

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Virtual Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

September 30, 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 September 30, 2020, work session of the Eugene City Council.

1. WORK SESSION: 1059 Willamette Redevelopment

Business Development Analyst Amanda D'Souza and Economic Development Planner Anne Fifield gave a presentation about the disposition and redevelopment of the property located at 1059 Willamette Street (former Lane Community College Downtown Center).

MOTION: Councilor Semple, seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved to direct the City Manager to release the RFP for disposition of the 1059 Willamette site using the RFP criteria in Attachment A, and direct the City Manager to identify the Gordon Lofts MUPTE Moderate Income Housing fee (an estimated \$400K) as available funding in the RFP to support the 1059 Willamette project.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Syrett – thanked staff for the presentation and expressed excitement about moving forward with this project; asked if these moderate income units will be designated as such forever or if there is a sunset date or situation in which they can be converted to market-rate; asked how a MUPTE would fit in with the other subsidies in this building, if it would only apply to the market-rate portion or the whole thing; stated the proposal to use the fee from the Gordon Lofts MUPTE reinforces her view that taking the fee rather than requiring built units in the MUPTE project itself gives Council flexibility in directing money toward projects like this one that probably would not otherwise be able to get off the ground; asked staff when the council will have a sense of how much more public dollars will need to be contributed to make this project successful.
- Councilor Pryor – thanked staff for the presentation and expressed enthusiasm about converting this location into a housing option; stated he is pleased with the ability to get half of it into an affordable category, which is for a lower income level than workforce housing; stated these types of projects require incentives in order to make them pencil out and the council needs to be open to the fact that some additional incentives may need to be offered to get what it wants from the project; stated he likes the progress made so far.
- Councilor Taylor – asked if staff are assuming the building will be demolished and stated this concerns her considerably and is not in keeping with climate action plans; stated she still thinks this building should be made into a much-needed downtown homeless shelter; asked staff if there could be a choice in the RFP of whether the building will be remodeled or demolished.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated that remodeling a building can be more expensive than building new and building new is completely consistent with the council's climate goals as most of the building's energy is not imbedded in the construction but in its use over time; stated as the originator of the MUPTE fee for housing projects, this is exactly what he had in mind to give Council flexibility in promoting projects like this; suggested Council could use the prospective

HUB money to fund this project; asked how many units can be placed on a lot this size; asked clarifying questions about funding of various affordable housing options; asked if bonus points or weighting within the RFP's scoring evaluation could be awarded for proposals keeping the property as affordable housing past the 20-year period for incomes less than 80 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI).

MOTION TO AMEND: Councilor Zelenka, seconded by Councilor Syrett, moved to add additional weighting to favor projects that continue affordable housing units up to 80 percent AMI past the 20-year period.

- Councilor Evans –stated there has been little to no maintenance done to the building for many years, a large amount of asbestos removal must be done and structural damage has occurred; stated experts have advised Lane Community College (LCC) there is no value in reusing the site as-is because it will cost too much money.
- Councilor Clark – stated he will vote against the motion if it is altered in this way because he is concerned that limiting the scope of the RFP will result in less creative proposals; understands the benefit of keeping the units affordable past 20 years, but requiring it may preclude something else we may not know we want.
- Councilor Pryor – the application process currently used for affordable housing has the ability to have base requirements and extra points, which are not required for the project but give it favorable standing, and a developer can submit a proposal for whatever he wants and can pencil out; stated he thinks what Councilor Zelenka is proposing is a reasonable middle ground because it is an incentive not a requirement; stated he agrees with Councilors Evans and Zelenka that the LCC Building would require too much money to restore, and would then be an energy-wasting and expensive building that would not meet the housing requirements we need.
- Councilor Syrett – stated she does not believe the motion Councilor Zelenka is proposing will preclude anyone; stated she doesn't see any value in trying to reuse the building and there is nothing historic about it.
- Councilor Clark – asked staff if they think this motion would preclude a developer from submitting an RFP.

VOTE ON MOTION TO AMEND: PASSED 8:0.

- Councilor Zelenka – asked if the idea of adding in HUB funds will be a different topic or where it will come in; asked if staff might include it in the RFP.

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION AS AMENDED: PASSED 8:0.

Mayor Vinis adjourned the meeting of the Eugene City Council and convened a meeting of the Eugene Urban Renewal Agency.

2. ACTION: 1059 Willamette Redevelopment

MOTION AND VOTE: Councilor Semple, seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved to direct the Agency Director to identify \$700K of Downtown Urban Renewal tax increment funds as available funding in the City RFP to support the 1059 Willamette project. **PASSED: 8:0.**

Mayor Vinis adjourned the meeting of the Eugene Urban Renewal Agency and reconvened the meeting of the Eugene City Council.

