

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Virtual Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

June 24, 2020
12:00 p.m.

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

Councilors Absent: Greg Evans.

Mayor Vinis opened the June 27, 2020, work session of the Eugene City Council.

- 1. WORK SESSION: Adoption of the Eugene-Springfield Area Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan 2020**
Emergency Manager Kevin Holman gave a brief presentation of the Eugene-Springfield Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan (NHMP) for Council approval.

MOTION AND VOTE: Councilor Semple, seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved to adopt a Resolution Adopting the Eugene-Springfield Area Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan 2020 and Replacing the Plan Adopted by Resolution NO. 5126. **PASSED 7:0.**

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Syrett – asked whether any public comments had been received, and what the nature of the comments were.

- 2. WORK SESSION: Wild Turkey Population Management**

Building and Permit Services Director Lydia Kaye introduced Chris Yee with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), who gave a presentation on strategies enacted to reduce the wild turkey population in Eugene.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Pryor – thanked staff and ODFW for the update; stated he was unaware of the degree to which trapping had begun and circumstances constraining that up to now; stated he is glad to hear the superflocks are beginning to break up; encouraged ODFW to also focus mitigation strategies in the south hills where turkey populations concentrate; thanked ODFW for its work.
- Councilor Syrett – expressed surprise that Ya-Po-Ah Terrace was a starting point for trapping as she did not realize there was a concentration of turkeys in the area; asked how large the flock was when trapping began at that location; expressed appreciation for the advice and partnership of ODFW in trying to mitigate the situation.
- Councilor Zelenka – thanked ODFW for its work; asked how well the feeding ban is working; asked how long the population reduction through trapping will take; offered assistance to ODFW to advocate for funding if it finds funding is reduced for this work; asked how large a flock and superflock are; asked how many flocks are in the city limits.
- Councilor Taylor – asked if trapped birds are killed and stated she is disturbed by this; stated she doesn't believe turkeys do a lot of harm.
- Mayor Vinis – stated it is helpful to know this will be a long-term process; stated that a 150-bird flock is alarming and reinforces the need to reduce the turkey population; thanked ODFW for its work.

- 3. WORK SESSION: Public Safety Review Discussion**

City Manager Sarah Medary introduced the discussion, with the purpose of preparing for the July 20 Council Work Session on Public Safety Funding Review.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Yeh – shared that the Civilian Review Board (CRB), supported by the Police Commission (PC), has requested the formation of a task force or ad hoc committee to assist in reviewing police policy; stated that Councilor Evans has a task force or committee idea as well, but would prefer he be present to articulate his ideas.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated he is committed to reform and action, both within EPD and other City institutions; stated Council has received an enormous amount of public input and should ensure everyone is heard; stated his first criteria for creation of a group is that it be an inclusive, large committee with many voices including those of Council, commissions and community groups; shared his second criteria that Council act in a timely manner while being thoughtful and deliberate, making a plan for short- and long-term actions; suggested before the July 20 work session, Council can make suggestions of different groups of people that could be on this committee.
- Councilor Pryor –stated he likes the idea of being able to work on this in an inclusive way; cautioned that accomplishing something constructive will take time and will need to be a knowledgeable and informed process capable of harnessing people’s passion and energy; stated he thinks this task force can be a good way to do this, but wants it to move along.
- Councilor Clark – thanked Chief Skinner and the police officers who helped protect the councilors’ homes during the protests; stated he would like to hear more people in the community talk about the outcomes they want to see; stated he served on the Police Commission for nine years and worked on the use-of-force policies, and noted that if Council reviews any of them, a thorough process is used; stated he was concerned to read the statement from the City’s Human Rights Commission which contained inaccuracies and misinformed ideas about how policy is created and executed in the City; stated he wants to hear from the City’s commissions but they should understand how the City works.
- Councilor Taylor – expressed appreciation to the police department and stated she is concerned for the families of police officers who are having to hear all the things said about their loved one; stated she does not believe the police department is racist, and does not believe the City has racist policies, but thinks there are people who are still racist; stated she is opposed to forming an ad hoc committee and that Council should be the committee, working with police leadership and officers; stated the local police force is being blamed for something that happened in Minneapolis when it is not the practices and policies used here; stated she is concerned about this and it is why she didn’t want to sign the Council statement which said the police and the City have racist policies when that is not true.
- Councilor Syrett – stated it does seem like Council is discussing two different ideas: consideration of budget priorities as they relate to community safety, and consideration of the City’s police policies specifically, which predicates the request from the CRB and PC to form a committee; stated she is in support of looking at a longer-term rebalancing of Community Safety expenditures and watching for opportunities in the short-term, such as dedicating increased marijuana tax revenues to homelessness and social services; expressed desire for Council to be deliberative and engage with a broad sector of the community to define clear outcomes.
- Mayor Vinis – stated the City and City Council have lamented the challenge of recruiting and including young voices and diverse voices in the City’s boards and commissions and policy-making groups, and now there is a groundswell of young and diverse voices who want to engage in civic decisions; stated she sees it an opportunity for both sides, for the City to understand who they are and their concerns, and for them the opportunity to learn about the civic system and how to make changes within that foundation and structure.

