

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Virtual Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

April 28, 2021
12:00 p.m.

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

Mayor Vinis opened the April 28, 2021, work session of the Eugene City Council.

1. ACTION: An Ordinance Allowing For the Temporary Establishment of “Safe Parking” and “Safe Tent” Sites That Are Larger Than Allowed Under Section 4.816 of the Eugene Code, 1971; Declaring an Emergency; Providing For an Immediate Effective Date; and Providing a Sunset Date

MOTION to AMEND: Councilor Keating, seconded by Councilor Groves, moved to amend the second sentence of paragraph B of the Ordinance findings to remove the words “illicit camping” and replace the words “those camping” with “unhoused residents” so the sentence reads: “This often results in unsanitary and unsafe conditions for unhoused residents and for the surrounding community, particularly the nearby businesses and residents.”; and to amend the first sentence of Section 5 to replace the words “illicit camping” with the words, “significant increase in vehicular living and unsanctioned erection of tent camps” so the sentence reads: “Due to the immediate need to address the significant increase in vehicular living and unsanctioned erection of tent camps occurring throughout the community by establishing lawful sites to park vehicles or erect tents, an emergency is declared to exist that cannot be addressed by the Ordinance adoption procedures in Section 28 Subsection 1 of the Eugene Charter of 2002.”

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Keating – spoke to the reason for this amendment, including that there are people living in their vehicles who are not participating in illegal or illicit activity and Council should not generalize in the ordinance; stated that the point of ordinance is to lift people out of poverty by establishing safe sites to camp or park.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted the tradition of councilors making a motion speaking to their intention beforehand, which is helpful in deliberations.

VOTE: PASSED 6:0, Councilors Clark and Semple absent.

- Councilor Keating – spoke to the reason for his next motion to amend; suggested changing the wording to reflect the provision of potable water and renewable power as a goal, so as to not prevent the acquisition of certain land for the purposes of the ordinance.

MOTION to AMEND: Councilor Keating, seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved to amend the second sentence of the paragraph entitled “Safe Tent Sites” in Section 1 to add the goal of providing renewable power and potable water so the sentence reads: “In addition to any conditions imposed by City Council at time of site approval to address site specific issues, all safe tent sites authorized and established pursuant to this ordinance shall have adequate

garbage and toilets with the goal of providing renewable power and potable water and at all sanctioned sites.”

- Councilor Zelenka – suggested specifying electricity as the renewable power; said the motion reflected an important change in wording to the goal; remarked that it is a good idea to have water which includes the handwashing stations.
- Councilor Syrett – stated support for the proposed amendment; asked about intent behind use of renewable power specification and if EWEB transmission line would satisfy the goal.
- Councilor Keating – stated specification of renewable power will adhere to CRO goals; stated EWEB transmission line satisfies the need, but not the goal.
- Councilor Syrett - proposed a friendly amendment to add the word garbage collection to the text and read “pursuant to this ordinance shall have adequate garbage collection, toilets, and potable water, with the goal of providing renewable power at all sanctioned sites.”; Councilor Keating and Councilor Yeh accepted.
- Councilor Semple – asked if handwashing was included in port-a-potty needs; supported adding them specifically to the ordinance; requested a friendly amendment to add handwashing facilities; Councilor Keating and Councilor Yeh accepted.

MOTION RESTATED (*with friendly amendments*): Councilor Keating, seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved to amend the second sentence of the paragraph entitled Safe Tent Sites in section 1 to add the goal of providing renewable power and potable water so the sentence reads “in addition to any conditions imposed by the city council at time of site approval to address site specific issues all safe tent sites authorized and established pursuant to this ordinance shall have adequate garbage collection, toilets, and handwashing stations and a goal of providing renewable power at all sanctioned sites.”

- Councilor Semple – questioned why toilets were specified instead of port-a-potties; expressed concern about City’s liability if it does not provide plumbing; asked why the change was requested only for tent sites and not the car camping sites.
- Councilor Keating – explained the assumption that car camping will be close to the tent camping facilities; stated his support for extending these services to car campers if the council chooses to do that; consented to Councilor Semple’s motion for car camping sites that mirrors tent sites motion.
- Councilor Semple – said it’s critical to have equitable services for tent sites and car camping sites.
- Mayor Vinis – clarified the safe parking sites section specifies “adequate garbage and toilets”, noting it could be parallel to safe tent sites and added if wanted.
- Councilor Semple – asked if it could be one motion to make the car camping and safe tent sites language the same; Councilors Keating and Yeh supported it.
- Councilor Zelenka – agreed with Councilor Semple.
- Councilor Groves – noted providing power to those housed in tents and automobiles is very different than power to trailers/RVs; expressed concern that if power is being delivered to every individual site then could get in way of ability to serve.
- Councilor Semple – interested in powering up phones, wheelchairs, life-sustaining equipment; said Council must be clear on how much electricity is paid for.

MOTION RESTATED (*with friendly amendments*): Councilor Keating, seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved to amend the paragraphs entitled Safe Tent Sites and Safe Parking Sites in section 1 so that the sentences read “in addition to any conditions imposed by the City Council at the time of site approval to address site specific conditions, all safe tent or safe parking sites authorized and established pursuant to this ordinance shall have

adequate garbage collection, toilets, handwashing stations and potable water, with a goal of providing renewable power at all sanctioned sites.”

VOTE: PASSED 7:1, Councilor Clark opposed.

- Councilor Keating – said he hoped for unanimous support of his next motion due to the nation’s history of relocating populations and how problematic it has been.

