

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

May 10, 2023
12:00 p.m.

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

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

1. **WORK SESSION: Fossil Fuel Risk Bonds**

City Manager Medary introduced Sustainability Manager, Ian Penn, who presented an overview of Fossil Fuel Risk Bonds.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Zelenka – would like this topic to be more encompassing of the area’s needs; would like the expansion to included environmental and human harm caused by all chemical and industrial processes, spills, leaks, explosions, and air pollution; would like a process to hold polluters accountable; thinks a tiered approach starting with high potential impact sites would be most effective; thinks that the process that King County uses is effective; thinks a consultant would be the most efficient way to start the process.
- Councilor Clark – stated that protecting the community is important; asked City Attorney if enacting risk bonds would be a preemptive action that may be overreaching the authority of the City; believes that risk planning is important; would prefer to focus planning and preparedness efforts in areas of seismic concern; is concerned how this process could impact the budget.
- Councilor Yeh – is concerned about the impacts to the budget; asked staff how King County’s model would work in Eugene; would support a tiered approach to this process; would like more details from staff about the cost and how to approach roll out this process.
- Councilor Semple – thinks that pollutants should include more than fossil fuels; concerned about seismic resistance; asked staff if the City could start with a small model and expand later; would like to take preventative steps with pollution from industry; concerned over health impacts of current residents; would support using a consultant to start the planning process.
- Councilor Keating – asked how to prevent costs from being passed on to rate payers; asked how the City could regulate a specific type of insurance policy or require a credit line be established to cover potential liabilities; concerned that the cost of past pollutant disasters around the world have exceeded the amount of insurance meant to cover it; concerned that no surcharge would be sufficient to remediate the damage to

the climate from fossil fuels; asked if a surcharge could be assessed on fossil fuels that pass through the City.

- Mayor Vinis – asked staff how much information the City has regarding potential industrial risks; asked what overlaps would exist with risk bonds and public health overlay zones.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted that the City has very little influence or authority on railways; stated that risk bonds are designed to hold businesses accountable in the event that they cause or create pollution; believes that risk bonds may be better suited at the state or federal level but thinks that the City can lead the work; believes that assessing the scale of harm and risk is the best place to start.

MOTION: Councilor Zelenka, seconded by Councilor Keating, move to have the City Manager bring back a memo in the fall scoping out the issue, and an Request For Proposals for an approach and budget for a consultant to do the work, that would start small and limited to high potential harm sites, and phase-in medium and small sites, looking at: 1) the risks (amount & level & likelihood) of potential harm; 2) assess gaps in funding, rules, and regulations, for risk mitigation (and our legal ability to act); and 3) options to close the gaps.

- Councilor Semple – asked City Manager if there is enough time to complete the work in the motion on the table; stated concern for the amount of staff time the motion will take.
- Councilor Clark – asked staff to estimate the time and cost impact of the work outlined in the motion; is concerned about creating a new program when facing budget deficits.
- Councilor Zelenka – clarified that his motion is for information only.

VOTE: PASSED 6:0

- Councilor Semple – asked if it is possible to secure the former site of J.H. Baxter to protect the neighbors.

2. **WORK SESSION: Willamette River Greenway Code Amendments Overview**

Mayor Vinis introduced Principal Planner, Gabe Flock and Senior Planner, Jeff Gepper, who presented an overview of proposed Willamette River Greenway Code Amendments.

Councilor Discussion:

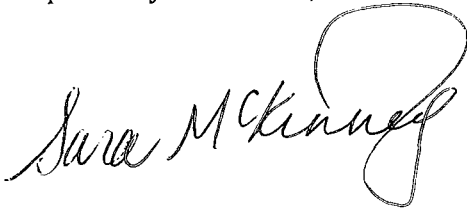
- Councilor Zelenka – asked if the Willamette Greenway prohibits all development in the Greenway; asked if this amendment would continue to allow limited development in the Greenway; asked if more housing would be allowed in the Greenway; asked if the amendment would change any existing zoning in the Greenway; asked if the amendment eliminates or enhances environmental protections for the Greenway; asked if a public hearing would be required for every application for development in the Greenway; asked if the dual tract option is available throughout the City or just within the Greenway; thinks these amendments are a positive enhancement.
- Councilor Keating – asked if a public hearing will be held for future development plans in the proposed University of Oregon land swap area; asked for an estimate of annual

Greenway permits approved and denied; asked who the hearings officials are for the permit process; asked how the elevation heights were determined; asked what the process would be to lower the heights outlined in the materials; asked what percentage of the South Hills area falls in the 500-900 feet range.

- Councilor Clark – asked if the proposed amendments is meant to simplify and clarify the clear and objective path; asked staff if the Willamette Greenway is part of the comprehensive metro plan; asked staff if the proposed amendments would conflict with the River Road Santa Clara Neighborhood Plan; asked City Attorney if there is potential for conflict between the neighborhood plan and clear and objective code amendments.
- Councilor Leech – asked why an applicant would choose the clear and objective standard permit option over discretionary or subjective permit option.

Mayor Vinis adjourned the meeting at 1:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sara McKinney". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text "Respectfully submitted,".

Sara McKinney
Deputy City Recorder

(Recorded by Sara McKinney)

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