiencing a frenzy of development right now given the high cost of housing.

"These developers put people over profits," he said,

Gloria Bruce, executive director of the East Bay Housing Organization (EBHO) moderated the panel, which in-

cluded Don Stump, president and CEO of Christian Church Homes with 12 properties in Oakland; Ancel Romero, president of Beacon Communities, Inc., and the developer for the Williams Chapel Project; and, Joshua Simon, executive director of the East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (EBALDC).

The event emphasized that faith-based organizations own plenty of property in the SF Bay Area, but affordable housing development takes exper-

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New Report Looks at Equity in Cannabis Industry

By Nadia Pérez

The Greenlining Institute and UC Berkeley are issuing a new report, "Cannabis Equity Policy" by researcher Leslie Valencia.

The report will be published on Valencia's website (<https://www.lesliev.net/>) on June 28.

This research comes three months after the Oakland City Council modified Oakland's groundbreaking cannabis Equity Permit Program, supported by an analysis of the program by the city's Department of Race and Equity.

Valencia says she views the city's program, which she examines in her study, as a model example of the first step other municipalities can take in attempting to address the issue of equity of access to the cannabis industry.

Prior to the changes that were approved in March, the city's Equity Permit Program reserved half of the cannabis permit programs for residents who were con-



Leslie Valencia

victed on marijuana-related charges or who lived for at least two years within six police beats in East Oakland that saw a high concentration of pot-related arrests.

Now criteria have been expanded to include police beats with high pot arrests in parts of West Oakland and the Fruitvale district.

In the first phase, at least 50 percent of permits will go to equity applicants who either: lived in one of the police beats for 10 of the last 20 years, and has an income below 80 per-

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Kalanick's Departure Gives Uber a New Chance, Says Community Coalition

Greenlining Institute President Orson Aguilar, who helped organize the "No Uber Oakland" campaign, made the following statement in reaction to the announcement that Travis Kalanick has resigned as CEO of Uber:

"Travis Kalanick's departure represents an opportunity that Uber must seize," said Aguilar.

"Uber offers a popular service but simply can't survive in the long run as a company that's disliked and distrusted everywhere you go.

"Uber can show it's serious about making a new start by having a real dialogue with the Oakland community about how it will operate as it enters our city. We've laid out a 10-point platform that can



Orson Aguilar

be a starting point for a productive relationship between Uber and Oakland.

"If Uber is serious about reforming, it should embrace that platform and start a meaningful dialogue with the community about how to implement it."

To read the campaign's demands, go to <http://nouberoakland.org/demands/>

Mother Vera M. Baggett Celebrates 99th Birthday

Mother Vera M. Baggett celebrated her 99th birthday on May 5, with family, friends and members of her 6 a.m. prayer group.

Mother Baggett, as she is known at Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church in West Oakland, has been a member of the church for 75 years and held many leadership positions.

She has a long legacy of caring and praying for individuals and the world at large.

Her celebration was held at the Home of Chicken and Waffles in Jack London Square, attended by loved ones from around the Bay Area.

She was honored by her



Mother Vera M. Baggett

pastor, Rev. Michael Wallace, who presented her with a 99th birthday certificate from Con-

gresswoman Barbara Lee.

Dr. Norma Francisco, a prayer group member for 20 years, read a proclamation from Vice Mayor Annie Campbell-Washington. Joan Fountain-Banks, also a prayer group member, led a responsive reading about Mother Baggett.

Her longtime friend Joyce Allen performed a rendition of "Yes, Jesus Loves Me."

Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf proclaimed May 5 as Vera Baggett Day.

Born in Gandy, Louisiana, she moved to Quincy, CA, a lumber mining town, when she was 8 or 9 years old.

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Thinking About the Sin and Shame of Lynching in America on Juneteenth

OPINION

By Wanda J. Ravernell

"Where there's a will, there's a way," the old folks used to say when facing obstacles, often under their breaths.

