

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Virtual Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

January 10, 2022
5:30 p.m.

Councilors Present: Jennifer Yeh, Claire Syrett, Emily Semple, Matt Keating, Alan Zelenka, Randy Groves, Mike Clark

Councilors Absent: Greg Evans

Mayor Vinis opened the January 10, 2022, work session of the Eugene City Council in virtual format.

1. WORK SESSION – World Athletics Championships Oregon22 Update

Library, Recreation and Cultural Services Project Manager Stephanie Scafa presented an update to the City Council on community preparations for the World Athletics Championships Oregon22 event (WCH Oregon22), to be held in Eugene July 15-24, 2022. The update included information on WCH Oregon22 planning efforts and citywide activations, including the Eugene Riverfront Festival.

Council Discussion:

- Mayor Vinis – stated it is great to see the event details refined and moving forward; expressed appreciation for ongoing updates to Council.
- Councilor Keating – asked about expansion of shade tenting; inquired about other mitigation efforts in place should there be another heat dome event similar to 2021; asked how many total visitors are expected at the Riverfront Festival; asked about other plans related to operations during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic; expressed concern over the safety challenge of an event with open entry and a need for greater emphasis on public safety considerations.
- Councilor Semple – thanked staff for the presentation and updates; expressed appreciation that the Riverfront Festival will be free for everyone; asked if construction will have begun on any of the lots adjacent to the event site; asked how much funding the City will contribute to this event; asked how much the City is paying to contract with REVERE as the event management company; asked about transportation considerations such as car and bike parking; asked for further information on the waste management plan for the event.
- Councilor Syrett – thanked staff for the presentation; appreciated the questions and concerns from Councilors; said she was excited to have the equity panel bringing an important new dynamic to this celebration and create a model for future City-sponsored events; advocated for a SLUG queen court at the event.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated this is an important event for Eugene; clarified that the City's funding of this event includes a substantial staffing investment around planning and management; asked about ground cover for the event site and whether grass or other turf would be added.
- Councilor Groves – thanked staff for their work; asked about the mitigation of public safety events in the downtown area and West University district; expressed hope that there will be a more cogent plan for addressing the behavioral problems in those areas.
- Councilor Clark – concurred with Councilor Groves and stated that if the City has a different and/or more effective approach to address public behavior during WCH Oregon22, it will be obvious to residents who will then wonder why such measures cannot persist; asked staff to clarify the impetus for hosting this event and whether it is optics, the University of Oregon, or something else; agreed the economic benefits will be considerable; asked if it is possible to

predict the effect that such a large-scale event, and its promotion of the local community, may have on an increase of those relocating to Eugene.

- Councilor Zelenka – asked for an update on details related to site control efforts and traffic/parking measures around Hayward Field.
- Councilor Semple – expressed concerns about the state of downtown as this event will bring a lot of media attention to the area; stated that downtown does not look great, with many empty storefronts, flower planters unkempt and people sleeping on the street; questioned how these spaces might be improved for such an event when they haven't already been tried; asked how Eugene can invite the world to its doorstep when it has been unable get this area cleaned up.
- Councilor Keating – suggested that, with food insecurity at an all-time high since the start of the pandemic, there is an opportunity to generate goodwill for the community by adding a suggested food donation at Riverfront Festival points of entry.

2. WORK SESSION – Eugene Municipal Court Update

Presiding Judge Greg Gill and Acting Municipal Court Director Sarah Callegari provided an update on the Eugene Municipal Court, including the status of court operations during the pandemic and other areas of interest for Council.

Council Discussion:

- Mayor Vinis – thanked staff and appreciated the steep learning curve of 2020 and how the courts were able to respond with a robust reopening in 2021.
- Councilor Clark – thanked staff for the presentation and said he was impressed with the reform of such a rigid system during these challenging times; asked if more budgetary access was needed to create additional jail beds; asked if the increasing prevalence of phenyl-2-propanone (P2P) methamphetamine is related to an uptick in jail bed occupancy; asked if drug court is equipped to handle the caseload and if additional resources are required to be effective; noted that several U.S. cities have begun to ask nonprofit providers of homeless services to offer law enforcement with a daily count of open shelter beds; asked if such a program would be an effective tool for the Eugene Police Department and Municipal Court.
- Councilor Groves – thanked staff for the presentation; stated he met with the sheriff and toured the jail to better understand its current state before addressing solutions; asked how the City's restorative justice programs are impacting the ongoing issues with jail capacity; noted that fentanyl-laced drugs can also be attributed to increases in addiction; stated he is in favor of forming a subgroup to address options beyond jail and emergency rooms for those suffering from mental health crises and drug addiction; stated that a larger conversation needs to take place between City, community and elected officials to address these growing concerns.
- Councilor Syrett – thanked staff for their dedication and leadership during times of constantly shifting challenges; urged fellow Councilors to tour the courthouse and jail.

Mayor Vinis adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Brooke Freed
City Recorder AIC

(Recorded by Jay Ferris)

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