

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Special Meeting Eugene, Oregon 97401

October 5, 2022
12:00 p.m.

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

Mayor Vinis opened the October 5, 2022, special meeting of the Eugene City Council in a virtual format at 101 W 10th Avenue, Eugene OR 97401.

1. **SPECIAL MEETING: Process for Appointing Interim Ward 7 Councilor**

City Manager Sarah Medary introduced City Recorder, Katie LaSala to introduce the topic.

Council Discussion:

- Mayor Vinis – asked Councilors to state their preferences on the proposed process for appointing an interim Ward 7 Councilor in order of ward; requested that Councilors not make motions in the first round of discussion; stated that Councilor Keating will make a motion in the second round for discussion.
- Councilor Semple – stated that she is not in favor of a direct appointment due to the amount of requests City Council has received for more public notification; noted her preference is to have an application process; stated that traditional voting for the candidate aligns better with public expectations; noted that the deadlines presented are reasonable; suggested that Council finalize the application at the October 12 Work Session and give Ward 7 residents an opportunity to engage Council during this process.
- Councilor Keating – noted the application period should be as long as possible to allow time for a wide array of qualified applicants; noted his support for the timeline and process laid out by staff.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated that City Council needs to be as thorough, deliberate, and open as possible through this important process; noted that an application process with an adequate timeline is his preference; noted that he wants people to understand the residency requirements; stated that this process is consistent with the boards and commissions process; noted that the first supplemental question is actually two different questions; stated that the application should include a question about parking because it is a topic City Council will be discussing over the next year; stated his preference for the standard voting system.
- Councilor Yeh – stated that direct appointment of a Councilor is not appropriate; noted her support for the standard voting process to avoid confusion; is in favor of the proposed timeline; stated her support for dividing the first supplemental question into two questions; noted that the application should not imply that living in Ward 7 for a longer period makes someone a better candidate; shared that her experience with this process was challenging but fair.

- Councilor Clark –asked staff what part of the process occurs in July 2023; asked if the start date of the elected Councilor is in code; noted preference for a quick, yet deliberate process to give Ward 7 residents representation; stated his support for the proposed timeline; asked whether there would be an official city process to engage residents of Ward 7.
- Councilor Evans – stated his support for the application process; stated his preference for simple majority voting, but he is open to ranked voting; stated that the residency requirements are important; favors knowing how long applicants have lived in Ward 7; noted that Council should not be involved in community forums.
- Councilor Clark –requested that any preliminary voting done by Council for the Interim Ward 7 Councilor be made public as soon as possible.
- Councilor Groves – stated that an important part of recruitment for the Interim Ward 7 Councilor is that candidates understand the election process that will follow if they wish to remain on City Council; noted his concern about community engagement; stated his preference for a simple majority vote; noted his support of the proposed timelines; stated his interest in public engagement during this process, and support for community forums hosted by neighborhood associations.
- Mayor Vinis – clarified that City staff cannot organize political candidate events; stated that neighborhood associations must organize these events themselves.
- Councilor Keating – noted his recognition of Councilors’ concerns about the proposed supplemental questions, particularly about residency in Ward 7.

MOTION: Councilor Keating, seconded by Councilor Groves, moved to approve the interim appointment plan as presented in the attachments, with the following changes to Attachment B: 1) strike “if yes, how long have you resided in Ward 7?” 2) separate question one into two questions and 3) separate question four into two questions.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Keating – noted that the two parts in supplemental question four are different enough to be separated and approving this motion would create one question for each Councilor; noted that the motion maintains the ranked choice voting system that was used in 2017; stated that the voting process should be as transparent as possible.
- Mayor Vinis – clarified that the supplemental questions are part of the application, not the interview process.
- Councilor Clark – stated his support for the motion; noted his hope for robust engagement from the community for the appointment process, but he will give the most consideration to input from Ward 7 residents.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated that length of residency in Ward 7 is an interesting fact for Council to consider; asked if Councilor Keating would reconsider striking that question as a friendly amendment; asked if Councilor Keating would consider a friendly amendment to change the preference voting to standard voting; asked for the plan for outreach to Eugene residents; requested greater outreach through the network established by the Office of Equity and Community Engagement.

MOTION TO AMEND: Councilor Zelenka, seconded by Councilor Evans, moved to amend the motion to change out item number three, preference voting, for a standard voting methodology used for boards and commissions.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Yeh – asked which voting type was used in 2017; spoke in favor of keeping the voting system that was used in 2017 for transparency.
- Councilor Evans – stated that there has never been a consistent format for voting for the appointment; noted that ranked choice voting was a new process for the 2017 appointment of Councilor Yeh; stated that the process needs to be as understandable for the public as possible.

