

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Virtual Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

May 13, 2020
12:00 p.m.

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

Mayor Vinis opened the May 13, 2020, work session of the Eugene City Council.

1. **WORK SESSION: COVID-19 Update**

Chief Heppel gave a presentation which included current local data, information about Lane County's Phase 1 application, and looking ahead to what reopening will look like in Phase 1 and beyond.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Syrett – thanked Chief Heppel for the thorough update; asked for staff to inquire of Lane County if it will be increasing staffing for contact tracing and if so, will it be requiring contract tracers to be registered nurses; asked for staff to clarify with Lane County that if it does need a higher capacity of contract tracers the State will be providing them; as a follow-up to Dr. Luedtke's presentation, asked staff to request Dr. Luedtke share with Council his response to a colleague regarding the emergency room doctors' video.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked what testing capability is as of today, and what the prognosis is for ramping up testing to a significant degree; asked if 5,000 tests per day could be done; asked if the testing policy at this time is to test those who are potentially sick or if those who are just curious are being tested as well; cautioned making testing data public as some lower-income and ethnic groups have shown a higher propensity to be infected and this may cause discriminatory tendencies; asked if the County receives its testing equipment from the State; commended the UO for being a great community partner in allowing use of their labs, facilities, knowledge and expertise to help the community through this situation.
- Councilor Clark – thanked the Chief for the report and the work that all are doing to keep people safe; asked what prevents Lane County from being able to conduct 4,000-5,000 tests per day, and asked staff to confer with Lane County for a specific answer; asked about batch testing and why it is not being done.
- Councilor Semple – asked to confirm if 500 tests are being conducted per day; expressed urgency for testing of as many as possible; asked how council can get an accurate testing number; asked if vulnerable populations are testing positive at a higher rate; asked if we are testing in the jail and pointed out this is a congregate living situation with the potential for a flare-up; stated that more testing is needed.
- Councilor Pryor – stated it sounds like councilors would like to move from the current reactive testing situation to a more proactive testing scenario; asked staff to provide information on what is needed to get to the proactive testing scenario.
- Councilor Taylor – asked when City Council meetings can again take place in person; wanted to know if residents can visit the coast.
- Councilor Clark – asked what the guidance and the Governor's authority is regarding visiting the coast (not recommended vs. prohibited).

2. WORK SESSION and ACTION: Broadway & Hilyard Property Disposition Deal Points

Amanda D'Souza gave a brief presentation on deal points for the City-owned property at the corner of Broadway and Hilyard.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Zelenka – expressed approval of the vision and plan and thinks it will be a great addition for the community if it is built; stated the track record of people buying surplus property from the City and following through with their plans is poor, and doesn't believe anyone who has gone through this type of process (small parcel sales, alley vacations, etc.) has ever done what they said they would do; said he believes this is because the City doesn't make any requirements of buyers in the terms of the sale; suggested if the City is not going to add a provision to the sale requiring completion of the improvement by a certain time or it reverts back to City, then a different process should be used, such as selling the property to the highest bidder; asked staff if any of the previous sales conducted with a similar process have fulfilled their visions; stated the way we do the process is bothersome to him and doesn't result in anything but people sharing ideas.
- Councilor Clark – asked why this parcel was not used for the improvements for which it was purchased; stated the property is in bad shape and is not being well maintained, and those offering to purchase it have motivation in the operation of their business to make it look better than the City has; stated he is in favor of the sale because the net result will be the City receiving money for property it doesn't want or use, and it will result in a more attractive entrance to the city.
- Councilor Pryor – observed the City has owned the site for over 10 years and has done nothing with it other than build a piece of road on it; stated he knows Tom Connor and the work he has done, and has high faith Mr. Connor will do what he says he will do; stated he believes the City did alley vacations or property sales for Whole Foods, the 5th Street Market expansion, the Woolworth Building and Matthew Knight Arena, all of which were built or are being built; said if the City is going to be involved in property and development there is a risk, but overall he feels the City's success rate is good. Stated he has confidence in Mr. Connor as he has control of the adjacent property with plans to improve it, the City will receive \$90,000 that it otherwise wouldn't have, and the parcel will be improved; he is supportive of the project, thinks it has a lot of promise and is comfortable taking the risk to see that vision pay off.
- Councilor Syrett – thanked staff for the presentation, stated she is supportive of the current deal points and thinks a mural at this site will be a significant improvement; expressed disappointment that Mr. Connor has not been able to secure the property to the west which appears to be held by a family trust, and that it may remain vacant and undeveloped for years to come in a major commercial corridor where improvements are being planned; recalled a successful disposition of city property being the alley vacation by the jail; stated she doesn't see any value in keeping the parcel and sees it rather as offloading a burden and gaining a small piece of taxable property; said if the new owner can fulfil his vision it will improve the value of the property and those nearby, all of which are net positives; asked if the parcel has pedestrian but no vehicle access and if the plan calls for the new owner to make access for food trucks.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated he will vote for the proposal and that his comments were not about this project as he hopes it will be built; his comments were about future projects and thinking about ways to make the process have meaning and not just result in some nice drawings that may or may not happen; clarified the projects he was specifically talking about do not include the large projects that have large building components as part of them, they were the smaller ones.
- Councilor Semple – reminded the council that this was the site of Whoville, which started out being a decent place for homeless people to have a place to sleep; said she understands it is an entrance to the city and \$90,000 is a lot of money, but at the same time, more places to shelter people are urgently needed.