"Where there's a tree, there's a rope," is the next line, almost a rejoinder, acknowledging the constancy of unpredictable trouble, an expression fraught with grief, fear and loss.

One that a Black child born in the North in the 1950s didn't know referred to the South's "Strange Fruit."

I am not sure if you can see it, the rope, on the altar, honoring and remembering the victims of white supremacy, lynched individually or in pairs or groups, these descendants of enslaved people whose only (proven) crime was to be Black.

They were all killed by "person or persons unknown," yet for decades after the Emancipation Proclamation, lynchings were very public events often occurring on the courthouse lawn.

Town newspapers sometimes announced the day and time the spectacle would take place and trains were specially scheduled to transport the spectators: men, women, and even small children. Newspapers covered lynchings in graphic detail.

Photographs showed desecrated bodies of Black people surrounded by triumphant white spectators. Again, "the persons unknown."

Black people certainly knew who terrorized them. The memory of such horrors



The rope is part of the altar for Omnia Institute's 'Ritual of Remembrance' Juneteenth celebration on June 10 at Lake Merritt. Photo by Tobaji Stewart.

haunted Black communities, a hobbling fear lasting generations. The frequency of the lynchings would stimulate the Great Migration, surging right after World War I.

The most renown lynching was of 14-year-old Emmett Till in 1955, and the blood lust of the South appeared to wane under the withering scorn of the world.

But the lynching of the Civil Rights workers in 1963 revealed otherwise as the search for their bodies in the river turned up many more, defiled, unidentified, unburied, un-mourned.

Like the tabloids showing the victorious crowds, social media in 2017 allows us to see 'lynchings' in real time.

There are so many, I honestly don't have the heart to

keep up.

Two weeks ago I glanced at an account on Facebook. Below three school portraits of impossibly young Black males, the headline was almost a taunt: "Did you know these youth were killed by the police this week? ...Neither did we."

Then, on Monday I received another Facebook notice of a pregnant, mentally-challenged Black woman in Seattle killed by police in front of her other children.

I am doing my best, as our people say, to stay or be "woke," but I confess I did not have the stomach to read further.

It is 2017, and lynching not only continues, it is increasing.

Like the mobs of the old

days, police become judge, jury and executioner. Hidden under police department policy, the names of "persons unknown" are not released until the victim's memory (ex. Mike Brown) is sullied.

On the rare occasion that police are actually tried for murder, lackluster prosecution ensures that they are seldom convicted.

And now it's not just the police, but individual white men who decide they want to kill Black people just because they feel like it. Timothy Caughman, a homeless Black man in New York, was stabbed to death in March by a man who came from Maryland for that express purpose.

In the 1920s and 1930s, not 'giving ground' to a white person, like refusing to step off the sidewalk or even bumping into a white girl while running to catch a train, were lynchable offenses, and it appears they are again.

Five days before his graduation in May, Bowie State College student Richard Collins III was stabbed to death while waiting for an Uber ride for refusing to "yield ground" to a white University of Maryland student.

"Where there's a will, there's a way; where there's a tree there's a rope," the old folks said.

I had been directed by spirit to make a noose with the coarse rope, but I didn't know how. I am glad I didn't. Symbolically, it would knot the possibility inherent in the third line, the last utterance of this trinity.

"Where there's life, there's hope." Yes. And I hope that the ancestors understood.



Shown (L to R): Judge John Sutter, "Jack London" George Rowan Jr. and Paul Cobb.

Community Seeks Waterfront Park to Save View of the Bay

Hundreds of community members have signed a petition to the board of the East Bay Regional Park District requesting that they purchase or lease property near the Port of Oakland for a waterfront park to preserve a Bay view for the public.

"Jack London" George Rowan Jr. presented the petition, which has been signed by over 700 people, to the district prior to the June 6 board meeting.

According to Judge John Sutter, the property would

blend in beautifully with the Bay Trail. Without a park, the public would face "a wall of motels," with no waterfront view for Oaklanders and visitors to the city.

