

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Meeting Eugene, Oregon 97401

April 11, 2022
7:30 p.m.

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

Mayor Vinis opened the April 11, 2022, meeting of the Eugene City Council in a hybrid in-person and virtual format.

1. CEREMONIAL MATTERS

Mayor Vinis read proclamations recognizing Fair Housing Month and House America.

2. COMMITTEE REPORTS AND ITEMS OF INTEREST

- Councilor Syrett- shared information about the United Front trip to Washington D.C.
- Councilor Groves - shared information about the dangers on the 500 block of Pearl Street; said he supported making improvements to the street to create a safer environment for pedestrians and bicycles.

MOTION: Councilor Groves, seconded by Councilor Clark, moved to authorize the City Manager to execute an agreement with Obie Development to allow for the City's contribution of \$209,000 for Obie's privately engineered public improvement project in accordance with Eugene Code 2.1430 and to reconcile any needed budget action through the supplemental budget process.

Council Discussion

- Councilor Semple - expressed concern that this proposal represents half of the MUPTE dollars and she would rather use the money for 6th and 7th avenues; asked what pool of money the funding will come from.
- Councilor Zelenka - stated he is not comfortable with this unexpected quarter million-dollar request with no discussion and said there should be a public discussion before funding.
- Councilor Syrett - shared she has more context on this issue because she met with Brian Obie and Public Works Director Matt Rodrigues to discuss it; said she can understand some of the hesitation from other councilors; stated there is an acute need in this area because of the commercial activity that is being generated and this project can alleviate some of the danger; stated she looks forward to having a discussion about improving 6th and 7th with two-way traffic flow.
- Councilor Clark - asked if an affirmative vote would direct the City Manager to bring details back to Council for discussion.
- Councilor Keating - said he recognizes the acute need to increase public safety; shared some other areas in town that have emerging safety needs and supported considering other projects to increase safety.

- Councilor Groves - shared there is time-sensitivity for the construction timeline; shared his experience with vehicle and pedestrian accidents and said this is an opportunity to take action to make the public safer in a vulnerable high foot-traffic area.
- Councilor Evans - said this is an example of a rare private and public partnership opportunity that offers public benefit, noting that getting the City of Eugene, Lane County and Obie Companies to work together is a positive; stated there needs to be a clear, safe path to the riverfront development from downtown and the Fifth Street Public Market.
- Councilor Zelenka - stated this is a poor public process and Council should reconsider taking a vote on a quarter million-dollar issue that the public just heard about.

VOTE: PASSED 7:1, Councilor Zelenka opposed.

3. CONSENT CALENDAR 1

A. Approval of City Council Minutes

- October 11, 2021, Council Meeting
- October 25, 2021, Council Meeting
- November 8, 2021, Council Meeting
- November 17, 2021, Council Work Session
- November 22, 2021, Council Work Session
- December 13, 2021, Council Work Session
- January 5, 2022, State of the City
- February 9, 2022, Council Work Session
- February 14, 2022, Council Work Session
- February 14, 2022, Council Meeting

4. PUBLIC FORUM

1. Jeff Althouse – said banning new fossil fuels will have unintended negative consequences.
2. McKayla Capage - asked Council to do more to create a livable environment for residents.
3. Eloise Parish-Mueller - stated that natural gas companies are not reliable as climate partners.
4. Samantha Roberts - asked Council to act quickly to create climate policy.
5. Sam Tyler - said he has seen the effects of climate change and climate anxiety firsthand.
6. Dylan Plummer – encouraged Council support for renter protection and climate policy.
7. Suzanne O’Shea – shared information about emergency preparedness and upcoming summer events.
8. Brian Stewart - stated that building electrification makes buildings and homes safer and cleaner.
9. Todd Miller - stated that banning natural gas hookups is a short-sighted goal.
10. Gretchen Miller - stated it is important to move the climate ordinance forward with alacrity.
11. Timothy Morris - stated he supports a fossil-free Eugene and opposed false ads from NW Natural.
12. Lyn Woodrich - stated it has become clear that the City needs a health overlay zone policy.
13. Danny Noonan - said Council needs to take urgent actions to reduce building emissions.
14. Paige Hopkins - urged Council to act on requiring all new construction to be electric.
15. Joanne Shotola - supported renter protections that are doable; shared landlord experiences.
16. Nicole Noceto - urged Council to prioritize the city’s transition away from gas and fossil fuels.
17. Andy Vobora - stated the proposal to ban new gas infrastructure will negatively impact businesses.
18. Alexander Miller- said building electrification has a significant positive impact in reducing emissions.
19. David Zupan – supported urgent action to address climate crisis for his grandkids’ protection.
20. Bethany Cotton - supported ordinance language requiring electrification of all new buildings.
21. Randal Berzier - voiced concern about renter protection proposals like debt-to-income ratio.
22. Alex Stabin – asked Council to draft ordinance language requiring building electrification.
23. Nicole Langpop - asked Council to draft ordinance language for building electrification.