MOTION AND VOTE: Councilor Semple, seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved to authorize the City Manager to sell the parcel identified in Attachment A to Budgetel Inns of Oregon, Inc. consistent with the terms included in Attachment B. **PASSED 8:0.**

3. WORK SESSION: Downtown Riverfront Phase 1 Infrastructure

Denny Braud and Emily Proudfoot gave a brief presentation outlining the infrastructure project that is needed to access the new Downtown Riverfront Park.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Clark – thanked staff for the presentation; asked staff how they came to the determination this will be the most visited park in Eugene and inquired if this plan gives adequate access for a highly visited park; asked if this infrastructure will make accessing the riverfront area easier and if it will connect to the EWEB Administration building; inquired when the commercial aspect such as restaurants and shops (not housing) will begin development on the site; asked if the Phase 1 infrastructure serves all of the commercial and public aspects.
- Councilor Zelenka – thanked staff for the presentation and stated he likes the vision of the riverfront development; said his concern continues to be around the recent changes in the project which he feels have fundamentally shifted how the project is completed, and which in turn has changed the risk, the timing and the potential of what will be built; if the Williams and Dame project doesn't come through, the City is considering a different model where it is acting alone, building and paying for the infrastructure and acting as general contractor to partner with multiple developers to build single parts of the overall master plan; expressed nervousness with this new model as it is significantly different from the original path, with more risk and work by the City; asked whether the City should stick with plan A and wait to act on the infrastructure until that part of the plan has some certainty (i.e. we have a deal with Williams & Dame); stated he doesn't agree there is no access to the park – there are City-owned parking lots on 4th and Mill which are a half-block away from this park and will give ample access, in addition to the bike paths on either side of it.
- Councilor Syrett – stated that overall she believes the pros outweigh the cons in terms of moving forward on the infrastructure, and for her at this time the negatives outweigh the benefits of not doing so; stated she will speak to that more specifically at a time when Council is considering a motion.
- Councilor Semple – stated she likes the project even though it has changed, as it brings needed elements right now such as jobs, housing and low-income housing; stated it was always a possibility that Williams & Dame might back out of the project; asked how much of this investment might be available for recovery projects if the project doesn't go forward and, if it's not available, this project might as well be completed; suggested that the land could be used for some temporary camp sites as long as it remains empty.
- Mayor Vinis – stated this is a recovery project – this is jobs and public investment that will spur other economic investment; stated she sees this as part of the community's economic recovery from this crisis, and is grateful to be in a position to move forward on a project that does create jobs and does show investment and confidence in the future.
- Councilor Taylor – asked for more consideration of the climate and the Climate Action Plan; people can get to the park by foot and bicycle; asked if Williams & Dame will back out of the project if new natural gas is prohibited at the development site; stated she thinks we should delay the infrastructure.

The meeting adjourned at 1:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Forrest

Beth Forrest
City Recorder

(Recorded by Jessica Gebb)

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