The piece of property, known as 1441-1551 Embarcadero, is located next to the Executive Inn at Brooklyn Basin.

"The people of Oakland and our guests deserve a 'water view.' The waterfront park would be an attraction to Oakland and the Port of Oakland for future generations," said Post publisher Paul Cobb.

A Jobs and Justice Budget



By Rebecca Kaplan, Oakland City Councilmember At-Large

dealers out of business.

And, we must build a future of jobs and justice by investing in youth summer jobs, and taking this program seriously.

During our summers, many young people are not provided safe and productive places to be. This can result in young people getting endangered by or recruited into crime.

And, when our young adults don't have access to the jobs they need, this hurts their own immediate finances, and their long-term job prospects.

For too long, the Oakland administration has treated this vital program as an optional charity case — instead of as a real, ongoing, staffed part of the City of Oakland budget, the youth jobs program has depended on the rise and fall of the inclination of the mayor for private fundraising.

And, last year, by failing to complete required paperwork on time, the Oakland Administration lost our community over \$2 million in youth jobs funding from the Federal government — funds we will never get back.

We need to fund this program and make clear that we want it to have ongoing support so that our young people are provided better opportunities.

That is why Councilmember Brooks and I, along with Community Coalition, have submitted a budget proposal, "Community Coalition Budget," based on these goals.

The Community Coalition Budget addresses all the above mentioned goals and values.

I hope the citizens of Oakland will also support our budget by coming out to the special City Council Meeting at City Hall in Council Chambers on Monday, June 26 beginning at 5:30 p.m. to speak in support of the "Community Coalition Budget", to make sure the City funds these vital needs in order to create a prosperous and humane Oakland.

In order to strengthen quality of life and opportunity for all of our communities in Oakland, we need to look not only at what we say, but also whether we put our money where our mouths are.

When the Oakland city government adopts a budget, deciding which programs to expand, which to cut, which to eliminate and which to add, these actions show where our values really are.

We must adopt a City of Oakland budget that gives real priority to jobs and justice.

This means doing more to help support our homeless neighbors get the services and support they need, and protecting our vital career centers and job training programs from cuts.

It means that we should stop wasting so much time and money having police stop and search people — mostly Black people — for no particular reason — and instead devote these resources to programs that uplift and support our communities, and respond to growing problems of blight, potholes, and illegal dumping that disproportionately impact parts of Oakland.

This means cutting the extra police academy the mayor added, and putting the money towards stopping the rampant violence in our communities. For example, we must crack down on gun violence and illegal gun dealing.

However, the mayor's proposed budget not only "does not include any additional resources for efforts to crack down on gun violence and illegal gun dealing," it also does not renew the funding for the staff who are specifically assigned to this important task.

We need to keep and strengthen our tracking down of illegal guns and putting gun

New Report Looks at Equity in Cannabis Industry

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cent of the city's average median income; or were arrested in Oakland and convicted of a cannabis-related crime prior to 1997.

Non-equity applicants who wish to apply during this phase will be given priority if they agree to serve as "incubators" for approved equity applicants, which entails providing free real estate or rent.

The second phase of the permit program will start after \$3.4 million in cannabis business tax revenue is collected, which will be used to offer no-interest loans and other assistance to equity applicants.

Once that phase begins, there will be no restrictions

on who can apply for a cannabis permit.

Valencia's research also details the disproportionate impact of the War on Drugs on communities of color.

"What is unique to Oakland is that there was a parallel, illegal but tolerated business environment for other people involved in the cannabis trade," she wrote in the report.

"Following the California legalization of medical cannabis in 1996, the Oakland cannabis advocacy community, which is predominantly white, began experimenting semi-openly with various cultivation, manufacturing and distribution business models."

She documents the growth and impact of the Cannabis Industry across the country, recommending that cities create "economic opportunities (in) the cannabis industry, specifically for low-income communities of color that may have been - either directly or indirectly - negatively affected by the war on drugs."

