

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

October 26, 2022
12:00 p.m.

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

Mayor Vinis opened the October 26, 2022, work session of the Eugene City Council in a hybrid format at 101 W 10th Avenue, Eugene OR 97401.

1. **WORK SESSION: Decarbonization of Existing Buildings**

City Manager, Sarah Medary introduced Sustainability Manager Ian Penn, who was joined by Josh Proudfoot and Aaron Toney of Good Company who presented information on the Decarbonization of Existing Buildings in Eugene.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Zelenka –noted it will take time to complete this transition and that the climate protection act passed by the legislature will help in the transition process; prefers to focus on the easier transitions first; noted the importance of outreach and education; stated that the City should focus on space and water heating in healthcare, office, food service, education and retail first; noted that the cost associated with clean energy will decline as technologies improve; stated the City should focus on aligning with the state.
- Councilor Groves – noted concern over decarbonization regulations and the impact to employers; asked if affordability and cost effectiveness were based on current EWEB and NW Natural rates; noted EWEB’s work on a hydro dam and the costs of that work; suggested that EWEB explore solar panel installation at reservoirs; recognized concerns about hydrogen blending with natural gas; asked for clarification on how nitrogen oxide increases when introduced with hydrogen; asked presenters about weatherization programs between municipalities and local utilities; noted interest in exploring weatherization programs.
- Councilor Yeh – noted Bethel citizen concerns regarding hydrogen blending; asked if presenters can provide information regarding the safety of a potential pilot project in Bethel on hydrogen blending with natural gas.
- Councilor Clark – noted that understanding the costs of carbon reduction projects is important; asked presenters to discuss energy reliability, storage, and transport for carbon reducing energy options; asked if the cost of materials for battery power storage is feasible; noted that energy storage is an important factor in decarbonization work; asked about nationwide work looking into blended energy options.
- Councilor Keating – stated interest in solar panel installation along Interstate 5; asked if a local solar plant investment for a large scale solar power collection stations is feasible; noted that increased solar installations would also create jobs; asked how many jobs

are in the green collar sector; asked how the training for green collar jobs are being offered; asked what about reducing emissions from lawncare equipment.

- Councilor Semple – noted her preference for weatherization efforts to reduce the energy used for space heating; asked how solar energy performs in winter months; asked if wind power installation in rights-of-way is a feasible option; asked if on-demand hot water is more efficient than standard hot water heaters; noted support for moving to electric lawncare equipment.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted that hydrogen is expensive and that improvements in technology will bring that cost down; stated that older buildings and heating in healthcare, office, food service, education and retail are the best places to start carbon reduction efforts; stated the importance of outreach and education prior to acting on decarbonization efforts; noted the federal funding options to assist in the decarbonization efforts; stated interest in green bank options; noted that a focus on equity for low profit margin and underserved businesses is important.
- Councilor Groves – noted a preference to align with state goals and standards; asked when the market will become more advantageous to shift to electrification; asked if the market would self-correct if no action were taken; noted that rights-of-way installation of solar and wind would be a potential risk near roadways.
- Councilor Semple – noted that industry was a smaller carbon emissions contributor than commercial and residential sectors; noted that Good Company’s report provided good recommendations for potential actions.
- Mayor Vinis – noted that staff are working on how federal funding can be used effectively; stated a preference to consider housing policy along with climate policy; noted that local action is important and the City should not wait for state or federal action; suggested that Council make a distinction between decarbonization and new buildings; suggested that Council consider sector strategies and more targeted approaches.

Mayor Vinis adjourned the meeting at 1:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Katie LaSala
City Recorder

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