

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Special Meeting Eugene, Oregon 97401

February 6, 2023
5:30 p.m.

Councilors Present: Emily Semple, Matt Keating, Alan Zelenka, Jennifer Yeh, Mike Clark, Greg Evans, Lyndsie Leech, Randy Groves

Mayor Vinis opened the February 6, 2023, special meeting of the Eugene City Council in a hybrid format at 101 W 10th Avenue, Eugene OR 97401.

1. SPECIAL MEETING and POSSIBLE ACTION: A Resolution Calling a City Election on May 16, 2023, for the Purpose of Referring to the Legal Electors of the City of Eugene a Measure Adding Sections 6.695 and 6.696 to the Eugene Code, 1971, to Prohibit Fossil Fuel Infrastructure in New Low-Rise Residential Buildings.

City Attorney, Kathryn Brotherton, presented information on the proposed resolution.

MAIN MOTION: Councilor Groves, seconded by Councilor Keating, moved to adopt A Resolution Calling a City Election on May 16, 2023, for the Purpose of Referring to the Legal Electors of the City of Eugene a Measure Adding Sections 6.695 and 6.696 to the Eugene Code, 1971, to Prohibit Fossil Fuel Infrastructure in New Low-Rise Residential Buildings, as set forth in Attachment A.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Clark – stated that due to the level of public interest the ordinance should be sent to a public vote; asked staff if there would be difference in the appeals process depending if the public or the Council approved the ordinance; asked if the public voting on in it would make it harder to overturn; stated that passing this ordinance will deter the construction of new homes over the summer; stated that if the public voted in favor of this ordinance it would have his full support; stated that while this is an off-year primary, due to the public interest in this topic he would expect a strong voter turnout.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted that banning natural gas in new low-rise residential buildings is a piecemeal approach to decarbonization; spoke in favor of a comprehensive plan that involves incentives and commercial compliance.
- Councilor Evans – spoke in favor of incentives; stated that he is in favor of this motion.
- Councilor Groves – spoke in favor of incentives; stated that he is in favor of this motion.
- Councilor Yeh – stated that she is against the motion; spoke in favor of incentives; stated that the presence of natural gas in homes is health issue.

- Councilor Semple – noted that energy efficient appliances will reduce energy usage and associated costs; stated that she is considering converting to electric due to the amount of emissions from gas stoves; stated that she is against the motion.
- Councilor Keating – noted that renters do not get a choice between gas and electric; noted that the use of natural gas in homes is a health issue; stated that he is against the motion.
- Councilor Leech – stated that she is against the motion.
- Mayor Vinis – stated that passing the ordinance to ban natural gas in new low-rise residential buildings helps to meet the City’s climate and housing goals.
- Councilor Clark – stated that if the Council passes the ordinance it will increase community cynicism; stated that home builders will build in other cities if the ordinance passes; stated his support for incentives.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted that home builders will continue to build homes in Eugene as long as it is profitable; stated that a recent study by the Oregon Global Warming Commission shows that the state is on track to meet its climate goals; noted that he is interested in moving ahead with a prohibition when incentives are available; stated interest in investigating a requirement for automatic ventilation when using a gas stove; stated that he is against the motion.

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION: 3:5 FAILED (opposed by Councilors Semple, Keating, Zelenka, Yeh, and Leech)

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Semple – spoke in favor of incentives; noted that natural gas is not available for use during a natural disaster.

MAIN MOTION: Councilor Semple, seconded by Councilor Keating moved to adopt an ordinance prohibiting fossil fuel infrastructure in new low-rise residential buildings and adding section 6.695 and 6.696 to the Eugene code, 1971 as set forth in attachment B but updating the 2022 date in the signature blocks to 2023.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Zelenka – stated that he supports a package over an individual action; stated interest in a work session to discuss the ordinance in conjunction with incentives.
- Councilor Evans – stated support for a more comprehensive package that includes incentives; noted that there are other strategies in addition to electrification to meet the City’s climate goals.
- Councilor Semple – stated that the ordinance is important for the community’s and the climate’s health.
- Councilor Leech – stated that this ordinance is in line with the City’s goals; noted that natural gas is a type of fuel that has proven to have negative impacts on health.
- Councilor Yeh – noted that many members of the community support this motion; stated her support for this motion.

- Councilor Keating – stated his support for the motion.
- Mayor Vinis – stated that the Council has already passed a package to address decarbonization.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked Councilor Semple if she would consider a friendly motion to postpone the current motion.

MOTION TO POSTPONE: Councilor Zelenka, seconded by Councilor Evans moved to amend the motion to have the City Manager bring back a motion to adopt as soon as possible.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Clark – asked about the process for the public to place a reversal of a City-approved natural gas ban on the May ballot; noted that he was unlikely to vote for Councilor Zelenka’s motion because it would end up pushing a vote to the November ballot.
- Councilor Groves – stated that he is against the motion to postpone.
- Councilor Semple – noted that the Council has already discussed the ordinance at multiple meetings.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted that he prefers that councilors share planned motions ahead of meetings.

VOTE ON MOTION TO POSTPONE: 2:6 FAILED (opposed by Councilors Semple, Keating, Yeh, Clark, Leech, and Groves)

- Councilor Zelenka – stated his preference for postponing the decision but intends to support the motion.
- Councilor Clark – stated his support for a more comprehensive plan and the use of incentives; stated that he is against the motion.

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION: 5:3 PASSED (opposed by Councilors Clark, Evans, and Groves)

Councilor Discussion:

- Mayor Vinis – stated that while there has been opposition to this ordinance there have also been many proponents.

Mayor Vinis adjourned the meeting at 6:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Katie LaSala". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Katie" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "LaSala".

Katie LaSala
City Recorder

(Recorded by Cherish Bradshaw)
Webcast of meeting available [here](#).