- Councilor Zelenka – stated he doesn't see the distinction between the budget issues and the police issues, he sees them as intertwined and would not want to have two parallel processes; stated he appreciates the frustration and passion of those wanting to get this solved, but wants to act in a thoughtful way; stated we can start distinguishing things to work on in the short-term with a deadline so as not to run the risk of talk with no action; suggested we can start off with listening sessions to hear people's ideas and have a create a summary before the Council work session on July 20; thanked police for their work.
- Councilor Yeh – thanked the police officers for being present during the protests at councilors' homes; stated she thinks the issues are too big for one committee; expressed concern for the entire Council being on the committee and stated whatever the end result is, the majority of members should not be Councilors; stated she hopes staff is finding an opportunity to look at equity issues within the organization; stated she would like to move forward with creating the group the CRB and PC have requested as she would like to be responsive to their request and have it going before summer break.
- Councilor Clark – stated he wants to live in a community where each person in it is treated equally before the law, and thinks it has almost never been true; stated the council instituted a payroll tax to fund public safety more thoroughly, and if that narrative is to change and resources are moved away from policing, consideration should be given to getting rid of the payroll tax just created; stated he doesn't think Council has a read on where most of the community is on these issues and until it does, should not be acting.
- Councilor Pryor – stated there are a number of changes already being considered in Salem and Washington, D.C., to which Council needs to pay attention to know how it fits into any conversations or strategies at the local level; cautioned that actions will need to be thought through to avoid any unknowns or unexpected consequences, and it will need to be a thoughtful, knowledgeable and deliberate process; stated everyone must be honest in the way they approach the process.
- Councilor Semple – stated the issue is huge and emotional, but is also an opportunity; stated Council needs to respond as quickly as possible, but also carefully and inclusively; suggested Council needs to work upstream and eliminate some of the reasons for law enforcement; stated she wants to have a more peaceful dialogue with good outcomes, and wonders how the rest of the community thinks because she cannot hear them over the group that is extremely loud.
- Councilor Taylor – agreed that not everyone is being heard and she doesn't know anyone that doesn't think the idea of defunding the police is appalling; stated it is an emotional topic that is causing people to be illogical; stated she was never in favor of the payroll tax and feels it should be repealed or revised because it discriminates against low-wage people and can contribute to more homelessness; stated she thinks Council should vote on whether to establish this large committee.
- Councilor Syrett – stated she voted in support of the budget and is supportive of the current plan on how the payroll tax will be allocated; stated that going forward she is willing to consider measured shifts over time to increase support for other ways to achieve public safety and feels a significant portion of her constituents would be supportive of that shift; stated she feels there are two conversations: questions about police policy that Councilor Yeh is proposing Council find a potential way to start the conversation, and how implementation of activities is supported through the budget process, whether it is homeless services, police patrols, or 911; stated these items need to be deliberated and voted on by Council before moving forward with consideration of these topics.
- Mayor Vinis – acknowledged everyone's impatience to commit to action and encouraged patience for outcomes; stated the CRB and PC can do work on looking at specific police policies, and Council can commit itself to a large community conversation without predicting what the outcome will be.

- Councilor Zelenka – agreed how police policy and budgeting/Community Safety Initiative construct can be two different processes, and this dichotomy can also lead to two immediate actions; stated he doesn't buy into the idea of defunding police; suggested another model that would allow councilor involvement is as an ex-officio member, without voting privileges but there to hear the conversation; stated the two presumptive councilors for wards 2 and 8 need to be included too; said he thinks Eugene's story of its long legacy of reform needs to be told; in the short-term the Mayor and City Manager can collect more input to be considered at the July 20 meeting, to help Council craft a more thoughtful process.
- Councilor Clark – stated he spent a lot of time on the Police Commission writing many of these policies, including the bias-free policing policy, which involved many conversations with officers and staff in the department to understand how the impact of those policies, written by non-police people, affect their day-to-day lives; asked Council to consider what it expects of the police department and does it expect police officers to make the right decisions and behave perfectly all of the time; stated it is an important question to be fair to employees about how they are asked to do the job of keeping the community safe, enforcing and forcing people to comply with the rules.
- Mayor Vinis – stated it is her hope through a community conversation that community members can understand more about how government works and Council can get a better sense of priorities and outcomes; stated there is a dynamic process that can happen.

MOTION: Councilor Yeh, seconded by Councilor Syrett, moved to direct the City Manager to work with staff, the Human Rights Commission, the Police Commission and the Civilian Review Board to create a task force from those groups and the community, tasked with developing a plan for reviewing and making recommendations on police policy to Council and then making those recommendations.

MOTION TO POSTPONE: Councilor Clark, seconded by Councilor Taylor, moved to postpone and have the discussion prior to July 30.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Clark – stated Councilor Evans is not present and he does not want to vote on the creation of this group without him; stated more time is needed to discuss many pieces of this motion which Council does not have at this meeting.
- Councilor Zelenka – suggested the motion could be simplified and brought back on July 20; stated Councilor Evans needs to be part of the conversation.
- Councilor Semple – stated Council needs to vote on the motion, but not today; stated she is concerned about leaving it until July 20 and agreed that Councilor Evans needs to be present.
- Mayor Vinis – suggested she and the City Manager can look for a new date, and Council and staff can come back more prepared for the conversation.
- Councilor Taylor – stated the City has a Police Commission and its function is to make recommendations on police policy, so why create another committee; stated she supports the motion to postpone.
- Councilor Yeh – stated she appreciates the direction and agrees to postpone as long as it is not to July 20; stated for the motion she will suggest three members from the HRC, PC, CRB, and City Council with an additional 4-5 community members.

VOTE ON MOTION TO POSTPONE: PASSED 7:0.

The meeting adjourned at 1:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
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Work Session

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Beth Forrest

Beth Forrest
City Recorder

(Recorded by Jessica Gebb)

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