According to Valencia, the continued growth of the industry, if not addressed, could further negatively impact vulnerable communities.

"The regulations in California set a five-year ban on large cultivation, which is considered over 10,000 sq. ft. Once the ban expires, well invested corporations will be able to easily open large cul-

tivation sites while paying fewer taxes than their smaller counterparts. This will make it harder for independent businesses to stay open when having to compete with these large companies," she said in an interview with the Post.

Access to real-estate and housing are also a concern. A study found companies concentrating in low-income areas, while wealthy neighborhoods had the power to exclude these types of businesses.

"If commercial real-estate prices in a district spike, housing prices will as well. Introducing these businesses into neighborhoods that are historically poor or disadvantaged will cause the cost of living there to rise," she said.

Movement for Black Lives

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they had never had a park," said organizer Cara Cotton, a second-grade teacher at Ile Omode school and an East Oakland native.

Community members put up four semi-permanent structures, Cotton said, including a play structure, two benches made from cinder blocks and a mural by Richmond painter Malik Seneferu. There is also an altar with candles on the top and books about Africans in America and a biography of Nat Turner at the bottom.

"The idea was to make it a memorial for community ... a way to connect Black people in the area with their history," said Cotton. Accompanied by some of her students, she poured libation and asked those present to recite the names of their ancestors.

According to lead organizer Chinyere Tutashinda, of the BlackOUT Collective, "Land and capital has continued to flow out of Black communities while Black people are displaced through cycles of police

and vigilante terror, gentrification, incarceration, and economic forces; and it is time for us to take stand."

The movement to reclaim land has a special meaning for Oakland, said Mitchell. "Historically, Oakland has been a city marked widely by Black home ownership," said Nikita Mitchell. "But through the mechanisms of capitalism, Black people are being displaced from these historically Black spaces through banks and developers greedily snatching and flipping these properties for greater profit."

Across the country, hundreds of individuals joined the day of action — in Oakland and Vallejo, CA; Chicago, IL; Atlanta, GA; New Orleans, LA; Kansas City, MO; Detroit, MI and several other cities — to put land-based reparations back into the national conversation.

For more information on the initiative, visit www.blacklandandliberation.org or contact Chinyere Tutashinda at chinyeretutashinda@gmail.com

Interfaith Affordable Housing Luncheon

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tise and time, and shared efforts make sense.

Attendees wanted to know when Measure KK and Measure A1 funds would be available.

"We are developing policy and procedure as fast as we can," said Alameda County's Linda Gardner.

Oakland's Director of Housing Michele Byrd, when

Department of Violence Prevention

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adopting a similar initiative, according to supporters. The new department will also establish a victims' support unit to combat sex trafficking and domestic violence and help families with cold case advocacy.

"When Oaklanders generously passed the Measure Z Safety and Services tax in

pushed by Post publisher Paul Cobb, said individuals and groups can "call me directly."

"We will be giving classes for first-time homebuyers, and I'm willing to talk with ministers on this. Let's call it a constructive form of 'speed-dating'," she said.

This article is part of a continuing series on Bay Area faith-based affordable housing development.

2014, they entrusted the City with \$25 million per year to reduce violence on the condition that we would give equal weight to policing and violence prevention," said Councilmember McElhaney.

"(This week) we took a major step forward in fulfilling that promise to the voters," she said.

Mother Vera M. Baggett Celebrates 99th Birthday

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showed love and compassion to the needy by passing out food, clothing, and the New Testament every Friday at Mt. Zion's food pantry.

Until two years ago, she visited rest homes monthly, taking the elderly gifts and the gospel.

Even now, she gets up every morning at 6 a.m. to lead a telephone prayer group that she started 30 years ago.

Mother Baggett has travelled extensively to places such as Jerusalem, Australia, Panama, Hawaii, and South Korea as well as all over the U.S. for church conventions.