

The Oregonian

Cop Watcher Jailed on Suspicion of Shoving Mayor's Security Guard, Violating Order Against Police Chief

April 19, 2019

A man who says he monitors police was jailed earlier this month on allegations of violating a stalking order against the city's police chief and shoving a mayoral security guard, records show.

Eli Richey, 38, is accused of fourth-degree assault, harassment and violating a court's stalking protective order, according to court records. Portland Police Chief Danielle Outlaw obtained the stalking protective order against him in 2017.

Court records say Portland Police Bureau officers saw Richey, who takes videos of law enforcement, standing on a sidewalk adjacent to the bureau's downtown Central Precinct on April 2. He put a camera and tripod in a tree, according to records, and eventually left. It's unclear whether he took the camera with him.

Officers later determined he was about 38 feet away from the south sidewalk entrance to the precinct, records show. Outlaw works inside.

The same day, Richey allegedly lunged toward Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler in Northeast Portland, according to records.

Records show Dorothy Elmore, Portland Office of Management & Finance Facilities Security Manager, stepped in to protect Wheeler. Richey then turned toward Elmore and shoved her to the ground, records allege.

Elmore reported that she hit her head.

Wheeler's spokeswoman, Eileen Park, said the incident happened at the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization's Northeast Glisan Street office — the site of a budget forum attended by the mayor and other elected officials. The incident occurred outside the office, records show.

Richey was first jailed April 6 in the assault and harassment case and later released on bail, according to jail records. He was again jailed April 8 and released on bail the next day.

Richey has continued to publish videos on YouTube.

A Portland police spokesman said the stalking order remains valid and active.

"We will continue to enforce that order like any other order issued by the county," said Sgt. Brad Yakots. "As with any case, we support the judicial process and the efforts by partners at the Multnomah District Attorney's Office."

A mayoral spokeswoman didn't immediately comment on the allegations when reached Friday morning.

Richey has pleaded not guilty in the protective order case, according to court records. He has yet to enter a plea in the other case, records show.

Environmentalists Urge City Hall to Halt Crude Oil Exports Through Portland

By Gordon Friedman

April 19, 2019

Six environmental groups sent letters to Mayor Ted Wheeler and Portland's city commissioners on Friday, urging them to halt the expansion of a crude oil export terminal in Northwest Portland.

Portlanders are opposed to such an expansion, the letter states, and city officials should stand in its way by passing a moratorium, issuing stop work orders and convening hearings.

The expansion is being undertaken by Zenith Energy, a Houston-based petroleum terminals company. Zenith bought its Northwest Front Avenue facility in 2017, when it was a mostly mothballed asphalt and diesel transfer station.

In 2015, the terminal's former owner applied for – and received – city permits to expand the facility for offloading rail cars. Construction is underway and expected to finish this month.

And despite concerns from environmentalists and commissioners, Portland leaders may be limited in their actions against Zenith. Building permits cannot be revoked unless a company is in violation of construction codes, which Zenith has not been found to be. It's unclear if a city policy to ban expansions of fossil fuels infrastructure would apply to Zenith's work since it was permitted before the ban was approved.

Since its purchase of the terminal, Zenith has singlehandedly created Oregon's crude oil export market, *The Oregonian/OregonLive* reported this month.

Increasing numbers of freight trains hauling crude oil have been arriving at the facility from Canada, and unloading into Zenith's storage tanks that can hold more than 1.5 million barrels of crude oil. The company contracts with Chevron, which owns a Willamette River dock across Front Avenue from Zenith, to pump the crude from storage tanks and onto vessels bound for foreign and domestic refineries.

Zenith's business has worried environmentalists. The tar sands oil brought in from Canada is extremely flammable, carries heightened toxic inhalation hazards and can sink if spilled in water – causing extra damage to marine habitats.

Zenith also misled state environmental regulators last year to avoid conducting a mock cleanup of a major tar sands spill into the Willamette, *The Oregonian/OregonLive* reported last week. Regulators essentially shrugged when they discovered Zenith's duplicity, the newsroom found.