MOTION to AMEND: Councilor Keating, seconded by Councilor Zelenka, moved to amend the first and second sentences of section 2 to replace the word “relocating” with “transitioning” so that the sentences read, “When a safe parking site is authorized and established pursuant to this ordinance, transitioning the vehicles unlawfully parked on City right-of-way in West Eugene shall be prioritized. When a safe tent site is authorized and established pursuant to this ordinance, transitioning the tent campers and 13th and Chambers and Washington-Jefferson park shall be prioritized.”

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Semple – shared her confusion with the use of the word “transition,” as it implies steps to relocation instead of relocating in one action and is unclear as a goal of the ordinance.
- Councilor Keating – stated relocation is harsh and nebulous, regardless of intent; noted relocating implies force and historically an action taken against someone’s will; stated transitioning someone from point to point in collaboration with service providers is more appropriate and the intent of ordinance will still be recognized.
- Councilor Semple – suggested “move” instead of “relocate”.
- Councilor Keating – stated his position that “move” is in the same category as “relocate”, noting the ultimate goal to lift people out of poverty; stated service providers use transition vocabulary and said he felt that “transition” will be less controversial with the homeless population and community.
- Councilor Semple – stated belief that transition does not fit here and will not support the motion with that language.
- Councilor Groves – stated his understanding of Councilor Keating’s intent and was supportive of the concept; stated for practical application he was in agreement with Councilor Semple as transitioning doesn’t imply immediacy; expressed support for the word “move”.
- Councilor Zelenka – suggested using “moving” instead of “transitioning” in the name of compromise.
- Councilor Keating – reiterated that “move” is in same category as “relocate” and does not accept that as a friendly amendment.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted that the paragraph in question is for a very specific action, and agreed with Councilor Keating’s intent; remarked on Opportunity Village’s success with moving and transitioning people; stated that “move” can be used as an amendment.
- Councilor Clark – asked staff whether the point of opening up the new camps was to address anyone or specifically the people illegally camped in those two specified areas in the ordinance; stated disagreement with the comparison of those camping illegally to the relocation of Japanese-Americans during WW2, as the people currently camped are being located from an illegal area to a legal area; said he doesn’t have a problem with that language in the ordinance.
- Councilor Syrett – suggested an alternative for wording; asked City Attorney if the City of Eugene has authority to require illegally camped individuals to go to one of these spaces; offered a friendly amendment to change the language to read, “When a safe parking site is authorized and established pursuant to this ordinance, those living in vehicles unlawfully parked on the City right-of-way and West Eugene shall be prioritized for occupying spaces at the safe parking site. When a safe tent site is authorized and established pursuant to this

ordinance, those living in tents at 13th and Chambers and Washington-Jefferson park shall be prioritized for occupying spaces at the safe tent site.”; Councilors Keating and Zelenka accepted.

- Councilor Yeh – supported Councilor Syrett’s suggestion.
- Councilor Clark – expressed support of Councilor Syrett’s amendment; requested more discussion as this is where the approach has failed in the past and the community is less successful in dealing with this issue; noted the inability to declare that illegal camping must be stopped and that contributes to the City’s inability to solve this problem.
- Councilor Keating – commented that one’s home may not have four walls and a roof and running water, one’s home may be on tires, on their back or in a tent, but their home is Eugene and there’s a commonality there; stated there are different points of view that inform truths.

VOTE: PASSED 8:0

- Councilor Groves – stated concern with sunset date in 2023, as it’s good policy; stated dislike of coming back and revisiting unless needed.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted sunset forces Council to look and do forced reevaluation of it; stated Council will look at it a couple months before sunset to evaluate efficacies.

VOTE ON ORDINANCE as AMENDED: PASSED 8:0

2. WORK SESSION: Review of 2020 Implementation of Bond Measure to Fix Streets and 2021 Pavement Management Report

City Manager Sarah Medary was joined by Public Works staff Matt Rodrigues and Katie Marwitz who gave a brief overview of the progress made on the bond measure projects.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Zelenka – spoke about the improvements made to the roads since the bond measure first passed and the successful work done to complete the backlog of work on roads needing repair; requested that staff track how much is spent on active transportation in a more detailed fashion; asked about Vision Zero.
- Councilor Clark – thanked staff for the report; requested information about the current backlog of work on unimproved streets and noted the tremendous reduction in the amount compared to when the bond measure first started; inquired about maintenance overlays and if staff have seen increase in need; supported increasing capacity for staff to do maintenance overlays.
- Councilor Groves – thanked staff for their work; noted the safety aspect of this project and that it has increased safety for traffic, vehicles, and the community.
- Councilor Keating – shared concerns from South Eugene community members regarding Willamette Street and suggested a virtual tour of the projects; asked if there’s something Council can do to help businesses impacted by ongoing construction on their roads.
- Councilor Semple – spoke to Lincoln School park’s improvements being on the list of projects coming up.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked about the traffic-calming program and the bike-ped plan and highlighted both as things for Council to find additional funding for as they’re significantly underfunded.
- Councilor Clark – asked staff about the bike-ped plan timeline and the issue with charging people for STCs on projects that may not be done for a long time.
- Mayor Vinis – thanked the panel for their ongoing work on reviewing this project; remarked on the backlog and that this is work that will always need funding; spoke to potential federal

infrastructure package and how it could help with broader needs; thanked staff for their work and report.

The meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Beth Forrest
City Recorder

(Recorded by Julie Adams)

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