



Meara McLaughlin
MusicPortland Board of Directors

Dear Meara and the MusicPortland Board of Directors,

I am writing to express serious concern over the dangerous rhetoric used by board member Jamie Dunphy and your supporters during the September 3 event organized by MusicPortland. During the meeting, there were mentions of using "firebombs" in protest of our proposal to build a music venue in the Central Eastside, a project meant to bring Portlanders together through the love of music. This language is unacceptable, fanatical, and rooted in racism.

Colas Development Group and Beam Development are two locally-owned, progressive family businesses committed to investing in Portland. Our proposed venue aims to bring joy and entertainment to the city while creating hundreds of jobs and supporting local businesses.

Our engagement with MusicPortland began over two years ago, in good faith and with a respect for Portland's music community. Yet, your team continues to spread misinformation, which has now escalated into threatening rhetoric. This harms the local music scene we all support. We believe we all want the best for Portland, but racially charged threats of violence have no place in our city. I urge you to research the impact of using the term "firebomb" and its significance to the Black community. To support your education, see a few of the many examples of firebombs decimating the black community:

Tulsa Race Massacre (Tulsa, OK, 1921) | The Rosewood Massacre (Rosewood, FL 1923) |
Martin Luther King Jr.'s wife and child were inside when his home was bombed (Montgomery, AL 1956) |
The Black Market Firebombing (Bloomington, IN 1968) | The MOVE Bombing (Philadelphia, PA 1985)

Firebombing has a painful history in this country, particularly during the Civil Rights Movement, when it was used to terrorize those fighting for justice. To invoke this method now, in response to a music venue project, dishonors the memory of those who fought for equality. Words matter; we expect more from leaders working to build a better Portland.

In his statement on 09/06/24 to the Business Journal, Dunphy said he responded with "dark-humored truth" at Tuesday's rally. This reveals your organization's willful disregard for the gravity of the comments made. There is no room for humor of any kind when referencing violence.

Colas and Beam have met all city development requirements and received approval for the project. This venue presents a significant opportunity for Portland's music industry, yet MusicPortland has actively opposed it, limiting opportunities for local residents. It's hypocritical for your organization to say, "ignore the people who make up the economic and cultural lifeblood of our city," Jamie Dunphy's words, yet support a single venue backed by AEG, a multinational multibillion-dollar corporation owned by an oil tycoon. We support competition in the music ecosystem and have publicly supported the position that two venues will create even more opportunities for musicians and economic development for our City.

Jamie Dunphy's recent remarks are the culmination of his continued lies and demonstrate a pattern of recklessness. MusicPortland is complicit in fostering an unsafe environment. Colas Development Group has faced racially charged threats before, but it is appalling to hear such rhetoric from a member of your board. Failure to denounce these remarks, especially involving "firebombs," is unacceptable.

We call on you, the leadership team, and the board of directors for MusicPortland to publicly reject this violent racist rhetoric and denounce Jamie Dunphy's irresponsible pattern of misinformation.

Regards,

Andrew Colas, President & CEO, Colas Development Group
Jonathan Malsin, Principal, Beam Development