

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Virtual Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

October 26, 2020
5:30 p.m.

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

Mayor Vinis opened the October 26, 2020, work session of the Eugene City Council.

1. WORK SESSION: Human Rights Commission FY2021 Work Plan

Chair of the Human Rights Commission Joel Iboa and Equity and Accessibility Analyst Fabio Andrade provided information about the Human Rights Commission's work plan.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Taylor – asked how homelessness is being criminalized, noting the need to address criminal behavior; voiced concern about language being used.
- Councilor Syrett – thanked staff for their work on the plan; discussed other councilors' concerns over provocative language and expressed the importance of phrasing.
- Councilor Clark – expressed that the illegal camping policy change does not have majority council support; agreed with other councilors' concerns about the language being used to address this issue and requested de-escalation of language and rhetoric.
- Councilor Pryor – expressed support for replacing the phrase “decriminalizing homelessness” replacing it with language that addresses the behaviors that require a different public safety or social services response, which should be the focus.
- Councilor Evans – discussed the lack of substantive results from outreach efforts to community businesses of color; noted the negative atmosphere for employees of color in the City organization and requested an investigation by the commission.
- Councilor Yeh – thanked staff for the report and noted the enormous amount of work done by the Human Rights Commission.
- Councilor Zelenka – spoke to the other councilors' concerns over language and agreed that phrasing needs to be more specific and clearer; requested analysis of adding a housing status classification to the human rights code.
- Councilor Syrett – said that councilors are seeking more specific outcomes; requested guidance from HRC to help to identify changes needed to address institutionalized racism in current systems;
- Councilor Clark – thanked staff for their work; discussed differences in changes to the code and how establishing another protected class could impact enforcement of the code; asked for staff follow up on human rights code.
- Councilor Yeh – voiced concern about other councilors' feedback on decriminalization and noted that the prior report did have more specific feedback and didn't use “decriminalization”; wanted to ensure staff understood what councilors are requesting.
- Councilor Evans – discussed conversations with staff about how to improve work with communities of color and the system for reporting hate crimes.
- Councilor Syrett – appreciated the reminder of the recommendations first made; said she is most interested in outcomes that HRC recommends;

- Councilor Semple – thanked staff for their work.
- Councilor Clark – discussed issues of intimidation and requested advice and input from the HRC staff.

MOTION AND VOTE: Councilor Semple, seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved to approve the Human Rights Commission FY 2021 Work Plan with the addition of the study of the impacts and analysis of adding housing status as a protected class to the human rights code. **PASSED 8:0**

2. WORK SESSION: Sustainability Commission Work Plan

Climate Policy Analyst and ESC Staff Liaison Samantha Roberts, Chair of the Sustainability Commission Zach Mulholland, and Vice Chair of the Sustainability Commission Julia Johnson provided information about the Sustainability Commission Work Plan.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Syrett – thanked the commissioners and staff for their work and the thoughtfulness of their advocacy; discussed suggestions for prioritizing inclusion of marginalized communities in the commission’s work.
- Councilor Pryor – discussed the value of committees; noted that clear suggestions that derive from committee research and expertise are most helpful to the council.
- Councilor Evans – commended staff and the commission on their establishment of the equity committee; discussed the economic impacts of moving forward with climate change and resiliency work; spoke to the disconnect of people and educating them on the benefits of addressing climate issues they’re facing.
- Councilor Clark – discussed the Sustainability Commission’s work relating to and supporting the role of urban agriculture; expressed importance of resiliency efforts that support backyard and locally produced food.
- Councilor Zelenka – discussed the initial Sustainability Commission work plan and development of food sustainability policy; thanked the commission and staff for the plan and their equity work; noted the importance of committing to the CAP 2.0.
- Councilor Semple – thanked staff and noted the importance of the work they do; appreciated her involvement as Sustainability Commission liaison.

MOTION AND VOTE: Councilor Semple, seconded by Councilor Yeh, move to approve the FY 2021 Sustainability Commission Work Plan. **PASSED 8:0**

The meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Julie Adams
Deputy City Recorder

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