Company executives have said Zenith never broke any state rules or laws and did not mislead regulators.

Recognizing the dangers in transporting millions of gallons of crude oil through the Columbia Gorge, along the Willamette River and through Portland neighborhoods, the environmental groups made several demands of the city:

- Adopt an “immediate moratorium” on new fossil fuels infrastructure
- Issue a stop work order for the Zenith project and reassess safety at the site
- Hold a public hearing and call Zenith officials to testify about their work
- Put in place policies that make companies liable for damage caused in the event of a spill or explosion

The letter's signatories: Mia Reback of Sustainable Energy and Economy Network, Khan Pham of OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon, Bob Sallinger of the Audubon Society of Portland, Nicholas Caleb of the Center for Sustainable Economy, Regna Merritt of Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility, and 350PDX.

Marshall Runkel, chief of staff for Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, emailed Friday that Eudaly "supports doing whatever the city government can to do limit/eliminate the amount of fossil fuels that travel through and are stored in our city."

Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty issued a statement saying she shares the environmental groups' concerns and finds that "crude oil transportation has no place in our city."

"We've seen how fossil fuel industry activities endanger our communities, especially communities of color and low-income communities, and as a city we need to say that's not acceptable," Hardesty said. "Our office is actively working to find solutions within the city and other jurisdictions."

Representatives of Wheeler and the other commissioners did not immediately respond to requests for comment Friday.

The Portland Tribune

Portland Activists Block Rail Line at Zenith Oil Terminal

By Zane Sparling

April 21, 2019

Extinction Rebellion plants 'Victory over fossil fuels Garden' at crude oil exporter on Sunday.

Operations at Oregon's only crude oil export terminal went off the rails on Earth Day weekend — after activists blocked all train traffic leading to the Northwest Portland facility.

Extinction Rebellion protesters dumped topsoil and planted a "Victory over fossil fuels Garden" on and adjacent to the train tracks as early as 6 a.m. on Sunday, April 21. By mid-day, a tiny house, large globe and a crowd of at least 100 had sprouted outside the Zenith Energy terminal, 5501 N.W. Front Ave.

A BNSF oil train was turned back from the rail spur around 9 a.m. Activists say they plan to occupy the site indefinitely.

"We are here to demand from our political leadership, at the city and county level, that they take effective action to end Zenith terminals," said Corbett resident Ken Ward, whose well-known exploits include a 2016 arrest for activating the Trans Mountain pipeline emergency shutoff valve.

"What we have to do to preserve liveable conditions on the planet, and what seems to be politically feasible now — there's a gap there, and we have to close it," Ward continued.

Long used as an asphalt and oil storage center, operations ballooned after Zenith purchased the terminal from Arc Logistics in December, 2017. Permits approved in 2014 allow Zenith to unload as many as 44 train cars at a time — though the swarm of tanker cars activists say they usually see were less visible on Easter Sunday.

Demonstration organizer Mia Reback led the crowd on a sidewalk tour of the area, highlighting the construction of new unloading platforms, an additional rail spur and a cinder block fence topped with barbed wire.

She said the 18 full-time workers on site use Naphtha diluent to flow the thick tar sands off the rail cars and into massive storage tanks. From there, the crude oil is pumped across the street to a Chevron dock and onto sea-going vessels destined for U.S. and foreign refineries.

"Zenith is doubling down on the fossil fuel industry at a time when we know we have to get off fossil fuels to stop catastrophic climate change." Reback said.

The 11 terminal companies located on Front Avenue store natural gas, asphalt and about 90 percent of the fuel sold at gas stations in Oregon and Southwest Washington. Zenith, however, has unique status as an exporter, and activists say the fire suppression equipment installed by the company isn't adequate.

"All of these tanks along here are built on fill," said David Scharf, a Scappoose resident. "If we get the big earthquake... the assumption is pretty much all of these tanks could burst."

"It's just an accident waiting to happen," added Jane Heldmann of Portland.

In March, Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler told the Tribune that he does not support the infrastructure expansion due to its location in an earthquake liquefaction zone. In a letter sent on Sunday, the occupiers called on the full City Council to rezone the land as open space.

