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Adams: Portland can be 'hub' for sustainable development

Mayor's State of the City speech sidesteps controversial recall questions

BY JIM REDDEN

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Mayor Sam Adams repeatedly stressed Portland's history of sustainable planning and development as the key to its future at his second State of the City speech.

Adams told City Club of Portland members that the city should be a leader in sustainable development and environmentally sound practices.

"There's no reason why Portland can't become the hub of sustainable development in this country and export our expertise and technology around the world," Adams said.

Although Adams was warmly received by the members of the long-running civic club, he could not escape the fallout from a sex scandal that has dogged him for most of his first term. While he spoke, supporters of the second recall campaign circulated petitions outside the hotel to force him out of office. During the question-and-answer period, one member asked Adams if people should support the recall so voters could decide whether to keep him as mayor, now that they know he lied during the 2008 election about having sex with a teenager.

Adams did not answer the question directly, but said that he has apologized for his lies and believes it is up to the voters to decide whether to demand a recall election.

Weathering an economic storm

Most of Adams' speech focused on the need to create jobs in what the mayor Adams called a "100-year economic storm," referring to the recession that has seen Portland's unemployment rate rise above 10 percent.

Adams repeatedly said the City Council was focused on the need to create jobs, and he listed several initiatives to do that, most concerning sustainable development. Examples included the Clean Energy Work Portland program that aimed to create 10,000 jobs by weatherizing 100,000 homes, and the creation of a citywide streetcar system that will use cars built by Oregon Ironworks of Clackamas.

Adams also announced several new loan programs he said would help local businesses, including a \$33 million Sustainable Development Fund he said was partly funded with federal stimulus dollars and a Portland Small Business Fund, which he said was started with \$500,000 in city funds. He challenged local banks to match the contribution, saying that several of them had already said they had money to loan.

In addition, Adams said that he supported Police Commissioner Dan Saltzman's efforts to make public Multnomah County grand jury records of its deliberations on the most recent fatal police shooting.

Adams declined to say, however, whether he believed the mounted police horse patrol should be cut from next year's city budget as proposed by Police Chief Rosie Sizer, saying he wanted to hear from the public before finalizing his proposed budget.

Several controversial issues did not come up during the event, including Adams' preferences for the size of the Columbia River Crossing bridge on Interstate 5, stalled development in the South Waterfront area and Commissioner Nick Fish's recent efforts to legalize and regulate homeless camping in Portland.

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