

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Virtual Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

November 23, 2020
5:30 p.m.

Councilors Present: Emily Semple, Betty Taylor, Alan Zelenka, Jennifer Yeh, Mike Clark, Greg Evans, Claire Syrett (arrived 5:49 p.m.), Chris Pryor

Mayor Vinis opened the November 23, 2020, work session of the Eugene City Council.

1. **WORK SESSION and POSSIBLE ACTION: An Ordinance Adopting an Amended Urban Renewal Plan for the Downtown Urban Renewal District.**

Co-Community Development Director AIC Will Dowdy and Town Square Analyst Josh Berman shared a presentation on the urban renewal plan for the downtown urban renewal district and a proposed amendment to restore the northwest park block and build a pavilion.

Council Discussion

- Councilor Taylor - questioned why the cost for the project had doubled; asked what property was purchased and what will not be done as a result of the increased cost; clarified that council can still change the other projects; asked for clarification about the blighted properties.
- Councilor Zelenka - acknowledged that his recommendations were thoroughly addressed; said he was impressed by the amount of public involvement and support; asked for clarification about the subsidies for the 1059 Willamette building and the dollar amount that will be left over to complete this project; said he was pleased with the direction the project is headed
- Councilor Semple - stated the thorough packet is helpful; voiced concern about the other projects' funds being exhausted; wondered if this project will lead to increased maximum indebtedness; asked about other ideas to pay for these two big projects; voiced concern about loose bricks on sidewalks downtown and would like to see them fixed.
- Mayor Vinis - shared that the cost is conservative not counting on the EDA grant; asked for clarification if the grant money is a possibility.

MOTION AND VOTE: Councilor Semple, seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved to adopt the proposed ordinance in Attachment A, an ordinance adopting an amended urban renewal plan for the downtown urban renewal district. **PASSED 8:0**

2. **WORK SESSION: Riverfront Virtual Tour and Construction Update.**

Planning and Development Director Denny Braud gave an intro and summary on progress on the Riverfront project and Principal Landscape Architect Emily Proudfoot gave a virtual tour and construction updates.

Council Discussion

- Mayor Vinis- expressed amazement and appreciation for the tour, and for having the capacity and technology to move forward during the COVID restrictions.
- Councilor Clark – said he was stunned by the tour, noting this is one of the most important projects for the community; asked for an estimate of the amount of money spent on public infrastructure to-date, what is authorized to spend and what will be spent by summer or fall;

requested more details about the private development agreement and whether council can change it: inquired about the inclusion of natural gas in the plans.

- Councilor Evans - asked for an update on what is happening with the steam plant, whether further investment is needed to start that project and if plans could include housing; said he felt this will improve the riverfront; asked about quiet zones and needing a sound barrier for trains.
- Councilor Syrett – expressed excitement about the development’s progress; said she felt redevelopment of the steam plant is important for the overall success of the site and supported a reimagining of the plan; appreciated all the work done to-date.
- Councilor Zelenka - asked if there were any deal point changes in the development agreement with Williams and Dame, shared his concerns about spending the money on infrastructure and the developer not meeting the deadline; asked if there are any urban renewal dollars left for funding the steam plant project and about where the non-refundable deposit will go.
- Councilor Clark - asked what the developer needs to have more certainty about the project.

3. **WORK SESSION: Alternative Shelter Update**

City Manager’s Office Director Brooke Freed and Homeless Systems Policy Manager Peter Chavannes presented a status update on the City’s homelessness efforts and the recently approved additional rest stops and asked for Council’s feedback on the alternative location for one of the rest stops.

Council Discussion

- Councilor Syrett - reminded Council of the success of the first rest stop locations and the decrease in property crimes after construction; asked if the Alton Baker site is larger than the other sites and how many Conestoga huts are planned for that location.
- Councilor Pryor - recognized the new proposed site is smaller, constrained, and has potential; raised awareness about the impacts of illegal camping in his ward and asked how to promote this option and be diligent in cleaning up the mess around West 11th; said it is an opportunity to show the City is tackling the issue in a thoughtful and deliberate manner.
- Councilor Semple – expressed concern about the proximity of a tavern to the proposed site but is pleased overall about the new rest stops.
- Councilor Clark – said he understood the state non-eviction orders will end on December 31; asked for an estimate on the demand for these sites when the eviction hold is lifted; voiced concern that there will be a big wave of unhoused in the winter.

MOTION AND VOTE: Councilor Semple, seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved to replace the establishment of a new rest stop at the Bertelsen Nature Park with the approval of a new rest stop within the right-of-way located on the northwest intersection of W. 7th Ave. and S. Bertelsen Rd. as recommended by the City Manager. **PASSED 7:1** (Councilor Clark opposed)

The meeting adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Julie Adams
Deputy City Recorder

(Recorded by Niyah Ross)

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