

## **The Oregonian**

# **Crude Oil Trains Increasingly Travel Through Portland, Alarming Regulators**

*By Gordon Friedman  
April 6, 2019*

Travel along the Willamette River's edge a few miles northwest of downtown Portland and chances are they'll be there: dozens of rail cars filled with Canadian tar sands crude oil.

Parked in a rail yard a stone's throw from Forest Park, the tank cars got there by traveling through the Columbia River Gorge, then winding through Portland neighborhoods, sometimes just yards from homes.

Their destination is a terminal owned by Zenith Energy, where the crude is unloaded into massive storage tanks and later pumped onto seagoing vessels bound for refineries and factories.

With those operations, Zenith has, in little more than a year, transformed the riverside terminal in the heart of the city's industrial district from a sleepy asphalt operation into Oregon's multimillion-gallon crude oil spigot.

Though the diluted Canadian tar sands crude that Zenith handles is less explosive than some other forms of crude, it carries greater toxic inhalation hazards. A train derailment could spill sludgy oil onto private property or into a river. The oil is highly flammable and its toxic vapors are a danger to human lungs and eyes.

To understand the consequences of the changes at Zenith, a reporter for The Oregonian/OregonLive spent a month poring over thousands of pages of records from local, state and federal regulators. He interviewed officials working at nine oversight agencies, toured the Portland terminal and talked with Zenith Energy executives.

That analysis found regulators – and one in particular, Scott Smith, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality official overseeing oil spills preparedness – are alarmed that Zenith Energy has singlehandedly and without advance notice dramatically increased crude-by-rail shipments to Oregon's most populous city and turned the state into a crude oil exporter.

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler and other city officials, who share many residents' view that the transport of crude oil through and from the city is anathema to Portland's eco-friendly ethos, oppose Zenith's activities. But federal commerce protections and the state building code leave them powerless to stop it.

The Oregonian/OregonLive also found regulatory agencies operate largely in the dark when it comes to Canadian oil sands. That opacity is perfectly legal on Zenith's part.

Zenith said in statements provided to The Oregonian/OregonLive that the company has a pristine safety record and takes health and environmental hazards seriously.

Company vice presidents said construction underway at the terminal, a multimillion-dollar project to build a new and bigger facility for unloading rail cars, is not an expansion, as characterized by activists and previous news reports, but a "modernization project."

The construction, approved under permits the city granted five years ago, will allow Zenith to unload as many as 44 rail cars simultaneously – up from the current capability of 12. Grady

Reamer, company vice president for U.S. operations, said that expansion has more to do with avoiding railyard usage fees as cars wait to unload than upping the terminal's productivity.

Millions of barrels of crude oil are handled safely every day in the United States, and Zenith's upgrades make the Portland terminal safer, the company said. Indeed, construction of the new unloading facility includes updated fire-suppression systems and worker safety measures.

During interviews, Shannon Caldwell, Zenith's vice president of health, safety and regulatory compliance, and Reamer said they hope to eventually make the Portland terminal the Northwest's premier biofuels hub. They acknowledged, however, that Zenith's business today and for the foreseeable future is crude oil. They also downplayed or denied crude oil's risks.

There have been no reported spills, leaks or other accidents at the terminal while under Zenith's ownership, nor by trains transporting oil from Canada to Portland. Regulators say Zenith is abiding by all rules and laws they enforce.

#### ONCE A 'GHOST TOWN'

Zenith's terminal, situated among the so-called tank farms of Northwest Front Avenue, has been in service since the 1947, when it opened as the Willbridge Asphalt Refinery. The 48-acre facility changed hands half a dozen times over the decades and was purchased in 2014 by CorEnergy Infrastructure Trust for \$40 million. CorEnergy leased the facility to a subsidiary of Arc Logistics.

Houston-based Zenith – which is owned by Warburg Pincus, a private equity firm run by ex-Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner – bought the Arc subsidiary, giving Zenith the opening to also purchase the Portland terminal. It did so in December 2017, for \$61 million.

Crucially, the site is Zenith's only West Coast facility, giving it access to Asian oil markets and West Coast refineries.

