

**MINUTES**  
**Eugene City Council**  
**Work Session**  
**Eugene, Oregon 97401**

**July 10, 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 July 10, 2023, work session of the Eugene City Council in a hybrid format at 101 W 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Eugene OR 97401.

- 1. WORK SESSION: Follow-Up to Presentation of Referendum Petition 2023-1 to Council.** City Manager Medary introduced Katie LaSala, City Recorder who presented on Referendum Petition 2023-1.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Semple – noted that she would be moving to repeal Ordinance No. 20681; stated that the ordinance has sparked action in other communities; noted that staff can now work on electrification issues.

**MOTION:** Councilor Semple, seconded by Councilor Keating moved to repeal Ordinance No. 20681 entitled An Ordinance Prohibiting Fossil Fuel Infrastructure In New Low-Rise Residential Buildings; And Adding Sections 6.695 And 6.696 To The Eugene Code, 1971.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Clark – stated his reluctance to remove this item from the ballot due to strong public interest.
- Councilor Groves – stated his support for the motion; believes that work to address climate change and protect our environment should be a united effort.
- Councilor Yeh –stated she is in favor of the motion; stated that improving the health and safety of the community is of utmost importance to her; noted her support for the appeal to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court decision that struck down the Berkeley natural gas ban for new buildings; noted that there are other actions Council can take to make progress.
- Councilor Keating –noted NW Natural made a strong campaign against the ordinance; believes that Council has a responsibility to protect residents from the climate crisis and to lead the transition to renewable electricity; noted his support for the motion.
- Councilor Evans – noted that he did not support the original motion; stated an interest in incentivizing change to a fossil fuel-free environment.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated the four pillars of decarbonization are energy efficiency, cleaning up the electric grid, electrifying end uses, and developing low carbon fuel for end uses that cannot be electrified; noted his support for the motion.

- Councilor Leech – noted her support for strategizing and working closely with the community to come up with innovative solutions; noted her support for the motion.

**VOTE: 8:0 PASSED**

Councilor Discussion:

- Mayor Vinis – thanked Council for their unanimous action; noted that repealing the ordinance is the best way to keep moving forward on fossil fuel reduction.
- Councilor Leech – noted she had a motion designed to achieve affects similar to those of the repealed ordinance.

**MOTION:** Councilor Leech, seconded by Councilor Keating, moved to direct the City Manager to return to Council before July 2024, for a discussion regarding ways in which the City can reduce the use of fossil fuels in new construction, including the feasibility of fossil fuel reduction strategies that have been adopted in other jurisdictions.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Clark – asked if the motion will reintroduce the ban on natural gas in new residential construction; noted he is in favor of incentives; stated he is not in favor of reintroducing the ban.
- Councilor Groves – noted he shares concerns with Councilor Clark; noted he is in favor of incentives; stated that if reintroduced, the ban should go to the people for a vote.
- Councilor Evans – noted he would like to introduce a friendly amendment to the motion, requesting that the City Manager bring a package of incentives for decarbonization.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted a natural gas ban for new construction has minimal effect on reducing greenhouse gas emissions; stated that emission reduction efforts should focus on existing buildings and transportation.
- Councilor Keating –noted he is in favor of incentives; noted his support for future electrification efforts.
- Councilor Yeh – stated her support for the motion; noted the value in a flexible approach to fossil fuel reduction strategies.
- Councilor Clark – stated he would not support the motion; noted that the gas ban was unpopular within the community.
- Councilor Evans – stated he would be supporting Councilor Zelenka’s upcoming motion; noted various incentivization strategies.

**VOTE: 7:1 PASSED** (opposed by Councilor Clark)

Councilor Discussion:

- Mayor Vinis – noted her appreciation for Councilor Yeh’s comments; stated Council was within their authority to pass the initial ordinance and will be acting within their authority when they consider how to reduce the use of fossil fuels in future construction.

- Councilor Zelenka – stated that Council should align their climate actions with state and federal programs; believes the focus should be where greenhouse gas emissions can be reduced the most; noted the need to engage the community; noted that in addition to decarbonizing buildings, Council should also focus on transportation.

**MAIN MOTION:** Councilor Zelenka, seconded by Councilor Evans, moved to direct the City Manager to, as soon as possible after the summer break, to return with a Work Session to discuss how to proceed on near term climate actions that aligns with new and existing federal and state programs, funding, and incentives; that focuses on strategic areas that reduce significant amounts of GHG emissions; and includes community engagement.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Semple – asked if the work session would be scheduled for fall.
- Councilor Yeh – asked how significant amounts are determined; asked what community engagement is needed and the potential timeline; noted concerns about the phrase “significant amounts.”
- Councilor Keating – noted concerns about the phrase “significant amounts.”