Representatives with the Portland Police Bureau and Zenith Energy did not immediately return requests for comment.

Willamette Week

Portland City Council Ordinance on Tenant Screening Criteria Delayed Until May

By Rachel Monahan

April 19, 2019

The controversial bill is getting a careful look by City Council. No vote until at least May 23.

City Commissioner Chloe Eudaly has delayed a vote on new restrictions for screening tenants for another month.

The ordinance would restrict the way landlords screen tenants before they sign a lease, with the aim of addressing discrimination and requiring more consideration for people with a criminal record.

The Portland Tribune first reported the plan to delay.

The mayor has previously said he thinks the screening policy needs "significant changes."

Eudaly's policy director, Jamey Duhamel, says the possible changes contemplated at City Hall are focused on whether there's a way to make the requirements less onerous for the real estate industry while still requiring accountability and enforcement.

"I feel really confident we're working well with our colleagues," says Duhamel, "and that what we bring back on May 23 is going to be a really solid policy in mitigating discrimination in rental housing."

Environmental Activist Ken Ward, Famed as a Pipe Turner, and Others Plant Garden on the Zenith Oil Tracks to Halt Trains Through Portland

*By Rachel Monahan
April 21, 2019*

Group is taking direct action to halt climate change in Portland and around the world.

Environmental protesters laid down soil and then planted a garden on train tracks Sunday morning to protest the growth in oil shipments to the Zenith Energy facility in Northwest Portland.

A leader of the group, Ken Ward, was the subject of a *WW* cover story in 2017 about his direct-action protests against fossil fuel companies, specifically turning a valve to shut off the crude-oil pipeline that runs from the Alberta tar sands to Washington State for refining.

Now he's directing his attention on oil trains. Oregon Public Broadcasting reported in February that Zenith Energy was increasing its rail capacity to quadruple its capacity for unloading oil.

The growth of Zenith's oil shipments under the nose of Portland regulators is striking, given that City Council has voted to block the expansion of further fossil-fuel infrastructure.

In a letter to City Council, OPB reported today, the protesters said they were "initiating a blockade."

"We are writing to inform you that we have rezoned the industrial corridor in which this facility is sited, which also houses numerous other fossil fuel operations, from an Employment and Industry base zone to an Open Space designation," Ward and fellow protesters wrote.

"We urge you to use your powers to make this zoning change official, but we are not waiting for such measures to begin enforcing our own code."

One group involved in the protest is Extinction Rebellion PDX—a local chapter of a group founded last year in the U.K. that has engaged in high-profile nonviolent civil disobedience in an effort to get action on climate change.

The Portland Mercury

City Employee With Alt-Right Ties Made Coworkers Feel "Unwelcome and Fearful"

*By Blair Stenvick
April 19, 2019*

A high-ranking employee at Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) with ties to the far-right Vancouver, Washington group Patriot Prayer has a history of making city employees feel threatened and uncomfortable, according to city records obtained by the Mercury.

Gregory Isaacson is an Analyst II—a managerial title—at PP&R, and has worked there since 2016. Isaacson was arrested during a Patriot Prayer protest last year, and charged with failure to comply with a lawful order. Isaacson has also been documented on video engaging in Holocaust skepticism, prompting Rose City Antifa and other leftist groups to call for his dismissal from PP&R.

Documents from the city's human resources department, obtained through a public records request, show that Isaacson's position with PP&R also drew complaints from city employees who said they felt "unsafe" in his presence.

The documents largely center on one training session for city employees held on Aug 24, 2017. The session was meant to educate employees on microaggressions, or forms of discrimination that are not overt but can still cause distress for people of color and other minorities who encounter them on a daily basis.

Isaacson attended the 2017 training and, by all accounts, was a disruptive presence.

A letter sent to Isaacson in 2018 by the city's human resources department details the numerous complaints made by city employees who also attended the training.

During the training, the letter states, Isaacson had "demonstrated a lack of support for the City's philosophy and expectations by saying things like 'this is bullshit,' or 'this is nonsense.'"