Previous terminal operators had done a modest business leasing the facility's 1.5 million barrels of tank space, business records show, but they weren't exporting crude oil. In emails between regulators, a state air quality inspector named George Yun wrote that the last time he had inspected the facility, when still run by Arc Logistics, it was "practically a ghost town with everything shut down."

Not anymore.

Once Zenith took over, regulators observed an uptick of crude oil "unit trains" – trains carrying a single commodity, sometimes a hundred cars long – in the Portland area.

"Full new crude oil unit train at Zenith and tanker at dock today," Richard Franklin, the Environmental Protection Agency's oil spills coordinator in Oregon, wrote in April 2018.

Officials with knowledge of railroad activities say the trains headed to Zenith chug southwest from Alberta, Canada through Montana and follow the Columbia River through Washington toward Portland. They most often come on BNSF line via the Washington side of the Columbia River Gorge, the officials said, and cross the river near Interstate 5, roll by the Smith & Bybee Wetlands and through the neighborhoods of St. Johns, Portsmouth and University Park before arriving at the BNSF railyard next to Zenith's terminal. BNSF and Union Pacific representatives declined to detail routes traveled by their trains to The Oregonian/OregonLive.

As the rail traffic increased so did tankship activity. In early 2018, regulators began tracking oil tanker berthings within the Port of Portland. They homed in on vessels that tied up at a dock owned by Chevron, which Zenith contracts with to load ships.

Once laden, the vessels sailed for places like Rizhao, China; Yeosu, South Korea; and Martinez, California, according to shipping data. The tankers generally hold about 200,000 barrels.

Zenith says it completed one marine shipment in 2017 and 10 in 2018. The pace is much faster this year, Zenith acknowledged, with five tankships filled in the first three months.

The activity essentially created Oregon's crude oil export market. The value of crude exports from Oregon in 2017 reached just \$2,523, according to U.S. Census Bureau data. In 2018, the figure topped \$71 million. According to Smith, Zenith is the only business in Oregon facilitating crude oil exports.

Zenith representatives say the company is not an exporter but a "liquids storage company" with no control over products' destination. Zenith cannot load tankships alone, and must pump crude oil from its storage tanks through pipes beneath Front Avenue to Chevron's dock to fill ships and barges.

When oil-bearing rail cars first arrived at the terminal under Zenith's ownership, they were loaded with raw bitumen oil sands, a peanut butter-like oil that must be heated or diluted with solvents to make it flow. Shipping vessel records indicate the bitumen oil likely ended up in China and South Korea.

Reamer said the bitumen exports were carried out under a contract entered into by the terminal's previous owner, which Zenith did not renew because its business plan had changed.

Since then, the oil arriving on tank cars is processed bitumen, to which a solvent has been added in Canada. It's known in the industry as "dilbit" – diluted bitumen.

#### 'ACUTE TOXICITY'

Zenith's dilbit is extremely dangerous according to its manufacturer, MEG Energy.

A technical document prepared by MEG that describes its hazards, called a safety data sheet, explains the oil is "extremely flammable" and that its vapors "may form explosive mixtures with air."

The oil also contains benzene, exposure to which can cause cancer, and hydrogen sulfide, a gas which if inhaled can cause breathing problems at low concentrations and, at higher intensities, loss of consciousness or respiratory failure.

Other kinds of crude commonly transported by rail, such as sweet crude drawn from wells in the Dakotas, are extremely flammable and may contain hydrogen sulfide.

But Smith, the spills regulator, said the chemical's presence in dilbit oil presents a "unique" inhalation and exposure hazard. The technical safety document for sweet crude, for example, calls it an "aspiration hazard" and an "eye irritant." The safety sheet for Zenith's dilbit, by contrast, highlights its "acute toxicity" and the possibility of "serious eye damage."

In a statement, Zenith said, "We disagree with the statement that there are additional hazards brought on by Canadian dilbit." It said the hydrogen sulfide levels in its oil are below exposure limits, and that dangerous levels of the chemical have never been detected by sensors worn on all its workers' lapels.

Caldwell said the chance of hydrogen sulfide in Zenith's oil harming a bystander in the event of a spill is "minuscule." "It's not like it's going to overcome a neighborhood," he said. Caldwell likened the safety sheets to an insurance policy for oil manufacturers and said their recommendations are "subjective."

