

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Virtual Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

January 13, 2021
12:00 p.m.

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

Mayor Vinis opened the January 13, 2021, work session of the Eugene City Council.

1. **Police Chief Update**

Chief Skinner gave a brief update on preparations for the week of the presidential inauguration.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Syrett – expressed appreciation for the update, communications, and the thoughtful and strategic approach; asked Chief Skinner to speak to how he is preparing his officers to be vigilant around potential activities that fall into the categories of Menacing and Intimidation; asked if there are any indications that members of the Eugene Police force were present in Washington, D.C. as part of the riot and illegal activity that took place on January 6.
- Councilor Groves – stated these are volatile, extremely dangerous and intimidating events for responders as well, who have split seconds to make critical decisions; appreciated the restraint shown by Eugene Police he personally has witnessed; encouraged that dialogue continues with organizers of events, and to make sure community expectations are clear.
- Councilor Keating – stated he was deeply troubled by the events and loss of life that took place on January 6; asked Chief Skinner to confirm swift action and possible termination by Eugene Police Department if officers were found to have participated in the January 6 insurrection; asked if the Proud Boys’ classification as a hate group will alter the police department’s response if there is any criminal activity that erupts from a demonstration.
- Councilor Evans – asked how the Council and the public can be assured that public safety officers and police will not be aiding and abetting perpetrators of a riot, and what is in place to keep officers accountable around these issues.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked Chief Skinner to discuss post-riot actions of the Proud Boys group.

2. **WORK SESSION: 75-Bed Low Barrier Shelter and Navigation Center**

Joint Housing and Shelter Strategist Sarai Johnson, Homeless Systems Policy Manager Peter Chavannes, and City Manager’s Office Director Brooke Freed presented a update on the siting of the 75-bed low barrier shelter and navigation center recommended by the Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC) in the Lane County Shelter Feasibility Study.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Clark – thanked staff for the presentation; asked how long the operational funding deficit will continue; asked staff to have a conversation with Police Auditor Mark Gissiner regarding potential federal funding.
- Councilor Syrett – thanked staff for the update and review; stated she supports moving forward with 100 River Avenue as the location for the Navigation Center and believes the City and Lane County can work together to identify funds and fill the gap in operational funding; asked what the characteristics are of the “most vulnerable” category of the homeless population.

- Councilor Groves – stated he would like to delve deeper into the homelessness issue at Council’s February workshop; asked if the car camps are set up to accommodate recreational vehicles and trailers; stated he toured West Eugene industrial areas and saw the impact those vehicles are causing for businesses in the area and would like to find a reasonable approach that includes compassion and pays attention to all of Eugene; stated Eugene can’t afford to lose jobs if businesses choose to leave due to this issue; stated he feels the issue is at a critical point.
- Councilor Yeh – asked a clarifying question regarding a potential funding source brought forward by staff; stated staff are doing a great job and work is moving in the right direction.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked staff to define “low-barrier”; stated he supports the River Avenue site and wonders if the Roosevelt site can be land-banked for future homelessness support; asked if Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds can be used for a Navigation Center; encouraged staff to acquire the Roosevelt site if possible.
- Councilor Semple – stated the River Avenue site is appealing but finds it distressing that timing of the use of the facility for COVID could impact funding and later use as a Navigation Center; stated it has been three years since Council approved \$1 million for a much-needed shelter; agreed with trying to acquire the Roosevelt site for homelessness purposes; asked staff how long a person will be able to stay at the shelter and if they can stay without a referral.
- Councilor Keating – asked about the shelter staffing plan by City staff; asked if there will be any programs in place for vaccination and treatment for the pets of the shelter’s residents; asked about the strategy for providing internet access to shelter residents and stated those staying in rest stops need internet access as well; asked staff to comment on the growing number of homeless women veterans.
- Mayor Vinis – asked staff to discuss the original Lane County Shelter Feasibility Study timeline.

Mayor Vinis adjourned the meeting of the City Council and convened a meeting of the Eugene Urban Renewal Agency.

3. **WORK SESSION: Riverfront Park – Southern Plaza Property Transfer**

Principal Landscape Architect Emily Proudfoot gave a brief presentation about the transfer of ownership of real property from the Agency to the City to support a Southern Plaza in the Downtown Riverfront Park.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Clark – stated he is in favor of the proposed motion; asked for a procedural clarification.
- Councilor Keating – thanked staff for the presentation; proposed a science, technology, engineering, arts and math center at the location known as the Steam Plant.

MOTION: Councilor Yeh, seconded by Councilor Syrett, moved to authorize the Agency Director to take all actions necessary to transfer the real property shown in Attachment A to the City of Eugene. **PASSED:** 8:0.

The meeting adjourned at 1:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Julie Adams
Deputy City Recorder

(Recorded by Jessica Gebb)

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