

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

April 24, 2023
5:30 p.m.

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

Mayor Vinis opened the April 24, 2023, work session of the Eugene City Council in a hybrid format at 101 W 10th Avenue, Eugene OR 97401.

1. WORK SESSION: An Ordinance Concerning Prohibited Camping, Permitted Overnight Sleeping, and Prohibited Activities on Streets, Sidewalks, and Shared-Use Paths, and Amending Sections 4.815, 4.816, 4.860 and 5.135 of the Eugene Code, 1971.

City Manager Sarah Medary introduced City Attorney Kathryn, Public Works Director, Matt Rodrigues and Eugene Police Chief, Chris Skinner who presented information regarding An Ordinance Concerning Prohibited Camping, Permitted Overnight Sleeping, and Prohibited Activities on Streets, Sidewalks, and Shared-Use Paths, and Amending Sections 4.815, 4.816, 4.860 and 5.135 of the Eugene Code, 1971.

Councilor Discussion:

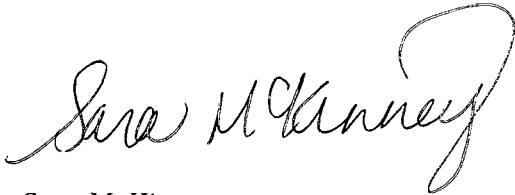
- Councilor Yeh – asked if banning camping but allowing other sidewalk obstructions could create legal issues.
- Councilor Groves – stated a preference for a camping ban 100 feet from all waterways; stated support for keeping sidewalks clear; asked how the Americans with Disabilities Act applies to situations where blocked sidewalks affect those with mobility issues; asked if the proposed ordinance would apply to sewage draining into wetlands; asked how the ordinance will be enforced; asked how members of the public would report violations; noted a concern that the emergency line would be overwhelmed with calls to report violations; would like the City to create a public education campaign regarding this ordinance and reporting violations.
- Councilor Zelenka – expressed concern that indigent individuals would not be able to pay fines; asked staff to define willful violation; clarified how the City’s accountability systems direct people to community court; asked how the camping ban distance is determined for different waterways; asked if currently established safe sleep sites are banned within 1,000 feet of educational facilities.
- Councilor Clark – asked staff to clarify the term ‘top of bank’; asked for the average difference between ‘high water mark’ and ‘top of high bank’; noted concern about camp debris entering waterways; asked if this ordinance eliminates all overnight camping; asked if this ordinance will reduce complaints about camps near waterways; noted concern that the City does not have enough tools to reduce the impacts of unsanctioned camping; asked if the court system has the capacity to handle the increased enforcement needs for this ordinance.

- Councilor Evans – asked if there is a precedent for the 1,000-foot campsite-free buffer zone around educational institutions.
- Councilor Keating – noted support for a 1,000-foot buffer zone around educational facilities; noted that a buffer zone could improve the safety of those using educational facilities; asked Chief Skinner if there are potential issues enforcing a buffer zone; asked Chief Skinner if enforcement would be easier if all waterways used the same distance for the camping prohibition; stated support for using community court to enforce violations and using a standard 100-foot distance from waterways.
- Councilor Semple – asked for the definition of a campsite vs. someone sleeping; asked staff to define an ‘established’ campsite; asked if this ordinance will make it easier for individuals to sleep.
- Councilor Leech – asked if enforcement staff would provide individuals with information on where they are permitted to camp; asked if there are larger areas that could be mapped out to show individuals where they are allowed to camp.
- Mayor Vinis – noted that it is uncomfortable to tell people where they cannot sleep versus where they can; noted that Council has approved a total of 500 safe sleep spaces and 250 have been established.
- Councilor Groves – asked if there are any future rest stops in the works, specifically locations for RVs and trailers; noted that there are budget and staffing limitations regarding addressing the homelessness issue.
- Councilor Clark – noted that it will be effective to use community court to handle violations; spoke in favor of supporting individuals who want to get well and against enabling those who do not.
- Councilor Zelenka – spoke against a map outlining where people can camp; noted it is better to point individuals to established sites; noted that a trespass letter is needed to remove campers from private property; stated support for variable waterway buffer zones to be consistent with current codes; asked if there is a 1,000-foot buffer for current rest stops; stated interest in hearing the public’s opinion on the 1,000-foot buffer zone around educational facilities; noted that this code would not allow camping where it is already banned.
- Councilor Yeh – believes that the public should know where it is legal to camp; spoke in favor of being proactive about determining where future unsanctioned camps may establish.
- Councilor Leech – spoke in favor of a simple user guide for people to understand City code regarding camping; noted the compassion fatigue felt by neighborhoods with large populations of unhoused neighbors; noted that safe sleep sites are full and there is a need for people to have a place to sleep.
- Councilor Semple – noted that individuals will be able to create their own maps of areas where camping is allowed.
- Councilor Keating – spoke in favor of making information about available services more accessible to the public; stated a preference for a camping ban 100-feet from all waterways for ease of enforcement; noted that a 1,000-foot buffer zone around educational facilities would increase accessibility, public health, and safety; spoke in favor of asking the state for additional resources to support our unhoused population.

MOTON AND VOTE: Councilor Groves, seconded by Councilor Keating, moved to direct the City Manager to schedule a public hearing on the draft ordinance, set forth on Attachment A with the following additions; 1) Camping restriction on public property located within 1000 feet of an educational facility, 2) Extending the Prohibitive Camping Zone for what is classified as other waterways to 100 feet top of bank, 3) Clarify that wetlands are protected areas with regard to camping and dumping, and move to direct the City Manager to add the proposed ordinance and Amendment to EC 4.990(8) making the penalty and process for willful violation applicable to any violation of EC 4.815, not just vehicular camping violations. **VOTE: 8:0 PASSED**

Mayor Vinis adjourned the meeting at 6:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sara McKinney". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Sara McKinney
Deputy City Recorder

(Recorded by Cherish Bradshaw)

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