Dan Serres, conservation director of Columbia Riverkeeper, is not reassured. He said the hydrogen sulfide risk is “really concerning” for people who live or work near railroads. “I don’t take solace in Zenith projecting overconfidence about who could be affected,” Serres said.

A Multnomah County analysis found that one in four county residents live within a half mile of an oil rail line, the distance generally thought to be the danger zone in the event of a fire. Large portions of those residents are people of color.

How exactly the oil traveling to Zenith would behave during a spill is unclear and would depend on where a spill were to take place, the amount of crude let loose and wind conditions. Hydrogen sulfide fumes emitted by the oil are heavier than air and are most dangerous in low areas unless whipped up by gusty winds.

Several real-life spills show what is possible if the worst were to happen to a train bound for Zenith.

In 2010, a pipeline carrying dilbit burst into a tributary of the Kalamazoo River in Michigan, spilling a million gallons and contaminating vast stretches of waterway. Because dilbit contains heavy tar sands particles, it can sink in water, complicating cleanups, and did so on the Kalamazoo. Remediation of the site took five years and cost more than \$1.2 billion. More than 300 people reported effects of hydrogen sulfide inhalation, though none were hospitalized.

Oregon had its most notable accident in 2016. A Union Pacific train carrying sweet crude derailed in the Columbia River Gorge town of Mosier, caught fire and sent noxious smoke clouds high into the air. No one was injured, but more than 10,000 gallons of oil spilled into the river and city sewers.

Hal Gard, railroad administrator at the Oregon Department of Transportation, said the accident could have been much worse. Most worrisome, he said, is the track which the Mosier train derailed from had been inspected shortly before the crash and appeared in good condition.

“That’s the part that keeps me up at night,” Gard said. “The things you just don’t know.”

The thought of a dilbit spill into the Columbia or Willamette makes him shudder.

“The crude, if it’s from Alberta, it sinks in the river,” Gard said. “My god, what happens to our fish?”

“I feel like they’re playing Russian roulette,” said Serres, the river activist. “We’ve already seen what happens when we lose – in Mosier – and they seem willing to continue gambling.”

## ACCIDENTS HAPPEN

Freight train derailments are common in Oregon. In the last decade, locomotives and their hauls derailed 77 times in Multnomah County alone, federal data shows.

Those trains often carry hazardous materials, much of it traveling through Oregon rather than stopping here.

In June 2018, for example, a Union Pacific train with 56 hazmat cars derailed at a faulty switch in Portland. Three hazmat cars crashed, but none ruptured. The accident report does not say what substance was in the cars.

That train derailed while traveling 7 miles per hour. Oil trains thundering through the Columbia River Gorge approach 50 miles per hour.

Major accidents, though exceedingly rare, are devastating. In 2013, an oil train derailment in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec caused a fire and explosion that killed 47 people. That train was carrying sweet crude, which is more explosive than Zenith's variety.

Transporting oil by rail is more dangerous than by pipeline, according to a 2018 report published by the International Association for Energy Economics. Its author found pipeline spills are more common but railway spills tend to be more disastrous. He concluded the risk of rail is "noticeably larger" than pipeline shipments.

Serres said it's simple math: "Anything that makes oil trains more frequent makes the potential for derailments also more frequent."

'WE DON'T KNOW'

Regulators and first responders say they operate with little information about the movement of crude oil through Oregon. The state requires far less disclosure than some of its neighbors.

Railroads provide reports on crude shipments to the Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office but they are "very generic and very basic," said Chad Hawkins, an assistant chief deputy marshal. BNSF's report, for example, shows it hauls zero to three trains carrying at least 1 million gallons of crude through Multnomah County each week.

The actual number of shipments is unknown, as are their origins and destinations, Hawkins said. No one verifies the companies' reports.

Oil terminals in Washington, by contrast, must report rail shipments to regulators 24 hours in advance.

John Johnson, administrator of the Oregon Department of Transportation's rail division, said his inspectors operate with almost no knowledge of oil-by-rail activities.

"We don't know what a lot of the trains are carrying or where the cars come from," Johnson said. "We don't inquire into that."

