

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Virtual Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

May 24, 2021
5:30 p.m.

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

Councilors Absent: Claire Syrett

Mayor Vinis opened the May 24, 2021, work session of the Eugene City Council.

1. **WORK SESSION: Middle Housing Code Amendments (Implementation of HB 2001)**

City Manager Sarah Medary, Principal Planner Terri Harding, Healthy Democracy panelists Hunter and Francisco, and ECONorthwest representative Becky Hewitt provided information on the Middle Housing Code Amendments plan.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Evans – thanked staff and panelists for the information; expressed issue with the plan concerning rental versus home ownership; spoke in favor of ADUs used for ownership and not as rental properties; asked how zoning would affect this process and protect people from discriminatory lending practices; inquired about subsidy programs from the state or federal levels to assist people acquiring these homes; asked if the City could provide a tax incentive for home ownership for those with middle to low income.
- Councilor Clark – agreed with Councilor Evans on the issue of using ADUs for rentals instead of promoting home ownership; noted lending regulatory body on the federal level that regulates bias practices; stated construction costs have at a minimum doubled in past year; noted that the plan is for more smaller rentals; stated that he is in favor of doing something but wished that Council was incentivizing more to help people’s financial health.
- Councilor Keating – stated that he is the only renter on Council, and he rents due to affordability, wage stagnation, lack of upward mobility in workforce; supported this as one solution among many to help these issues; asked if there was a feasibility study done for land along transportation routes that is available for rezoning for commercial and residential purposes; asked how this proposal can help stop the unaffordable pathway to home ownership.
- Councilor Groves – thanked staff and presenters; noted the importance of making home ownership available to as many people as possible to accumulate personal wealth; noted the high cost of housing with the supply and demand imbalance; stated one reason materials are in short supply is the loss of structures in wildland urban interface across the US and mitigating wildfires will be important for this issue, too.
- Councilor Zelenka – thanked staff and presenters for the information; asked about the amount of discretion Council has in implementing this plan within the confines of House Bill 2001; asked if Council proposed a more lenient plan or went beyond the minimum standard, if it would get litigated to have to be the minimum standard; appreciated matrix with different code recommendations in packet materials.
- Councilor Clark – noted the high cost of building the ADUs due to current construction costs and that most people will buy old single-family homes to replace with a fourplex rented at market

rate; emphasized current lower number of permits for single-family homes and the need to incentivize the building of more single-family homes.

- Mayor Vinis – noted the current task for Council is to have City code in compliance and that the next step will be incentivizing ADUs and single family homes to make them more affordable; stated the overall goal is to build for the future and increasing supply of housing.

2. **WORK SESSION: Wildfire Preparedness**

City Manager Sarah Medary introduced Eugene Springfield Interim Fire Chief Heppel and Deputy Fire Marshal Mark Dahl, filling in for Merrill Harrison, who presented on Wildfire Preparedness and Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). Nuisance Vegetation Specialist Jeff Chandler, Battalion Chief Wayne Morris and Eugene Wildfire Preparedness Coalition representative Tom Peck contributed to the topic.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Keating – thanked staff and firefighters for all the work they have done for the community; asked what a neighbor could do to reduce fuel load on an adjacent private property when they can't contact the owner.
- Councilor Groves – thanked staff for the presentation; stated belief that the Eugene Wildfire Preparedness Coalition is a good contributor to solutions for mitigating wildfire risk and preparedness, particularly within communities; stated the two main necessities for wildfire preparedness are working together for mitigation and quick response.
- Councilor Clark – thanked staff for their work; asked if there was a time in their memory when the potential for wildfire was higher than now; asked if Chief Heppel agreed that mitigation and quick response are the best defenses against wildfires; highlighted the importance of quick response for wildfires.
- Councilor Keating – noted the particularly high fire risk in the South Hills area.

MOTION: Councilor Keating, seconded by Councilor Zelenka, moved to direct the City Manager to prepare an ordinance and schedule a June 21 public hearing on an uncodified code amendment banning the use of all fireworks south of 18th Avenue or east of Agate Street until 2023, and banning the sale of all fireworks south of 18th Avenue or east of Agate Street in 2022, the proposed ordinance should declare this matter an emergency and include an immediate effective date.

- Councilor Keating – noted that the sale portion of the proposed ordinance would not go into effect until 2023 due to current contracts with vendors; said he hoped that the space at 30th and Hilyard is used as place to educate the public on where and when they can set off fireworks, contingent on passage of ordinance.
- Councilor Groves – stated his support for the motion.
- Councilor Zelenka – thanked Councilor Keating for the proposed motion; noted a similar ban had been put in place before; asked Councilor Keating to speak to the part of the motion about the sale of fireworks.
- Councilor Keating – shared that his proposal addressed an access issue by prohibiting the sale of something in a geographical area where it can't be utilized.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked if it is known how many locations would be impacted by the proposed ordinance.
- Councilor Clark – referenced a previous time when a similar ordinance had passed and the problems encountered around enforcement; asked to hear from Chief Skinner on enforcement difficulties and cost.

MOTION RESTATED and VOTE: Councilor Keating, seconded by Councilor Zelenka, moved to direct the City Manager to prepare an ordinance and schedule a June 21st public hearing on an uncodified code amendment banning the use of all fireworks south of 18th Avenue or east of Agate Street until 2023, and banning the sale of all fireworks south of 18th Avenue or east of Agate Street in 2022, the proposed ordinance should declare this matter an emergency and include an immediate effective date. **PASSED 6:0**, Councilors Evans not present for vote.

- Councilor Groves – referenced the watering restrictions for lawns in the late 80s and that was a bad time for wildfires, but the present conditions are even worse; asked Mr. Morris to add any additional insights to the topic.
- Mayor Vinis – thanked Mr. Morris for showing the evacuation maps that help with public safety.

The meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Brooke Freed
City Recorder (AIC)

(Recorded by Julie Adams)

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