

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

July 20, 2022
12:00 p.m.

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

Councilors Absent: Greg Evans

Councilor Syrett opened the July 20, 2022, work session of the Eugene City Council in a hybrid format at 101 W. 10th Avenue, Suite 114, Eugene, OR 97401.

1. **WORK SESSION: Decarbonization Roadmap**

City Manager Sarah Medary introduced Public Works Director Matt Rodrigues, and Good Company's Josh Proudfoot, who presented the results of the report "City of Eugene Community Decarbonization by 2045 for Existing Residential, Commercial, and Industrial Buildings Energy Use – Part 1 Residential - Draft".

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Clark – asked to confirm whether the dam removals on the Snake River will decrease supply to Bonneville by 33 percent and, if so, what the cost and reliability impact will be; asked how power supply can be increased in the short-term; encouraged Council to read the article that was emailed to them about Bonneville.
- Councilor Keating – asked why Eugene solar power use is at 0.1 percent and why Eugene is not leaning further into solar power usage; asked if Council could legally create a consumption fee that targets gas-powered tools, new and used cars, kitchen equipment, etc. to fund a clean energy fund.
- Councilor Groves – asked to clarify the costs per unit that was presented; noted that he has been tracking the Snake River hydro projects; asked if Oregon would get roughly the same solar power production as Germany based on the comparative climates.
- Councilor Syrett – asked what assumptions regarding age and size were made about the houses being retrofit in the report provided; noted appreciation for a central project management hub that will ensure resources are being used in the best way; stated that, to her knowledge, brownouts in California are scheduled to help prevent forest fires, not due to reliability issues; noted that Texas relies almost exclusively on carbon emitting power and that is what failed in their extreme cold weather; stated that dams on the Snake River would not be removed for at least a decade; asked if NW Natural is suing the State of Oregon to get out of the climate protection plan.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted that the lower Snake River dam plan would replace and then remove dams and would not impact reliability; noted that the power

grid is not in danger and reliability is not at risk; note that coal replacement is the most pressing issue; stated his preference would be to focus on lowering the emissions created by transportation, which is the cause of 53 percent of emissions; noted that the existing housing stock is a priority; asked what the percentage of natural gas emissions from existing versus new hook ups is; stated that mobile homes and single family homes should be the focus; noted that 60 percent of NW Natural customers are low- to moderate-income and so it is important to consider the impact on them when making decisions for action plans.

- Councilor Yeh – stated that the report provided shows that people are taking climate protection seriously; asked to clarify the cost of the most expensive option in the presentation; asked to clarify that the costs in the presentation include changes and upgrades that would be done in any situation.
- Mayor Vinis – expressed appreciation for the recommendation for a central management team for the decarbonization project; noted that EWEB does all of the suggested home retrofit or upgrades except home repairs and coordinating the project management with EWEB will be important; stated it will be important to make sure that homeowners know what resources are available to them for decarbonization upgrades and repairs; noted that the map provided for low-income residential areas aligns with the public health overlay presentation that will be coming soon; noted that it is important to consider low- to moderate-income neighborhoods as this process moves forward; reminded Council that the federal government has grants that can be of assistance as the first steps are taken.

MOTION AND VOTE: Councilor Keating, seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved to extend the meeting by 15 minutes. **VOTE: PASSED 5:2,** opposed by councilors Groves and Semple.

- Councilor Keating – asked to confirm that NW Natural is suing the State of Oregon in order to be excluded from the state’s critical Climate Recovery Ordinance goals; noted concerns and read passages from an activity book that was published by NW Natural and sent to 4J School District students.
- Councilor Clark – stated that he would like to see more focus on reducing transportation emissions; stated he would like to see more hybrid options for reducing carbon emissions; noted that his previous comments regarding reliability came from an article published on newsdata.com on July 15, and urged his colleagues to read the article; asked how a new, large corporation could impact energy reliability.
- Councilor Groves – stated that the brownouts and blackouts in California were due to fires and a supply and demand inequity; asked if there is any work by the federal government to increase and improve the utilities; noted that there is a backlog or backorder of transformers for power supply; stated that he would encourage work toward increasing a more robust power supply grid both locally and nationally; stated that he hopes staff and Council look at the resiliency aspect of options moving forward.

- Councilor Syrett – shared a quote about climate change action; noted that she feels an urgency to act due to a large number of deaths caused by a heat wave in Spain and Portugal, melting airport runways, and fires destroying homes in the Pacific Northwest; stated that there is an need to move on all things and for Eugene to lead in the nation; noted that she will postpone intended motions until the next work session.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted that climate change is the crisis of the time and the world is way behind stopping the impacts of climate change; stated that it will take immense effort and funding to complete the necessary changes; stated that implementing a project manager is important for this project; noted that the presentation shows that 90 percent of emissions come from space and water heating and that is where efforts should be focused.

Councilor Syrett adjourned the meeting at 1:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Katie LaSala
City Recorder

(Recorded by Sara McKinney)
Webcast of meeting available [here](#).