But the department does maintain figures showing crude-by-rail shipments. When pressed, Johnson provided data showing 2,836 crude oil tank cars, with a capacity of 84 million gallons, passed through the BNSF railyard next to Zenith in 2018.

Just two crude-bearing cars travelled there in 2016, according to additional data obtained by The Oregonian/OregonLive from other officials. That data gives a full accounting of the vast quantities of crude oil that passed through Oregon last year.

Union Pacific trains, for example, hauled more than 7,000 cars carrying 210 million gallons along the railroad's route from the Columbia Gorge in Eastern Oregon to a junction in Portland's Portsmouth neighborhood. BNSF trains took more than 170 million gallons along track beside the Deschutes and Klamath rivers.

Officials with knowledge of railroad activities said the shipments consist almost exclusively of Canadian dilbit.

Franklin, the EPA inspector, said an oil train barreling down its track at full speed is something to behold.

"When you see a whole unit train of oil cars it's like, woah, look at that," he said.

"If we know what they're bringing in," Franklin said, "that helps all of us."

## NOT PREPARED

Assessments by the city of Portland and Multnomah County say emergency personnel are underprepared for a major oil train fire.

A Multnomah County analyst, for example, found oil trains' dangerousness has "eclipsed" local response capabilities. "Emergency responders do not have adequate equipment to respond to a large scale (oil-by-rail) event," his report says.

Portland's emergency action plan states, "Local capacity to fight fires and clean hazardous material spills is limited."

First responders interviewed for this story said they feel ready.

Oil trains are "a big deal" for the environment and public safety, said Lt. Shon Christensen, hazmat coordinator for Portland Fire & Rescue.

"But am I nervous about responding to them? No," Christensen said. "Am I sitting here saying we're 100 percent prepared? No."

"Everything keeps us up at night," said Michael Heffner, an assistant chief deputy state fire marshal. "I don't know that the trains would be different than any other area we deal with."

## PORTLAND LIKELY POWERLESS

Word of Zenith's activities rocked Portland City Hall.

After OPB published an article about Zenith in February, the mayor's environmental policy adviser, Amy Rathfelder, emailed aides to say her email inbox was "overflowing" with constituents' demands to oppose the company.

Rathfelder wrote that aides were figuring out "what the city can actually do." She also wrote: "I think the mayor needs to issue a statement ASAP opposing this."

Officials began drafting a press release for Wheeler's approval. Sophia June, a press aide, emailed his chief of staff, "I think we should absolutely say we're against it even if we don't know what we can do to stop it."

Government lawyers and officials at the city zoning and code enforcement departments told the aides it was impossible to revoke the permit allowing Zenith's construction.

"Unless they're doing something wrong, I have no grounds to revoke a permit," Terry Whitehill, the building codes manager who approved Zenith's permit in 2014, told The Oregonian/OregonLive. "In fact, we'd get in big trouble with the state if we did."

Wheeler said in a statement that the city will monitor Zenith's activity levels. He said that based on assurances his aides got in a meeting with Zenith representatives, he believes oil train operation is "not expanding."

# Portland Man Who Took Neil Goldschmidt's Portrait From City Hall Burns it, Livestreams His Arrest

*By Eder Campuzano*

*April 6, 2019*

The man who took Neil Goldschmidt's portrait from Portland City Hall late last week burned the picture during a bonfire Friday evening, then livestreamed his arrest by city police the following morning.

Jeff Thomas Black was booked into the Multnomah County Jail and charged with misdemeanor theft, criminal mischief and tampering with physical evidence.

Video posted to Facebook on Saturday by Black shows him greeting three officers at his home in North Portland. The broadcast begins at around 8:45 a.m., nearly two hours before Black said he agreed to meet with police.

Black spends the first two-thirds of the video, which clocks in at 6:30, getting dressed and making his way to the door.

When an officer named Jacobsen asks Black why he took Goldschmidt's portrait from City Hall, Black says he did it as an "act of civil disobedience." The former Oregon governor confessed to having sex with a 13-year-old girl during his first term as Portland mayor.

Goldschmidt's misconduct was uncovered in 2004, well after the statute of limitations on the case was lifted.

