

## **Diane Sussman's Oct. 25 address to the Portland City Council—"Keeping Portland Cool (and Safe)"**

My name is Diane Sussman and I live at 1005 SW Park Avenue. First, thank you for giving me my three minutes of blame on one issue that seems to have surpassed traffic in the past year: the weather.

As we all know, this past year was alternately the coldest, wettest, hottest and smoggiest on record. That is not the City Council's fault. But I do feel that the city—and I include our wonderful residents in this—needs to do more than bear witness to its escalating snow gauges and thermometers and say that "this never happens here." Clearly, the time to stop saying "this never happens here" is when something is happening here. Because it's unlikely this was a one-time, nonstop freak events, I'd like to offer a few ideas that I think would help show that the city is not once again going to let rarity supersede reality. I'll start with winter.

I sympathize with the city's rationale that it cannot afford to invest in a fleet of snowplows. And I sympathize with not wanting to salt the roads—we are a tree-loving people. But I do not sympathize with having allowed the streets to remain iced over for 10 days while the city dithered over salt, snowplows and studded tires. It was positively dangerous. I can't tell you the number of people I saw falling on their tuchases outside my window as they tried to get to the museum or work. I'm surprised lawsuits didn't follow. So I say to the City Council: *Get some shovels, dudes*. And enlist some of the homeless people staying in the emergency shelters to form a shovel brigade and clear the sidewalks.

Many of the people who make use of these shelters are veterans and able-bodied young people. Offer them \$8-\$10 an hour to shovel snow and a chit for a free hot meal at the end of the day. I'd be willing to bet that several of our local soup kitchens would love to put on that meal. In addition to shoveling all downtown and other heavily trafficked sidewalks, the city could create a list of elderly people and others whose shoveling days are behind them and dispatch a brigade member to their house. I wouldn't be surprised if that led to some extra tips and hot chocolate.

Now let's talk about summer, or more aptly, hell.

### ***First, protect the grid for the have-nots.***

According to new reports, 40% of Portland residents don't have air conditioning. When it comes to the grid, air conditioning pits the haves against the have-nots, with the have-nots being the sweatier, smellier and more sleep-deprived of the two. Until the blessed day when everyone has air conditioning, more needs to be minimize waste among the haves. Particularly galling are retailers, large and small, that maintain "Frozen"-level temperatures inside and keep their doors open.

I'd like to see the city pass an ordinance requiring retailers that run air conditioning to keep their doors closed if the temperature is projected to rise to 90 or above. This past summer, I only saw two stores that gave a fig about wasting air conditioning: Water Avenue Coffee on Water Avenue and Imelda Shoes on Alberta. Both had signs asking patrons to close the door behind them. Contrast that with places like Anthropologie and Free People, which had their doors wide open in 107-degree heat and still were able to maintain arctic temperatures inside. To people without any air conditioning, it's galling, to say the least. And it's not just large stores. As I said, I only saw two stores, large or small, that seemed to get the point of an extreme heat emergency.

Fine offenders \$250 (or the amount it costs to air condition an average-size retail space to 78 degrees for 12 hours). To boost enforcement, develop a call-in hotline or an app that allows citizens to snap a picture of offenders and relay that to the city in real time at which point the city can make a courtesy call or assess a fine to repeat offenders.

### ***Second, on smog days, absolve no one.***

Our collective misery was enhanced this summer by the smoke from the many devastating fires. But more needs to be done than advising people to stay indoors—but only if you have air conditioning!!—and not breathe.

It's time for the city to declare official Spare the Air Days, which make air quality a collective, not just individual responsibility. That means you, drivers and coffee roasters and barbequers. Of course the objective is to get people out of their cars, which, admittedly doesn't work. But it does raise awareness and cultivate guilt.

On Spare the Air Days, make all public transportation *and* the orange bikes free (to anyone with the app). Make drivers pay for the loss of transit revenue by adding a \$1 Spare the Air Day surcharge on all parking meters. And with apologies to outasite barbecue places like the People's Pig, prohibit all outdoor fires and barbecues.

And finally, set up a text-based alert system for residents with asthma and other respiratory ailments so they can get to air-conditioned spaces like Anthropologie (kidding!) *before* the smoke hits the fan.

### ***3. Third, hold a campout!***

On select nights in July and August when there is an excessive heat warning and a full moon (or close to it), put on Hot Poetry Nights at Poet's Beach. Let residents bring their sleeping bags, pup tents, flashlights and poems to the banks of the Willamette for a night of poetry and river breezes. No campfires or smoking, just poetry readings until midnight, coffee in the morning and a chance for people who live in heat-trapping buildings without air conditioning to take advantage of cooler night air and breezes coming over the Willamette.

## Davis, Meghaan

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**From:** Diane Sussman <diane.sussman@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 24, 2017 4:44 PM  
**To:** Davis, Meghaan  
**Subject:** Re: request to address the City Council

Hi, Meghaan,

Wow--I guess Portland is filled with gasbags.

Sign me up for Oct. 25.

Diane Sussman

On Thu, Aug 24, 2017 at 2:11 PM, Davis, Meghaan <[Meghaan.Davis@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:Meghaan.Davis@portlandoregon.gov)> wrote:

Hi Diane,

I have received your communication request to speak to the city council and the next available slot is not until October 25, 2017. If that spot will work for you, please email me back a confirmation and I can go ahead and put you on the schedule.

Thank you,

Meghaan Davis

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Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail.

**From:** Diane Sussman [mailto:diane.sussman@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 24, 2017 11:58 AM  
**To:** Moore-Love, Karla <Karla.Moore-Love@portlandoregon.gov>  
**Subject:** request to address the City Council

Dear Ms. Moore-Love,

I am requesting permission to address the City Council on Aug. 28 about ways I think the city can help residents cope with our increasingly frequent instances of "it never happens here" heat waves and snow storms. You can schedule it for any of the available time slots.

I promise to keep it to two minutes and to be nice in the telling.

Thank you.

Diane Sussman

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Portland OR 97205  
415-254-4801

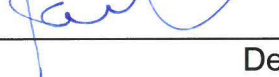
Request of Diane Sussman to address Council regarding ways the  
City can help residents cope with heat waves and snow storms  
(Communication)

OCT 25 2017

**PLACED ON FILE**

Filed OCT 17 2017

**MARY HULL CABALLERO**  
Auditor of the City of Portland

By  Deputy

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