24. Pam Woddell - responded to councilors' comments on Middle Housing during earlier work session.
25. Peter Dragovich - stated that many cities that have electrified have not repealed their decision.
26. Noelle Studer-Spevack - stated the decision for Eugene to require electrification is inevitable.
27. Mike Gamble - said regulations on landlords impacts the availability and affordability of rentals.
28. Jacob Trewe - supported fossil-free coalition and said NW Natural Gas is spreading misinformation.
29. Eloise Navarro - said the elimination of fracked gas infrastructure will honor indigenous residents.
30. Tomoko Sekeguchi - stated a move to building electrification is urgently needed.
31. Jim Neu - expressed concern about waiting too long to have a smooth transition to electrification.
32. Kathryn Dunn - asked Council to schedule at least two dialogue sessions with landlords.
33. Debra Hughes-Sudyka - stated she is a property owner who has switched from gas to electric.
34. Peter Reppe - said the statement that heat pumps do not work when it is cold is false.
35. Fred Mallory - shared that 40 percent of carbon produced in Eugene is from transportation.
36. Clay Skurdall - asked if the infrastructure is in place to transmit energy with current the load.
37. Glen Gillis - asked Council to immediately draft an ordinance requiring building electrification.
38. Brittany Quick-Warner - said she is concerned about how Council is addressing the climate crisis.
39. Katherine Williams - said that NW Natural Gas shares the City's goals for decarbonization.

Council Discussion

- Councilor Syrett - appreciated the counterpoints to the misinformation about the electrification work session and what Council will be considering; stated it is disappointing that NW Natural Gas is taking out ads and sending mailings to customers that misrepresent their efforts and ability to achieve decarbonization of their products; shared details on what Council is proposing in building electrification and that the first work session is nearing; encouraged public input.
- Councilor Semple - expressed gratitude for those who were not able to speak at the public forum and encouraged them to send emails.
- Councilor Groves - stated everyone's voice matters and it is important for Council to hear the community members' thoughts and concerns; encouraged people to contact Council by email because there are a lot of big issues being discussed.
- Councilor Keating - stated that "push-pulls, rate hikes and misinformation" do not allow for collaboration; stated he looks forward to having conversations with constituents in his ward in group and one-on-one settings.
- Councilor Clark - commented that 75 to 80 percent of community members do not want Council to ban the use of natural gas; stated the City of Eugene has acted in bad faith with NW Natural Gas in this negotiation.
- Councilor Syrett - corrected a comment made by a colleague; stated she was on the steering committee that worked in good faith for many months to try to come to an agreement with NW Natural; said that NW Natural was the culprit in moving the goalposts, not the City of Eugene.
- Mayor Vinis - stated this is the first of many conversations about how to implement the climate action plans and that building electrification is one possible strategy; said it is important to remember that there will be a public conversation and that work will be done collaboratively to gather the needed information; reminded everyone that the goal is to respond responsibly to the impacts of climate change.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Brooke Freed', with a stylized, cursive flourish.

Brooke Freed
AIC City Recorder

(Recorded by Niyah Ross)

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