In the video, Black tells officers that Goldschmidt's portrait had already been taken down from the Oregon Capitol building. Throughout the conversation, Black says he was prepared for the consequences of taking the portrait and burning it.

"I'm happy to pay for Neil Goldschmidt's crimes," he tells police.

The portrait "had to be destroyed" because of Goldschmidt's conduct, Black says.

That's when Jacobsen tells Black he's under arrest. Black asks if he can go inside his house to grab a jacket and shoes. Jacobsen says another officer can get them for Black. After a bit more negotiating, Black resigns to his arrest sans shoes and jacket.

"Go ahead, arrest me. Whatever," Black says as officers handcuffed him.

The previous night, Black posted video of him burning the Goldschmidt portrait during a bonfire. He invited Donna Hayes, grandmother of Quatrice Hayes, who was shot and killed by Portland police in February of 2017.

Black told KOIN he'd reported himself to police. Black also told the station he took the portrait to shed light on the plight of survivors of sexual assault.

## The Portland Tribune

### Fritz: 'I Have Decided Not to Run For Re-Election'

By KOIN 6 News

April 5, 2019

**Longtime City Council member posts announcement on her website on Friday, April 5.**

Commissioner Amanda Fritz announced Friday that she will not run for reelection to the Portland City Council in 2020.

In a statement posted to her city website on April 5, Fritz explained that she has "already accomplished many significant changes in ten years of service to the people of Portland."

"Now, I feel I've accomplished many of the things that have been in my power to get done. I plan to continue working flat out for the next 21 months, and I know I can't continue to do that for another four years beyond that," Fritz said.

Fritz said her accomplishments include paving the way for the Paid Sick Time initiative, championing fiscal responsibility, setting up Portland's recreational cannabis program, and passing a bond for urgent repairs to local parks.

Fritz went on to say that by the time 2020 rolls around, she will "have been in nurses training or working in public service for over 40 years."

Fritz had previously said she planned to leave City Hall at the end of 2016, but her plans changed after her husband was killed in a crash in 2014. Fritz has held the position of commissioner since 2008.

"When Steve was killed, I found myself in the company of many older Americans, especially women: I needed a job to maintain health insurance. And I needed motivation to get up in the morning," Fritz said. "Bereft of the love of my life, continuing to serve the people of Portland answered both needs. I greatly appreciate the support of Portlanders, in that nobody filed to run against me until a week before the deadline in 2016 and I was re-elected with 69% of the vote. I have worked hard to make sure your faith in me was rewarded."

Fritz said she plans to work "flat out for the next 21 months" to complete many current goals but she ultimately wants to "open the door for someone else to be the voice of Portlanders."

You can read Fritz's full statement [here](#).

### Hardesty's Questioning Leaves Property Manager in Tears

By Amelia Templeton

April 6, 2019

**Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty said questioning was appropriate and says she often asks hard questions**

For months, Portland landlords have complained that they have been listened to but ultimately ignored as Commissioner Chloe Eudaly crafted a complex policy to regulate many core aspects of their business.



The resulting ordinance, introduced this week, establishes new rules for how landlords screen tenants, advertise their units, collect security deposits and calculate damages and other charges to tenants.

At a first hearing Wednesday, set up as a chance for Eudaly to make the case for the ordinance, two exchanges between commissioners and experts invited to weigh in on the bill gave credence to those concerns that criticism of the policy is unwelcome.

After the second tense exchange, Mayor Ted Wheeler took the unusual step of exhorting his colleagues to treat their critics with respect.

The hearing comprised of five panels of invited experts.

Surprisingly, Eudaly's first invited expert, Tyrone Poole, declined to take a position on the ordinance. He used much of his time to urge the council to consider the possible impact on small businesses.

[Click here](#) to read the rest of the story by OPB, a news partner of the Portland Tribune.

## **Man Arrested for Burning Goldschmidt's City Hall Portrait**

*By Zane Sparling*

*April 6, 2019*

**Activist Jeffrey Black live-streamed the burning of the photo... and his arrest by Portland Police.**

A local activist has been arrested 10 days after he live-streamed a video of himself stealing a portrait from Portland City Hall.