VOTE ON MOTION TO AMEND: PASSED: 6:1, opposed by Councilor Keating.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Semple – stated that it is useful to know the length of residence in Eugene and Ward 7; stated that Council's efforts to be open and transparent are critical; noted that people will bring forward their questions and concerns about the process at public forums; stated that it would be useful to know the wards of people who submit comments.
- Councilor Evans – asked how residency will be verified.
- Councilor Keating – clarified that the motion includes questions about residency; noted that many emails from residents do not include ward information; stated that he looks up voter registration of constituents to verify their ward; requested that the City website ask residents to provide their address and ward information when they communicate with Councilors; noted that the City should not be sponsoring forums but should encourage neighborhood associations to do so.
- Councilor Clark – stated that although it is not a requirement, he would like to know how long applicants have lived in Ward 7; stated that length of residency in Ward 7 will inform his thinking about candidates.

MOTION TO AMEND: Councilor Clark, seconded by Councilor Zelenka, moved to amend the motion to retain “if yes, how long have you resided in Ward 7?”

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Zelenka – stated his support for the question about length of residency in Ward 7; noted that it is not a requirement, but it would inform his consideration of candidates.
- Councilor Groves – stated his support of Councilor Zelenka's statements.
- Councilor Yeh – spoke in opposition to the motion to amend; noted her concern that Councilors statements make it appear as though length of residency in Ward 7 is a criterion; believes that adding this criteria will discourage diverse applicants by creating a barrier.

VOTE ON MOTION TO AMEND: PASSED: 4:3, opposed by Councilors Keating, Yeh, and Evans.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Zelenka – asked about political restrictions on City Council in this appointment process.
- Councilor Groves – noted his concern about relying on outside organizations to engage the community; encouraged Councilors to find opportunities to help engage the community.
- Councilor Evans – stated that Council should listen to all feedback they receive from the community on this process.
- Councilor Yeh – clarified that Council is not holding an election for this appointment; stated that Ward 7 voters will have that opportunity in May 2023; spoke in opposition to Council taking actions that make this process seem like an election.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted his agreement that Council should not take actions to make this process seem like an election; stated that notifying the public about the application should be as broad as possible; stated that the interview process is similar to a community forum because it is a public meeting; noted that many people will give input to Councilors on this process.

MOTION RESTATED AS AMENDED AND VOTE: Councilor Keating, seconded by Councilor Groves, moved to approve the interim appointment plan as presented in the attachments with the following changes to Attachment B: 1) separate supplemental question one into two questions, 2) separate supplemental question four into two questions, and 3) replace ranked choice voting with a direct vote process. **VOTE: PASSED 7:0**

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Keating – asked if the Council Vice President can do the roles and duties of Council President before one is officially in place; asked if an acting Co-Vice President could be appointed as part of a leadership transition team.
- Mayor Vinis – stated that there is a formal process for the rotation of Council President; stated that the Councilor who has served as Council President the longest ago would be next for nomination

MOTION: Councilor Clark, seconded by Councilors Groves and Zelenka, moved to nominate Greg Evans as Council President to fulfill the unfinished term of the Ward 7 President.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Zelenka – stated that it's clear that Councilor Keating cannot serve as Council President until January; stated that it is inappropriate for one Council Officer to share the load of President and Vice President; noted that he seconded the motion because Councilor Evans should be next in line to be Council President.
- Councilor Semple – asked if Councilor Evans would like to be Council President for the next two and half months.
- Councilor Evans – stated that he would like to be Council President; noted he is awaiting the birth of his grandchild in November; stated that he is able to help with the baby and be Council President.

- Councilor Keating – stated his support for Councilor Evans accepting his nomination; stated that he looks forward to serving with Councilor Evans.

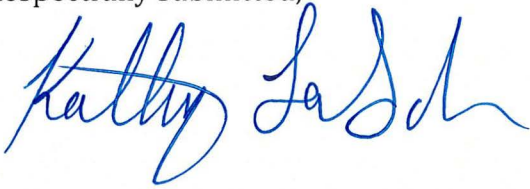
VOTE: PASSED 7:0

Council Discussion:

- Mayor Vinis – congratulated Councilor Evans; stated she looks forward to working with him; thanked Councilor Evans for his willingness to step into the role; thanked the Council for their work to clarify this process for the public.

Mayor Vinis adjourned the meeting at 1:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Katie LaSala
City Recorder

(Recorded by Olivia Clark)

Webcast of meeting available [here](#).