

The Oregonian

Smoking ban: Amanda Fritz says 'peer pressure,' not police, will enforce Portland policy

By Andrew Theen
June 15, 2015

Updated: This post was updated with more information about city enforcement and signs.

Portland's citywide parks smoking ban begins July 1, but Commissioner Amanda Fritz already wants to snuff out significant consequences for would-be offenders.

Fritz, who introduced the smoking ban this year, is set to propose several amendments Wednesday that would remove the possibility of a misdemeanor fine or park exclusion.

"It was never my intent for people to go to jail for smoking," Fritz said Monday.

She said that after discussions with the Portland Police Bureau, she became concerned that violators who earned exclusions but refused to comply could face unduly strict consequences.

The purpose of the smoking ban is to promote public health and protect Portland's parks and natural areas, she said. "To me, smoking in parks is like littering," Fritz said. "We don't expect people to go to jail for littering."

As the policy is currently written, lawbreakers would face a potential misdemeanor citation for violating the smoking ban in any of the city's 200 parks and nature areas. Repeat offenders could face exclusion.

Fritz is proposing an amendment that instead says smokers "shall be required to leave the park" for the rest of the day. Enforcement, to the degree there is any, would fall strictly to park rangers. And they would essentially be limited to asking smokers to leave.

In February, Commissioner Dan Saltzman was the only one to vote no, calling the policy "simply unenforceable." The ban, which also applies to e-cigarettes, vaping products and all other tobacco forms, gave police a reason to "hassle somebody for smoking," he said.

Fritz said the amendments address that issue by restricting enforcement to park rangers.

She added that the proposed amendments won't make the policy toothless. "People generally follow the rules whether they like them or not," Fritz said, saying "peer pressure" will be one method of enforcing the rule.

She also noted, with recreational marijuana becoming legal July 1, police will enforce the ban on public use.

Parks officials budgeted \$9,500 for signs and decals in city parks on the new rules. According to a bureau spokesman, the city will start installing 800 signs in July and will add stickers to 200 existing signs.

Portland's minimum wage: \$15-an-hour supporters plan Wednesday rally, 'glad' Tina Kotek revived issue

By Andrew Theen
June 16, 2015

Advocates will rally in front of Portland City Hall Wednesday to push for better wages for the 2,000 city employees who earn less than \$15-an-hour and downtown janitorial workers in the private sector who struggle to make a living.

Organizers with 15 Now PDX, the advocacy group that's spent more than a year pushing for higher wages in Portland and at the State Legislature, said they'd already planned the rally before House Speaker Tina Kotek introduced her minimum wage policy Monday.

Kotek, a Portland Democrat, wants to raise Oregon's minimum wage to \$13-an-hour by 2018. The policy also lifts a state law that prevents cities from setting their own minimum wages.

Justin Norton-Kertson, 15 Now PDX spokesman, said he's happy the minimum wage issue is reemerging in Salem "We're glad that she (Kotek) is putting this forward if for no other reason than it's keeping the conversation going," he said.

Wednesday's rally at 11:30 a.m. will focus attention in part on the 2,000 temporary workers, largely in Portland's parks bureau, who still make less than \$15-an-hour. Earlier this year, Portland City Council ensured all full-time city workers and contractors earned that wage.

Norton-Kertson said he's heartened Kotek's policy would lift local preemption, allowing more expensive areas of the state like Portland to set higher wages.

15 Now organizers are closely watching the policy in Salem to see how it progresses. If lawmakers pass the legislation, he said, that will prompt a reevaluation of a proposed 2016 ballot measure to raise the state wage to \$15-an-hour by 2019.

Norton-Kertson said it's too early to tell how that might play out.

The Portland Tribune

Council moves to encourage home 'deconstruction' by hand

By Jim Redden

June 16, 2015

The City Council signaled its sympathy with residents concerned about the growing pace of residential demolitions on June 3, when it unanimously approved a pilot program to encourage deconstruction by hand instead.

Mayor Charlie Hales and the other members of the council all said they want to make deconstruction mandatory when the marketplace can support the influx of surplus materials.