Jeffrey Thomas Black openly admitted to taking the photograph of disgraced former Mayor Neil Goldschmidt — calling it "a deliberate act of civil disobedience" against a child rapist.

On Friday night, April 5, Black burned the picture for another live audience watching along on social media. In a third video, he live-streamed his arrest — saying that he had planned to meet Portland Police at 10:30 a.m. but they surprised him by showing up at his house while he was taking a shower.

"I'm happy to pay for Neil Goldschmidt's crimes," Black tells arresting officers in the video. "He was a terrible man, and it needed to be destroyed.... I was supporting victims."

Black was arrested just before 9 a.m. on Saturday, April 6 by Central Precinct officers, who say they also watched the video of the photograph going up in flames.

The 50-year-old with 30,000 followers on Twitter is charged with second-degree criminal mischief, third-degree theft and tampering with physical evidence.

The original video, which is still viewable by the public on Facebook, shows Black filming a City Council meeting on March 27, then walking into the unlocked foyer of current Mayor Ted Wheeler's office.

Black approaches the wall where images of almost every mayor have traditionally been displayed, and yanks down the portrait of former Mayor Goldschmidt.

Goldschmidt sexually abused a young girl during his first term as mayor — though the crimes were kept hidden for decades, while Goldschmidt rose up the ranks of power, eventually

becoming Oregon governor and U.S. transportation secretary. Goldschmidt was never convicted after the statute of limitations ran out.

Police say the Neighborhood Response Team has been investigating the theft since the portrait was stolen from the "outer entryway" of Wheeler's office.

Police say they arrested Black inside a home located in 7900 Block of North Berkeley Avenue. He was booked and released from the downtown jail, records report.

## **Wheeler and Peterson: Add More Redevelopment to I-5 Project**

*By Jim Redden  
April 07, 2019*

### **Mayor and Metro President lobby the Oregon Transportation Commission to build stronger caps over I-5 in the Rose Quarter area.**

Mayor Ted Wheeler and Metro President Lynn Peterson are calling on the Oregon Transportation Commission to rethink parts of the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project, although they say it is still needed.

The \$500 million project is intended to improve the bottleneck caused by the complex intersections of I-5 and I-84 in the Rose Quarter area, and to encourage redevelopment by capping the freeways and creating bike and pedestrian connections over them.

In an April 4 letter to the Oregon Transportation Commission, Wheeler and Peterson admit "Interstate 5 is a critical economic artery for the Portland region and the entire West Coast" that needs improvements in the Rose Quarter area.

But the two leaders also urge the Oregon Department of Transportation to provide stronger connections over the freeway that can accommodate redevelopment projects. They cite the truss-hung retail space on the Interstate 80 cap in Reno and Margaret Hance Park above Interstate 10 in Phoenix as two examples.

"Any cap on Interstate 5 must be engineered so the urban streetscape can continue seamlessly over the freeway and accommodate built structures that support community continuity," reads the letter, which says the freeway disrupted Portland's historic African-American community when it was designed and built in the Eisenhower-era .

"If done right, this project presents a rare opportunity to repair past wrongs while simultaneously improving the ability of the facility to effectively serve our region," the letter said.

The 2017 Oregon Legislature declared Portland area congestion to be a statewide problem and approved the project. It also directed the commission to ask the Federal Highway Administration for permission to impose tolls on parts or all of I-5 in Portland to help fund it.

Federal authorities have indicated the project is eligible for toll funding. It is unclear if tolls can be proposed if the project is stopped, as some community groups are trying to do.

You can read the [letter here](#).

You can read a previous Portland Tribune story on the [issue here](#).

## Willamette Week

# Portland City Commissioner Amanda Fritz Won't Seek Reelection

*By Rachel Monahan  
April 5, 2019*

**The three-term city commissioner made the announcement via a press release.**

Portland City Commissioner Amanda Fritz has decided not to seek reelection.

Fritz, 60, currently in her third term, has opted not to seek a fourth in 2020, she announced Friday afternoon. That sets off the race for an open seat well in advance of the formal election season.

Fritz, who has championed the use of publicly funded elections, said in a statement that was part of why she announced her decision more than a year before the primary election date, rather than delay.

