

## MINUTES

### Eugene City Council Virtual Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

September 16, 2020  
12:00 p.m.

**Councilors Present:** Betty Taylor, Alan Zelenka, Jennifer Yeh, Claire Syrett, Chris Pryor

**Councilor's Absent:** Emily Semple, Mike Clark, Greg Evans

Mayor Vinis opened the September 16, 2020, work session of the Eugene City Council.

#### 1. **WORK SESSION: Community Safety Initiative Workshops for Communities of Color**

Human Rights and Neighborhood Involvement Manager Michael Kinnison provided an update on the convening of workshops for communities of color, including which organizations will be included, the process and the timeline.

Councilor Evans joined the meeting at 12:12 pm.

#### Council Discussion:

- Mayor Vinis – thanked staff for the presentation and work; stated this is a major outreach effort to undertake on a short timeline.
- Councilor Taylor – asked why this group was created in addition to the Ad Hoc Committee on Police Policy when the same communities are involved; stated that if workshops are held to discuss community safety, everyone in the city should be included; asked how often this group will meet and if participants will be paid; stated the payroll tax needs to be repealed because it is discriminatory to low-income individuals.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked if these are invitation-only workshops; stated if all participants get to talk, it will be a long meeting and suggested breaking the list into smaller groups; stated a large meeting will be ineffective for collecting input; asked why 15<sup>th</sup> Night was not included; stated he would like to see broader public input and asked if this process can include an additional open public meeting.
- Mayor Vinis – suggested the possibility of a survey instrument following the workshops as opposed to another public meeting.
- Councilor Yeh – said she appreciates this first step and suggested it can be part of a larger engagement plan; stated she anticipated that representatives of the groups would be able to go back to their communities for discussion and come back together, and feels one month is not realistic to accomplish this during a pandemic; stated more effort needs to be made to reach out to these communities; asked staff if feedback was collected from the Community Safety Initiative speaking events from a couple of years ago.
- Councilor Syrett – expressed approval of the presented process goals but has concerns around the outline for the actual process and stated the process needs to be longer and should not be rushed; suggested recrafting the process to be more along the lines of focus groups with 10-12 people for 90-120 minute sessions, which will be more appropriate for in-depth discussions; stated she doesn't feel the need to re-engage with neighborhood groups or hold an all-comers meeting.
- Councilor Pryor – agreed that a focus group model would work best, with the groups created not just around ethnic, religious or cultural groups but also around particular issues such as

police, emergency response or social services; supported the Mayor's suggestion of a statistically valid survey.

- Councilor Taylor – stated it is a filter if these groups are allowed to come between Council and the public and feels Council is the body that should be talking policy with the public; stated all parts of the City should be able to participate in conversations about community safety and she will be voting against this unless it is changed to include everyone.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated a survey may look more like a solicitation of ideas and thinks Council wants this process to be a broader input or solicitation about the Community Safety Initiative (CSI); stated he doesn't feel the large forum format is going to solicit valuable or meaningful input; stated he doesn't perceive this as a rush and taking several months to complete the process is fine; suggested the City Manager come back with a new motion instead of crafting one on the fly.
- Mayor Vinis – said this concept came out of a demand for defunding the police and adjusting the budget, and the intent is to have a targeted, responsive and accessible approach to organizations that work on behalf of the BIPOC community and represent those interests, making it easier for these groups to look at the CSI and respond thoughtfully; stated the City Manager was correct in reading that Council was under pressure regarding the Supplemental Budget and reminded Council these were the original intents to which staff was responding; stated she doesn't think a separate engagement process is needed, noting the council is trying to do targeted outreach to communities of color.
- Councilor Evans – stated he represents multiple constituencies including Ward 6 and the entire city community, but specifically is a BIPOC representative on this body; stated that reallocating resources to a social services framework is something people want to see happen and this means moving more money into CAHOOTS and working closely with Lane County and the State around mental health and addiction services; stated police want to do police work, not social work, and the council needs to help police to narrow their focus and treat all communities in an equitable and fair way.
- Councilor Yeh – stated she is in favor of the City Manager coming back with a second option and liked the idea of smaller, more focused groups; stated she is happy to be involved in this process in some capacity to make connections and start building trust; asked if consideration would be given to integrating another funding source such as the marijuana tax and wanted to make sure that doesn't drop from the radar as another option for funding.
- Councilor Syrett – stated she supports the idea of the City Manager coming back to Council with a modified proposal; suggested there could be a module that helps explain the CSI that people could watch before coming to a forum or focus group; stated she can support expanding outreach as long as it is not at the cost of ensuring input explicitly from the BIPOC community; stated Council could potentially begin in December with the Supplemental Budget looking into having marijuana tax revenues fund some of this work or ideas that come out of this work.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated the expanded outreach would be in addition to and to supplement the BIPOC outreach, and it is important to reach out to all because of all the changes that have happened since George Floyd died; agreed it is important to push the timeline out to be thoughtful and do this right.
- Councilor Pryor – reiterated it is important to be thoughtful rather than fast; stated the council needs to try to be as broad as it can while being focused.
- Mayor Vinis – stated “Be impatient for action and patient for outcomes,” and said she felt this conversation reflects that; Council is impatient for workshops to begin and to be responsive to community demands, while patient for outcomes in terms of making sure it is going in the right direction and doing the right thing.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked the City Manager to recap what she heard and talk about how she will proceed.

- Mayor Vinis – stated it is important for the community to know where the council is going with this initiative and that this is not an indefinite process with a prolonged timeline.

The meeting adjourned at 1:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Julie Adams".

Julie Adams  
Deputy City Recorder

*(Recorded by Jessica Gebb)*

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