"Though [Isaacson] presented himself as very 'polite' he was constantly making convoluted comments under his breath, shaking his head, and smirking at what the presenters were offering," wrote one city employee who sat at the same table as Isaacson during the training. "[Isaacson] also smirked at us when we shared and he refused to participate in the small group sharing activity ... stating that he has offended a lot of people in his life and he doesn't care."

The employee wrote that due to Isaacson's behavior, they "missed important aspects of the training, and left the room feeling very unsafe."

"I do not feel safe collaborating with [Isaacson] in the future," they concluded.

Isaacson allegedly told his table that the term "politically correct" comes from 16th century Communist China, and grew hostile when others contradicted him. One of the training facilitators quickly changed the subject so as to avoid escalation.

"I walked away from the training last Thursday feeling like I was really glad I don't have to work with him," another employee who sat at Isaacson's table wrote. "Basically, I now think of him as a person I'd like to avoid."

A letter from the event's co-facilitator noted that the specific 2017 training was "the third time that I have observed Greg's behavior in an training topic related to Equity" [sic].

“It is my opinion that Greg is very resistant to any concepts related to equity,” the co-facilitator added.

The 2018 letter also mentioned an incident in which he made a city employee of color feel unsafe at a PP&R facility:

“A Parks employee who is a person of color visited the Mt. Tabor Yard (MTY) and left feeling unwelcomed and fearful to return to MTY because of an interaction had with you,” the letter reads. “The person described the situation as you questioned them in an aggressive tone about the reason for visiting MTY.”

The letter advised Isaacson that while “this interaction alone did not provide sufficient evidence of a rule violation, please know that there have been other reports by employees of color who have felt unwelcome and subjected to scrutiny while visiting MTY that other employees who are white have not reported experiencing.”

It’s unclear what, if any, formal discipline Isaacson received as a result of these complaints. In the 2018 letter sent to Isaacson, the human resources employee said the purpose of the letter was to “serve as a closure to the complaints that raised the issues addressed above, to document the concerns raised, and provide you with my expectation moving forward.”

The letter continues:

“You are to treat everyone you work with at the City with respect, courtesy, and be aware of your approach to others that can come across as intimidating and/or unwelcoming. You also need to be keenly aware of your interactions with employees of color to ensure that you are not treating them with greater scrutiny than you do to white employees. My expectation is that you will interact with all employees in a welcoming manner.”

When reached for comment about Isaacson, PP&R sent the Mercury the following statement:

"Our bureau is fully committed to the values of equity and inclusion, and strives to enhance diversity and culturally-conscious efforts. Our Equity Statement and Racial Equity Plan, and our bureau priorities, reflect these goals. Our Equity & Inclusion team is focused on advancing equity and inclusion practices to improve Portland’s parks system. Our Diversity and Equity Committee advises our bureau Director and Equity & Inclusion Team on bureau policies and practices to remove barriers and promote diversity, inclusion and racial equity best practices.

We require a series of equity and inclusion trainings for all employees. Each employee is reviewed on equity outcomes through our performance management process. And, as an employer, we both respect and are bound by the Constitutional protections governing freedom of assembly and speech.

The City takes seriously any complaint that an employee is engaging in criminal activity, particularly when that activity involves hate. We investigate all concerns brought to our attention and take appropriate corrective action if City rules have been violated. We do not, however, comment on specific personnel issues."

The Daily Journal of Commerce

A Tough Call for Portland Design Commission

By Chuck Slothower

April 19, 2019

The Portland Design Commission delayed making a decision Thursday on an appeal of a controversial homeless shelter proposed for the Pearl District.

The commission will reconvene on June 27 after considering recent testimony and evidence, commissioners said. The record will remain closed until then, meaning no additional new evidence will be accepted.

The proposal comes from Oregon Harbor of Hope, a nonprofit founded by developer Homer Williams and others to provide homeless services in Portland. The group has already erected a tent on a vacant lot just north of the Broadway Bridge on Northwest Naito Parkway. The structure would host a shelter and services for homeless individuals who would stay for three to four months. Transition Projects would manage the shelter.