"I am announcing now in the hope that many worthy candidates will use the public campaign finance resources in the Open and Accountable Elections program," she said, "and that there will be as positive and trust-building campaigns for the open seat in 2020 as there were when five of us ran with Voter Owned Elections funding in 2008. I want to open the door for someone else to be the voice of Portlanders in my place."

Fritz, a former psychiatric nurse, who was a neighborhood activist and sat on the Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission before running for City Council, is known as a tireless public servant with a personal touch, who answers constituent emails to her office herself. She developed a reputation for rejecting the wheeling-and-dealing typical of City Hall, and instead arriving at a principled position and sticking to it.

She was an iconoclast who frustrated two mayors—Sam Adams and Charlie Hales—and outlasted both of them.

Her announcement cited among her accomplishments the passage of the 2014 parks bond and championing the organized homeless village Right 2 Dream Too.

She had planned to retire in 2016, but sought a third term after her husband, Dr. Steven Fritz, died in car crash on Interstate 5 in 2014. She later championed state legislation to install "median crash barriers" as protection on the highway.

She retires as the last great champion of the neighborhood association system in City Hall. The Office of Neighborhood Involvement, which she led for many years, was renamed the Office of Community Civil Life under City Commissioner Chloe Eudaly last year.

She ran for election the first time with public financing, and after her husband's death self-financed her reelection campaign after that program was disbanded.

Her plans for her remaining time in office include getting the new publicly funded elections program off the ground but also "developing a program to sell development rights from certain City-owned sites to fund maintenance of facilities Portlanders value," similar to what the city did at the office tower Park Avenue West, and creating "permanent protections for the Bull Run watershed in the City's Charter," according to the release.

"I am looking forward to finishing strong with my team—continuing to connect with Portlanders, doing my homework, getting important things done, and dedicating my life to serving the people of Portland for the remainder of my term," she said. "And then, I am looking forward to retiring and sitting in my back yard with my cat watching the wildlife."

Carmen Rubio, the executive director of the nonprofit Latino Network, and a former policy director for Commissioner Nick Fish and former Mayor Tom Potter, is one of several names being mentioned at City Hall.

"I'm honored to be thought of and will be taking some time to seriously consider the best way to continue serving the community," says Rubio. "I will be seeking the advice and counsel of my family, trusted friends and colleagues before making a decision."

At least one person is already openly eying the seat.

Oregon House Representative Diego Hernandez (D-East Portland) may run. "I'm not ruling it out," he says, "but I'd really prefer to support Carmen Rubio for that seat. She's been a long time community leader in Portland, and I would love to see her consider City Council."

Another name mentioned in advocacy circles is former mayoral candidate Sarah Iannarone, who challenged Wheeler in 2016. (She retweeted a housing advocate's suggestion that she run.) "I've been talking with friends and family a lot about 2020, she said in a statement. "The People of Portland know I'm committed to leveraging my skills, my knowledge, and my networks to make our city the best place it can be. That's what will drive my decision-making."

## **Portland City Hall Operations Director Talks About Mimicking Tel Aviv Smart City Technology, Draws Outcry From BDS Protesters**

*By Elise Herron*

*April 5, 2019*

**Perez says her goal with similar technology in Portland is to “serve citizens who are not been served.”**

Portland City Hall might soon implement technology that gives residents individualized push notifications with city updates.

During a talk at TechfestNW today, Elizabeth Perez, operations director for Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler's office, joined Zohar Sharon, Chief Knowledge Officer for the Tel Aviv-Yafo municipality, to talk about technology Sharon developed in Tel Aviv to connect residents with city government.

The technology, called DigiTel, allows the government to gather demographic information from residents and then send them push notifications about city happenings. In exchange for providing personal information, people who sign up get perks like free yoga classes and free ice cream.

Perez says her goal with similar technology in Portland is to "serve citizens who are not been served."

"We're not getting info from individuals," she says, "but individually we are targeting people who have not been connected previously and don't have means to participate."

Perez adds that she'd like Portland to be able to "push information out and get feedback," in the form of mobile phone notifications.

Four protesters—affiliated with Don't Shoot Portland, the Portland Democratic Socialists of America and Jewish Voice for Peace—stood up at various points during the event to decry the talk. They appeared to be aligned with the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement, which demands that governments disassociate from Israel to support Palestinian rights.

