

## MINUTES

### Eugene City Council Virtual Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

March 8, 2021  
5:30 p.m.

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

Mayor Vinis opened the March 8, 2021, work session of the Eugene City Council.

**1. WORK SESSION: An Ordinance Concerning Clear and Objective Approval Criteria for Housing; Amending Sections 9.0500, 9.2181, 9.2471, 9.2520, 9.2687, 0.2751, 9.2761, 9.3216, 9.3221, 9.2626, 9.3725, 9.4830, 9.5750, 9.6010, 9.6710, 9.6810, 9.6815, 9.6820, 9.6845, 9.6865, 9.6885, 9.7007, 9.8030, 9.8045, 9.8055, 9.8085, 9.8090, 9.8100, 9.8105, 9.8205, 9.8210, 9.8215, 9.8220, 9.8310, 9.8320, 9.8325, 9.8360, 9.8365, 9.8440, 9.8445, 9.8505, 9.8510, 9.8515, and 9.8520 of the Eugene Code, 1971; Adding Section 9.5860 to That Code; and Providing an Effective Date (City File CA 20-4)**

Senior Planner Jenessa Dragovich provided a project overview in advance of the March 8 public hearing on the proposed Clear and Objective Housing Approval Criteria land use code amendments.

#### Council Discussion

- Councilor Clark – asked what the net effect of the proposed ordinance is on buildable land inventory; asked if city possesses cost burdensome land.
- Councilor Groves – inquired what the cause and effect relationship is between the code amendments and what is driving the amendments.
- Councilor Semple – expressed gratitude to the Planning Commission for its extensive work on this topic.
- Councilor Clark – asked if these code amendments are adequate to cover any future decision Council may make regarding the NW Natural Gas franchise agreement, or if they will affect that decision.

Mayor adjourned the meeting of the Eugene City Council and convened a meeting of the Eugene Urban Renewal Agency at 5:58 p.m.

**2. WORK SESSION: Riverfront Urban Renewal Follow-Up #2**

Executive Director of Planning and Development Denny Braud, and Amanda Nobel Flannery and Will Dowdy, Interim Co-Directors of Community Development, provided an update of the current financial status of the Riverfront Urban Renewal District, and outlined four projects that could be pursued.

#### Council Discussion

- Councilor Syrett – inquired if a MUPTE is approved, does the developer intend to build the low-income units or make a payment in lieu of building; asked if the idea of removal of transmission lines has been previously presented to Council, and commented this should not be included as a project of the Urban Renewal Agency; stated she supports building a minimum of 75 affordable housing units; stated the project should be looking into alternatives to reduce the number of concrete parking spaces provided on-site.

- Councilor Keating – requested an explanation of the suggestion that relocating the transmission lines would be safer; asked clarifying questions regarding budgeted items; asked if underground parking is an option and stated his preference would be to find creative parking solutions rather than build a parking lot.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked for the cost differential of underground versus surface parking; stated his preference would not be to site a parking lot on prime developable land alongside the river; stated he supports the idea of relocating the transmission line; agrees with Councilor Syrett’s comments concerning the number of affordable housing units.
- Councilor Yeh – commented it is not ideal to spend so much on parking when trying to get people to use other modes of transportation; stated she appreciates the idea of right-sizing park features to the current budget with an eye to adding more in the future; stated she does not support reducing the number of affordable housing units below 75.
- Councilor Groves – asked staff if they foresee Council needing to extend the zone and financing or increase the amount; inquired if overhead power lines are high voltage and raised safety concerns of Extremely Low Frequency (ELF) radiation being emitted in the park and electricity reaching the ground; stated he would support burying the lines underground if it was financially feasible, and at a minimum, the lines need to be removed from areas the public will congregate.
- Councilor Semple - commented on the importance of the Plaza and affordable housing at the site; stated she is not keen on extending the urban renewal district.
- Councilor Evans- asked staff when the Riverfront Urban Renewal District will sunset and how long of an extension would be required to meet the financial requirements to complete the Downtown Riverfront projects; stated he would like to see Council review the details and make a decision about sunsetting or extending the Riverfront Urban Renewal District.
- Councilor Clark – stated there is existing parking available at the EWEB Headquarters Building if the City were to buy it; stated echoes Councilor Groves’ concerns about the high voltage power lines in the park; asked clarifying questions regarding the language around receiving the non-refundable deposit from the developer.
- Councilor Syrett – asked for clarification of the amount of funds being allocated for parking and how much additional money is required to complete the park project; expressed confusion about the urban renewal district paying to relocate the transmission lines.
- Councilor Zelenka- asked questions relating to the estimated investment Atkins Dame will be making for the parcels in the first closing and all parcels combined.
- Mayor Vinis – commented that the Steam Plant is a big piece of the overall development and is an economic anchor, and parking may be needed to make that viable.
- Councilor Syrett- commented she would like staff to be mindful of how much parking is actually needed and ways to creatively meet that need.
- Councilor Keating – inquired if there is an electric vehicle parking strategy for the Riverfront.

Meeting Adjourned 6:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Julie Adams  
Deputy City Recorder

*(Recorded by Niyah Ross)*

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