**MOTION TO AMEND:** Councilor Keating, seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved to strike the words significant amounts of from the proposed motion. **VOTE: 4:5 FAILED** (opposed by Councilors Zelenka, Evans, Clark, and Groves with Mayor Vinis’ vote in opposition breaking the tie)

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Zelenka – stated that the goal of his motion is to align the City with what is happening at the state and federal level; noted that the Good Company report recommended focusing efforts on existing buildings.
- Councilor Groves – noted his appreciation for Councilor Zelenka’s motion; stated support for increasing public engagement and bringing people together as they move forward.

**VOTE ON MAIN MOTION: 8:0 PASSED**

**2. WORK SESSION: Financial Condition and Revenue Update.**

City Manager Medary introduced Twylla Miller, Finance Director and presented the Financial Condition and Revenue Update.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Evans – asked how the City can increase its industrial manufacturing capacity to increase its tax base and create jobs.
- Councilor Clark – noted his appreciation for the inclusion of increasing the tax base as a revenue proposal; noted the City has underutilized assets that might be used to

address a one-time revenue need like helping the Eugene Emeralds build a new stadium.

- Councilor Zelenka – noted that increasing efficiencies and increasing the tax base are an important part of the process; asked about next steps; noted in addition to issues around housing and homelessness, other issues have emerged including the structural deficit, the fire station and library, and the stadium.
- Councilor Keating – asked if the known service gaps were listed in a specific order; asked how service area importance was determined; noted his interest in increasing revenue through the sale of one-time assets, additional fees, adding a third urban renewal district, or creating an events center.
- Councilor Semple – noted cutting 10 million dollars in services would be unpopular in the community; stated work around reducing homelessness was her top priority; noted an interest in using funds to protect against animal abuse.
- Councilor Groves – noted his appreciation for the inclusion of fire station 17 on the list; noted the station would require funding for both construction and operations; noted a lack of ready sites is preventing development in West Eugene; spoke in favor of encouraging the creation of housing in downtown; spoke in favor of providing one-time funds for the creation of a multi-use stadium; asked when Council would hear about funding the stadium.
- Councilor Yeh – stated a preference for guaranteeing funding for the library, emergency services, and shelters before providing funds for a stadium.
- Councilor Clark – stated the county should be taking the lead on providing homeless services, not the City.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted his priority is solving the budget deficit and providing funding for climate action and homelessness; asked about the construction and operation costs for a new fire station.
- Councilor Keating – stated a preference for the revenue committee to work to fund both new projects and vital services; noted pet licensing as a potential revenue source; expressed disappointment the revenue team will not be a public body; stated that the City has an obligation to support vulnerable community members; stated the revenue team should take into account inter-governmental agencies that have committed to the same work.
- Councilor Evans – stated inflation may keep members of the track and field community from travelling to Eugene; expressed concern that generating new revenue from tourism may be difficult.
- Councilor Groves – noted the costs for a new fire station depend on the type of station; stated a multi-company station with an engine ladder truck is appropriate given the proximity to high-rise buildings; stated he would like to look into providing one-time funding for the multi-use stadium; noted the stadium may help increase the tax base; stated a preference to meet about the stadium separately and sooner than the revenue committee discussion.
- Councilor Semple – asked what assets the City would consider selling to fund the stadium; noted the various projects without funding total about 20 million dollars; asked how much revenue the Community Safety Payroll Tax generates.

- Councilor Clark – noted bicycle theft is a problem in the community and that a bicycle registry could both reduce theft and provide revenue; noted the value of bare land zoned for housing.
- Councilor Evans – asked how the current inflationary spiral is impacting the budget gap; asked if the airport is a potential source of additional revenue.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated he is opposed to selling the Laurelwood Golf Course or any other parkland; stated he is in favor of finding one-time funds; stated they need to be selective about which projects they will work to fund; noted many of the listed projects were part of the Technical Collaborative Assistance (TAC) report.
- Councilor Keating – noted an urgency to the decision about the proposed stadium; spoke in favor of the revenue committee exploring a ticket surcharge; noted he occasionally serves as a guest announcer for the Eugene Emeralds.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Katie LaSala  
City Recorder

*(Recorded by Cherish Bradshaw)*

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