

MINUTES

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

**February 10, 2020
5:30 p.m.**

Councilors Present: Betty Taylor, Emily Semple, Alan Zelenka, Jennifer Yeh, Mike Clark, Greg Evans, Claire Syrett, Chris Pryor

Mayor Vinis opened the February 10, 2020, work session of the Eugene City Council.

1. Executive Session: Pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(e)

City Council met in Executive Session pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(e).

2. Work Session: Town Square Project Update

Urban Development Manager Will Dowdy gave an update about the Town Square Project and asked for decision points about City Hall from City Council.

Discussion

- Councilor Clark – asked about the continued increase of construction costs and the impacts of state legislation on those costs; said he was hoping the City would set a budget and decide what it can get for that, instead of making decisions before a budget is put in place; said he has asked about how long the Downtown Urban Renewal District would have to be extended in order to fund a \$22 million dollar city hall and that the voters will not support an extension; said asking for money on the ballot to fund city hall will fail; said he would vote no on each decision today because this is the wrong approach for moving forward.
- Councilor Taylor – said she thinks the City should build for the future and not pursue a building that will be torn down in 50 years; said she'd like a third choice on the first motion, including bringing City offices that are currently renting space to city hall so that they are all in one location; said she thinks the underground parking is worth doing and much needed downtown, especially after the butterfly lot is removed; said she wants to first ask what is needed in a city hall and what is good for the future of the city and then figure out where to get the money; said environmental sustainability of the building is important, but not the LEED certification, and that she supported the hybrid seismic standards.
- Councilor Syrett – said she's not in favor of building additional office space to lease or to house other city offices; said she's not in favor of the underground parking because it's too expensive and conflicts with goals to discourage people from driving; thanked staff for bringing the costs and options for environmental standards forward; said she supports city policy and working towards LEED silver certification; asked for an example of monitoring that creates the \$40,000 cost for administering the certification; said she's in favor of the "safety plus" as an alternative for seismic standards because it protects the investment in the building without needing immediate occupancy; confirmed that the building would be insured up to \$75 million dollars.
- Councilor Zelenka – said he's not sure cap and trade would contribute to the cost increase of a building and that energy efficiency would bring costs down over the long run; said adding more floors would increase the cost and that there was an analysis done that showed the City's leases are cheaper than adding new building space and he's in favor of a modest building that meets basic needs; said it's important that the public meeting space be multi-purpose and overlooking the market and plaza; asked how many underground parking spaces would be possible and said he was not in favor of adding it; asked how maintaining certification standards adds value to the

building and if there are studies done of value added to and costs benefits of LEED silver versus other buildings; asked if the seismic building cost is based on square feet.

- Councilor Pryor – asked about the previously proposed \$28 million dollar building and where that would have been built, noting that building on the previous city hall site is no longer an option; noted that the City is planning to build a different building in a different place with a different price tag and is in more in control of what is being building now; said it would be hard to lease any additional space because it would be too expensive to build; said he wants to build a 21st century city hall on the scale being discussed; said underground parking is too expensive, even though parking needs to be addressed; said if we’re trying to achieve a sustainability standard, there should be verification to know if it’s been achieved; supported the hybrid seismic model.
- Councilor Yeh – asked for help understanding the timeline; asked how decisions will be made along the way that will have costs associated with them; shared concerns that there will be momentum moving forward towards a facility with a huge price tag that will be out of the ballpark when the ballpark hasn’t been defined.
- Councilor Semple – said she supports LEED silver certification and the seismic life-safety plus option; said the other options are a conundrum between what the council has said it wants and what it will cost; said that with the goals of density and building up, it wouldn’t make sense to only build a three-story building; said she didn’t want to lease out floors, because it would be nice to have a central area where more City staff are located, such as the staff on the fourth floor of the library; said people should be able to park at city hall, but that may be old thinking and it costs too much; asked who gets to make design decisions along the way.
- Councilor Clark –said this proposal will be over 40 million dollars when it comes back to council; said parking is desperately needed downtown, especially because new units of housing are being built downtown without parking; asked why the City isn’t working on a public-private partnership to build more parking on the county lot that’s a block and a half away and can house underground and three stories of parking on it; said he’s concerned that there’s no ceiling on the budget and that the council hasn’t talked about where this money will come from; opposed voting on these issues because the community will be unhappy with this process.
- Councilor Syrett – asked about costs associated with LEED; asked if the LEED certification takes into account more than the energy efficiency of the building, but also the environmental impacts of materials and construction itself; said that whether a budget is set now or an estimate after some direction is given, there will be public opposition to this project and council will have to make difficult choices about how it pays for this building; said none of these decisions are final; the council will give direction to the team to come up with an estimate and it can then decide what steps to take in terms of funding or scaling back.
- Councilor Evans – asked what the sources of money would be to finish this project if it moves forward.
- Councilor Zelenka – said that they are narrowing down the concept of city hall so that a price estimate can be generated, which can be adjusted later; said he assumes that as the cost is determined, staff will bring back potential funding plans; asked for the previous cost study for leases and summary of building comparison costs to be provided to council.
- Mayor Vinis – reminded council that they are in the process of reviewing the Draft Climate Action Plan 2.0 and a few of these decisions are very relevant to that, including discouraging people from driving and holding ourselves accountable to reducing our environmental impact through construction.

MOTION: Councilor Semple, seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved to direct the City Manager to design City Hall without additional floors of leasable real estate.

MOTION TO SUBSTITUTE: Councilor Taylor, seconded by Councilor Semple, moved to direct the City Manager to design City Hall with additional floors for city offices that are currently paying rent in other buildings.

Discussion

- Councilor Zelenka – asked for clarification of Councilor Taylor’s motion because there is large number of City operations that lease building space and if the intent was to relocate every office to the city hall space, the building would be significantly bigger and more expensive.
- Councilor Taylor – said she wants offices that the public needs access to located in the building, such as permit services; said people are upset that money is spent to lease space.

VOTE ON MOTION TO SUBSTITUTE: FAILED 2:6, Councilors Semple and Taylor in favor.

Discussion

- Councilor Clark – said he wanted to move to consider a budget first on Wednesday but would also like to move the votes on these motions to Wednesday so they can have a more thorough conversation; said the community’s opinion should be known before staff spends a lot of time planning based on council’s votes.

MOTION and VOTE: Councilor Clark, seconded by Councilor Evans, moved to postpone this debate over these issues to Wednesday and to add a discussion of budget and money sourcing. **FAILED 3:5,** Councilors Semple, Clark, and Evans in favor.

VOTE ON ORIGINAL MOTION: PASSED 5:4, Mayor Vinis broke the tie and voted in favor with Councilors Zelenka, Yeh, Syrett, and Pryor.

MOTION AND VOTE: Councilor Semple, seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved to direct the City Manager to design City Hall without underground parking. **PASSED 7:1,** Councilor Taylor opposed.

MOTION AND VOTE: Councilor Semple, seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved to direct the City Manager to design City Hall to achieve LEED Silver certification. **PASSED 6:2,** Councilors Clark and Evans opposed.

MOTION AND VOTE: Councilor Semple, seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved to direct the City Manager to design City Hall to a seismic standard above Life Safety, with the intent of City Hall being repairable after an earthquake. **PASSED 6:2,** Councilors Clark and Evans opposed.

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Beth Forrest
City Recorder

(Recorded by Elena Domingo)

Link to the webcast of this City Council meeting [here](#).