Commissioners struggled with the temporary nature of Oregon Harbor of Hope's Navigation Center, and whether to apply design standards meant for permanent buildings.

Pearl District resident Kurt Sorensen filed an appeal objecting to city staff approval of the structure. He wrote in the appeal that the shelter did not qualify as a "mass shelter" under Portland code and didn't satisfy other design guidelines such as unifying design elements, and reinforcing the identity of the Pearl District neighborhood and the waterfront area.

"It isn't the use; it's the building," Sorensen said. "If somebody wanted to put a restaurant in that structure, you wouldn't approve it. You should apply the same standard."

The Design Commission's decision could ultimately come down to whether commissioners apply design guidelines to the tent, or make an exception because of its temporary nature.

Harbor of Hope's lease with Prosper Portland, the public agency which owns the property, is scheduled to terminate Dec. 31, 2023, and the shelter is not expected to be in use past that date, said Tom Kemper, a real estate professional who is acting as project manager and developer's representative.

That poses a quandary for design guidelines requiring "quality and permanence" that borders on the metaphysical: What does it mean to be permanent?

Chairwoman Julie Livingston tried a novel approach, suggesting the tent could meet quality and permanence standards if the materials are intended to last until the 2023 termination of the deal.

"For a five-year structure, this is a relatively well-designed structure," she said.

Livingston added that the guidelines do not state what permanence means.

"There is nothing in the guidelines that places a timeline on permanence," she said.

Commissioner Andrew Clarke pushed back at that line of reasoning, saying he was unwilling to bend guidelines to "fit a narrative."

"Permanence to me is permanent," Clarke said. "It's there for a long time."

The Design Commission may be the wrong group to decide the Navigation Center's future, Commissioner Sam Rodriguez said.

“Frankly, I think it should be before City Council,” he said.

The tent did not meet design guidelines and would not be approved without a condition of approval mandating it be temporary, Rodriguez said.

An appeal of the Design Commission’s eventual decision would go to the state Land Use Board of Appeals, meaning the question could be settled in Salem.

Tiffany Sweitzer of Hoyt Street Properties testified against the tent, saying the proposal should be held to the same standards as other developments. Developer Jim Winkler also testified, saying the proposed tent is “simply not good enough.”

Iain MacKenzie, an architect and blogger, was among the supporters to testify. He pointed to precedents for temporary structures in Portland, including at Portland State University and The International School.

OPB

Group Plants Garden On Oil Terminal Tracks To Protest Portland Climate Action

By OPB Staff

April 21, 2019

An environmental group has blocked railroad tracks at Zenith Energy’s oil-by-rail terminal in Northwest Portland, demanding “local and systemic action” against climate change.

Activists with the environmental action group Extinction Rebellion, including Ken Ward, left, watch over a protest garden planted near the tracks of Zenith Energy’s oil-by-rail terminal in Portland, Oregon, on Sunday, April 21, 2019.

Activists with the environmental action group Extinction Rebellion, including Ken Ward, left, watch over a protest garden planted near the tracks of Zenith Energy’s oil-by-rail terminal in Portland, Oregon, on Sunday, April 21, 2019.

Early Sunday morning the group, Extinction Rebellion, dumped a truckload of topsoil on the tracks near the Zenith-owned petroleum terminal at 5501 NW Front Avenue. The group also erected a tiny house on the site and has planted flowers, trees and a garden as part of its protest against what it calls a “governmental inability to act” in response to the company’s Portland expansion.

In a letter announcing the blockade sent to city council members and Mayor Ted Wheeler, Extinction Rebellion says it demands that Portland City Council rezone the area where the terminal is located to prevent the increased export of oil products.

OPB reported earlier this year that company has begun work to significantly expand its capacity to unload rail cars at its NW Portland facility. The expansion would allow the number of oil trains rolling along the Columbia and Willamette Rivers to more than double.

The facility handles imports of heavy crude oil from Canada, which it then loads onto ships to be exported to overseas markets.