3. WORK SESSION: Homeless Services Update

City Manager's Office Director Brooke Freed, Homeless Systems Policy Manager Peter Chavannes and Joint Housing and Shelter Strategist Sarai Johnson provided an update on emergency shelter.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Syrett – thanked staff for the work, and stated she knows how challenging it has been to find additional rest stop sites and supports these proposed sites; asked staff what site management provisions will be made to ensure that people who are not residents of the site are prevented from camping in the vicinity of the site; asked if the City Manager will continue to have the authority to close a site should it become untenable or unworkable; asked if people currently camping near the proposed sites will be prioritized for outreach to be brought into the site should it be established; asked if staff will be coming back to Council with information about microsites in the next couple of weeks.
- Councilor Pryor – stated he is supportive of this proposal and the location suggested for Ward 8; agreed that a managed and supervised approach is what is needed for his ward and would be in favor of opening more sites in Ward 8 as long as this same managed/supervised model is used.
- Councilor Yeh – stated she is supportive of this effort and glad to see the number of sites that have been identified; asked staff to give a brief summary of the engagement process.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked clarifying questions about the engagement process and the identified sites; stated he is willing to move forward with the list; expressed his amazement that the City have gone from zero to 655 spaces in just five years, which is a huge accomplishment.
- Councilor Clark – congratulated staff for a remarkable job of fulfilling Council direction; stated he thinks this problem will become dramatically worse soon and though he has supported this direction in the past, he thinks it is entirely inadequate for the problems this community will face and the council needs to make a significant change in how it is dealing with this issue.
- Councilor Semple – stated she is thrilled for these additional sites and supports going forward with them; stated it is critical to use the CARES money not only for immediate help but to also be wise in investing it in things that can be used in the future; said she does not feel the most visible people will be staying at these rest stops or microsites; stated more land is needed and a way to make sites accommodate more people, such as campsites with camp hosts; expressed her gratitude for these new sites.
- Councilor Taylor – agrees with Councilor Clark that this is the wrong approach; stated Council voted to build an emergency shelter and hasn't done it, and these additional beds are insignificant compared to the bigger problem.
- Councilor Evans – stated that clearly what is being done is not enough and it is time for the City to develop its own strategy; said illegal camping has become a significant public health and safety problem and the homeless are being directed to Eugene because this is where the services are; said he thinks a municipal response or strategy is needed, and investment in that strategy to deal with the issues the community now faces.
- Mayor Vinis – reminded Council that rest stops are an established Council policy, and Council directed staff to work on this policy and staff has done so; stated it is part of several strategies that are all coming to fruition, including super-siting, service expansion of providers and continued work on the shelter feasibility study; stated this is a multi-pronged approach by design and it would be a mistake to say “rest stops aren't good enough so therefore we won't do them,” as it is an established policy and an important step in the process.

MOTION AND VOTE: Councilor Syrett, seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved to extend the meeting by 10 minutes. **PASSED:** 8:0

- Councilor Syrett – corrected that the Skinner City Farm site borders the Owen Rose Garden and Skinner Butte Park, not Maurie Jacobs Park; expressed frustration with other councilors’ comments because Council has a strategy that it committed to with Lane County that is referred to as the TAC Report; stated these sites are taking advantage of unexpected funds to bring more people off the street; stated she feels this is misplaced criticism and perhaps when staff presents to Council it needs to remind Council of the context in which it is working; stated this is temporary emergency shelter and will get people off the streets and of course there is more that needs to be done; stated that just this effort today could increase emergency shelter capacity by 25 percent or more, which is significant.
- Councilor Clark – agrees this is developed Council policy and staff have done an excellent job of fulfilling policy direction by Council, but it is entirely insufficient to the problem; stated he thinks there are parts of the solution not being done, such as allowing illegal camping by way of not working to provide enough shelter to enforce the illegal camping ban (citing the Boise and Grants Pass decisions); stated a solution is needed that is bigger and quicker to address illegal camping.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated the council needs to continue working on the TAC Report in partnership with Lane County; stated he believes the strategy is sound and criticizing that it is taking too long isn’t fair; stated the council’s strategy is to have multiple solutions that add in increments along the way, and believes it needs to stay the course.

MOTION AND VOTE: Councilor Semple, seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved to approve the establishment of new rest stop sites as recommended by the City Manager, which include Skinner City Farm, Empire Pond, Westmoreland Park, Lot 9 (Leo Harris & Walnut) and Bertelsen Nature Park. **PASSED:** 6:2, Councilors Clark and Taylor opposed.

The meeting adjourned at 1:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Julie Adams
Deputy City Recorder

(Recorded by Jessica Gebb)

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