"The community has shown a strong shared interest in moving in this direction, and the council shares that urgency," Hales said before voting in support of the resolution he introduced.

Developers say there are many questions that should be answered first, including whether requiring deconstruction will increase housing costs at a time when affordability is becoming a growing concern.

"Deconstruction can cost 40 to 60 percent more than mechanical demolition, and we need to ask whether we should be increasing housing costs now," said Jeff Fish, owner of Fish Construction.

Before the vote, Hales also noted the program is just the latest step the council has taken in response to complaints about the increasing number of relatively small houses being torn down and replaced with larger, more expensive homes throughout the city. The council previously required developers to give nearby residents more notice of planned demolitions, in part to allow neighbors and others to determine if they want to buy and preserve the properties.

Hales went on to say the city is just beginning to study whether and how the city can set limits on the size and character of replacement houses to make sure they fit into the surrounding neighborhood.

"Portland has mile after mile of great old houses, and it's such a treasure. But it is a way of life that is under attack now and it's going to get stronger," said Hales, adding that residential demolitions should be rare and considerate of neighbors.

The resolution directs the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability to create a program to train and encourage developers to deconstruct homes targeted for redevelopment, a process that allows more materials to be salvaged for reuse than demolition by heavy equipment. The council amended the resolution to require BPS to report on the progress of the program in January 2016 instead of September 2016, as originally proposed.

The resolution was supported by the Home Builders Association of Metro Portland. Activists with the grassroots United Neighborhoods for Reform urged the council to make the timeline shorter than had been proposed, to strengthen support of voluntary deconstruction, and to set a goal of making deconstruction the way Portland demolishes houses by fall of 2016.

Experts says that when a house is deconstructed by hand, 50 to 75 percent of it can be recovered. Much of that material can be reused, including lumber for remodeling projects. In comparison, only 30 to 50 percent of a house can be recovered when it is demolished. Much of that lumber can only be burned for fuel because it is so damaged.

Fish is not sure those estimates are accurate, however. He recently had a house targeted for development deconstructed by hand to learn more about the process. According to Fish, much of the wood could not be easily reused because it had dried out with age or was covered with lead-based paint.

"A lot of it ended up being burned anyway," Fish said.

Fish added that deconstructing a house reduces the amount of hazardous materials released into the air, such as asbestos and lead-based paint chips.

"There are definitely some environmental benefits that need to be considered," Fish said.

The pilot program is expected to start with deconstruction training classes this fall. It will also include grants funded by \$50,000 from the Solid Waste Management Fund Reserves maintained by BPS.

Council set to adopt \$3.7 billion budget

*By Jim Redden
June 15, 2015*

The City Council is scheduled to formally adopt Portland's next budget on Thursday.

According to an ordinance submitted by Mayor Charlie Hales, the budget for the fiscal year that begins on July 1 totals \$3.7 billion.

Hales has described the budget as back to basics, emphasizing street maintenance, safety improvements and increased services for young people.

The ordinance can be read [here here](#).

The budget includes an increase of \$49 million in general fund dollars, the source of funding the council has the most control over.

The council has approved \$20 million of that increase for transportation maintenance and safety improvement projects. Those projects include \$4.69 million for safety improvements on 122nd Avenue that TriMet has said will result in frequent bus service being scheduled along that route.

The council also has approved \$2 million requested by Hales to expand opportunities for young people at community centers. The program began with free admission last weekend at the Matt Dishman Community Center operated by Portland Parks & Recreation at 77 N.E. Knott St.

Free programs will expand to the PP&R's East Portland, St. Johns and Mount Scott community centers later this summer as well.

"We have a crisis of gun violence and youth violence in our community, and one answer to that is to get upstream in the lives of our kids," Hales says. "That means letting them pick up a soccer ball or a paint brush, a pen or a guitar, a job skill or a résumé. The more of these safe, positive activities we can provide for them, the better."

The budget also includes millions to start planning the renovation of the Portland Building that houses city bureaus. The total cost is estimated at \$175 million.