Olivia Katbi Smith, co-chair of the Portland DSA, yelled, "You are complicit in whitewashing apartheid," and "Free Palestine" while handing out flyers to audience members about "[Israel's] colonialism and apartheid over the Palestinian people."

Katbi Smith and the three other protesters were escorted out of the room as the talk continued.

## **The Portland Mercury**

### **Commissioner Fritz Will Not Seek Reelection in 2020**

*By Alex Zielinski*

*April 5, 2019*

**Portland City Commissioner Amanda Fritz won't be seeking a fourth term on city council in 2020.**

Fritz, who's served on city council since 2008, announced her retirement plans Friday afternoon.

"I am looking forward to finishing strong with my team—continuing to connect with Portlanders, doing my homework, getting important things done, and dedicating my life to serving the people of Portland for the remainder of my term," she said in a press statement.

"And then, I am looking forward to retiring and sitting in my back yard with my cat watching the wildlife."

Fritz, who still has 21 months left as commissioner, used the early announcement to set a few goals for her remaining tenure.

One of those priorities? The long-awaited rollout of the city's Open and Accountable Elections, a public finance program geared toward helping lesser-known candidates secure enough funding to make a run at city office. Fritz, who entered city hall on a platform of campaign finance reform, introduced the Open and Accountable Elections program in 2016—but has struggled to find a home for it since.

The program currently lives in Fritz's office, but would be tossed to another commissioner if she chose to run for office. Since she's decidedly not, Fritz now has the chance to see the project through its first election cycle.

"I am announcing now in the hope that many worthy candidates will use the public campaign finance resources in the Open and Accountable Elections program, and that there will be as positive and trust-building campaigns for the open seat in 2020," Fritz said. "I want to open the door for someone else to be the voice of Portlanders in my place."

If successful, it'll be just one of many progressive programs Fritz championed over her decade in city hall. A few of her accomplishments: Creating the Office of Equity and Human Rights, creating the City Budget Office, mandating paid sick time in Portland, orchestrating the contentious relocation of Right 2 Dream Too, making I-5 safer after her husband's tragic 2014

death, championing a massive Parks Bond, and creating the Cannabis Tax to support transportation programs and help people remove weed-related convictions from their criminal record.

Fritz, a former OHSU nurse, served on the city's Planning and Sustainability Commission before joining city council. Her votes on the council dais regularly reflect her passion for smart urban planning, which sometimes comes at a cost for tenant advocates. Fritz and Commissioner Eudaly, who was elected to improve renter rights in Portland, have repeatedly clashed on ordinances that pit landlords against tenants.

Fritz has consistently stood in opposition to Portland's on-again-off-again relationship with the FBI through its Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF), and voted to successfully dissolve the partnership in February.

As the seventh woman elected to Portland City Council, Fritz long-tolerated being the sole woman at the council dais. However, she doesn't think changing the way the city elects its commissioners—a contested topic—would change the ability for a woman to win a council seat.

In her final months in office, Fritz says she hopes to "reinvigorate" the city's equity initiatives in regard to racial and disability justice, find a way to sell development rights from city property to fund maintenance projects, and establish "permanent protections" for the Bull Run watershed within the city's charter.

Fritz's resignation makes Commissioner Nick Fish the longest-running city commissioner. Both commissioners entered office in 2008—Fish in May, Fritz in November. (Thanks to a special election win, Fish isn't up for re-election until 2022). We dug into Mercury archives to recall her election night, which joyously synced with Obama's first win. It's a pretty dreamy moment:

Seconds after Obama was declared the victor, Multnomah County posted preliminary results. At the Ecotrust Building in the Pearl District, Amanda Fritz found out she had nearly 72 percent of the vote. She gasped at the high number, throwing her fists in the air.

"Sometimes you work really, really hard, and you have lots of really, really good friends, and something really, really good happens!" she told the crowd, which included Mayor Tom Potter, Mayor-Elect Sam Adams, and Commissioner Nick Fish. She also put on a jersey with the number seven on it—to commemorate her victory as the seventh woman ever elected to the Portland City Council—then cut into a massive sheet cake.