

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Work Session and Eugene Urban Renewal Agency Meeting Eugene, Oregon 97401

September 12, 2022
5:30 p.m.

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

Mayor Vinis opened the September 12, 2022, meeting of the Urban Renewal Agency in a hybrid format at 101 W 10th Avenue, Eugene OR 97401.

1. **WORK SESSION: Riverfront Urban Renewal District**

City Manager, Sarah Medary introduced Community Development Director, Will Dowdy, Business Development Analyst, Ananda D’Souza and Senior Financial Analyst, Maurizio Bottalico presented information on the Riverfront Urban Renewal District.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Groves – asked if the acres being considered in the University of Oregon land swap would be included in the Riverfront Urban Renewal District; asked if there are any ideas for funding options for affordable housing in the district.
- Councilor Evans – asked staff to clarify the term ‘urban context’; asked if the proposed housing location in the material is the final location; asked on the status of partner agencies for this housing project; asked staff to clarify that raising the cap or extending the Urban Renewal District could generate more funds that could be allocated to affordable housing or the steam plant; asked if Council is considering extending the district by two or three years to fund steam plant project.
- Councilor Syrett – asked if Williams and Dame Inc. were still the developers for the affordable housing project, if not, when did this change; noted that affordable housing is a priority project for the district; noted her preference to have 75-units, not 75 rooms in the affordable housing project; noted that the vandalism at the steam plant is disturbing; voiced concern over the historic value of the building and the cost of maintaining it as an undeveloped site; noted that the Riverfront Park area can be used without additional parking; noted concern about overdeveloping parking areas.
- Councilor Semple – noted that she is not in favor of urban renewal districts but is in favor of these projects; noted that the affordable housing in this district is imperative to avoid gentrification; asked if the 75-units would be multi-bedroom units or studio units; voiced concern over the vandalism of the steam plant building.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted he would be in favor of the district sunseting in 2024; noted his priority order for the projects discussed today would be 1)housing, 2)steam plant and 3) parking; noted he is not in favor of extending and raising the cap; asked if urban renewal funding has ever been used for affordable housing projects; stated he would not be in favor of putting a large amount of funding into the steam plant project; noted he would be interested in a rate of return analysis for the steam plant project; noted that additional parking is at the bottom of his interest list for funding.

- Councilor Yeh – stated that the affordable housing project is a critical item for this district; noted that she would consider the entire project a failure if it were to not include the affordable housing; noted that it would be critical to identify if the steam plant project is worth the funding that would be required to complete it; noted that she is not in favor of funding additional parking.
- Councilor Keating – stated that he would not be in favor of using any additional land acquired for parking; noted that the World Athletics Championship event was a success without additional parking; noted if the steam plant were developed appropriately it could be a hub for small business, music, and theater; stated that affordable housing is at the top of his list for priorities.
- Councilor Clark – asked staff how many additional parking spaces are planned for this area; asked staff how many parking spaces would be needed to support the Riverfront Park and steam plant; asked how many spaces are available at Alton Baker Park.
- Mayor Vinis – noted that both affordable housing and the steam plant are priorities; noted she would prioritize affordable housing over the steam plant; asked staff to confirm what the funding goal is in extending the urban renewal district; advocated investing in the steam plant; noted that urban renewal districts are to spur economic development and that is exactly what the steam plant project would be; noted she is not in favor of investing in parking.
- Councilor Evans – asked staff what it costs per space to develop parking; asked if the proposed parking would be in front of the steam plant.
- Councilor Syrett – noted the steam plant would be an investment and she is open to discussions regarding filling the funding gap; stated she would consider the redevelopment of the riverfront would be a failure without the affordable housing project.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated he believes the project would be a failure if the affordable housing project were not completed; noted that the steam plant proposal is for a hotel; asked if there is potential to use parking at the old EWEB headquarters building; asked staff to clarify the district would be extended by four years to raise an additional \$10 million.
- Councilor Clark – stated that there are more than 200 parking spaces at the EWEB building and the building has more than 100,000 square feet that could be used for city hall; noted his desire to have a conversation regarding acquiring the EWEB building.

Mayor Vinis adjourned the meeting of the Urban Renewal Agency and opened the September 12, 2022, work session of the Eugene City Council.

2. WORK SESSION: Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities Overview

Senior Planner, Heather O'Donnell, Transportation Planning Manager, Rob Inerfeld and Building and Permit Services Director, Lydia Bishop, presented information on the Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities requirements.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Clark – asked City Manager if the new Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities projects would cost the City of Eugene \$10 million per year without any state funding allocated yet; asked City Manager who decided that this item was not

brought forth to council until after the state-level rulemaking was complete; asked who decided that the City of Eugene did not want to join other cities in a lawsuit against implementation; noted that this was an executive order by the governor and two of the three candidates running for governor would reverse this mandate.

- Councilor Syrett – noted that it would have been difficult to bring the item to Council prior to the ruling; noted that staff presented a lot of information to the state to try to prevent and change the mandates; noted that she does not think the lawsuit is the right approach.
- Councilor Groves – noted he feels conflicted about state mandates; stated this is similar to the middle housing mandate; believes the timing and cost of the issue is going to have a big impact; would like to hear more about the lawsuit.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated that this is a big deal and will be a lot of work; noted that the assumptions in slide three and four about greenhouse gases do not include any new actions that the state has taken; asked how the new items enacted incorporate into this; stated he was on the governor’s task force that helped create the rules and on the Metropolitan Planning Organization when it was created; would like to know how the city level plan was adopted; asked what needs to be done in regard to parking to comply; noted that the lawsuit is intriguing however if the suit is lost, municipalities still have to act and could fall behind on deadlines; asked how the timing of compliance and end product of the lawsuit would be.
- Councilor Keating – noted he is interested in the scenario plan; asked if the new rule contradicts the middle-housing distance to EmX that was previously adopted by Council.

Mayor Vinis adjourned the meeting at 7:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Katie LaSala
City Recorder

(Recorded by Sara McKinney)

Webcast of meeting available [here](#).