

MINUTES

Eugene City Council
Harris Hall, 125 East 8th Avenue
Eugene, Oregon 97401

May 20, 2013
5:30 p.m.

Councilors Present: George Brown, Betty Taylor, Alan Zelenka, Mike Clark, Chris Pryor, Claire Syrett, Greg Evans

Councilors Absent: George Poling

Her Honor, Mayor Piercy, convened the May 20, 2013, City Council work session.

A. WORK SESSION: HOMELESS CAMPING

AIC Parks and Open Space Division Manager Mark Schoening re-introduced this topic and reviewed the proposed options and list of potential sites that had been identified in previous discussions. If the ordinance amendments were adopted, the City Manager would identify which sites would be used for camping purposes by Administrative Order. Following that action, a public hearing would be scheduled to receive public input before any final adoption or action took place.

Mayor Piercy read a letter from Rev. Dan Bryant regarding the Micro-Housing Project at the Garfield site and asking the City to postpone the decision about how to pay for the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) fees if there was no money in the contingency fund.

Discussion Summary:

- This is a tough issue with no quick or easy resolution.
- If camping on City owned land is allowed, bathrooms, garbage service and some level of security should be provided at each site.
- The City can't afford to underwrite the ongoing expense of providing sanitary and security services.
- If site users are to be screened, how does that happen, who does it, what is the cost and where do those not allowed in the authorized sites go to sleep?
- A maximum of eight to twelve sites should be designated, as this is pilot project only.
- The money spent by Public Works/Parks staff for clean-up is unbudgeted money and not something that can be transferred for another use.
- Concerns were expressed that the discussion was assuming a more permanent solution to the overnight camping issue, rather than a simple, smaller-scale plan. The original goal was to allow unhoused people to sleep without penalty.
- It was noted the proposed ordinance defines "overnight sleeping" as "from dusk to dawn", which changes each season.
- Concerns were expressed about competing needs and the reality of non-profit agencies closing their doors due to lack of funding. Social service agencies depend on money from various sources to address elements of homelessness.

- There is wide support for partnering with other local agencies, faith communities, businesses and individuals, to make the proposal more sustainable.
- More information about the City's liability was requested.
- It is important that the sites are equally dispersed around the city so no one area is impacted any more than another.
- Ideally, camping areas should be located along transit routes and close to social services.
- Camp sites should not be near schools for safety reasons.
- The council's primary objective is to review the camping ban and amend it to allow overnight sleeping.
- Staff was asked to refresh the site list and clarify the criteria. Define what is ideal vs. what is necessary.
- Identify which non-profit and for-profit agencies/communities have the capacity to help with this initiative.

Mayor Piercy urged the council to consider what questions need to be answered in order to move this forward and make progress. Another work session will be scheduled to continue this discussion.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Mortensen,
Deputy City Recorder