

## MINUTES

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

June 9, 2021  
12:00 p.m.

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

**Absent:** Greg Evans

Mayor Vinis opened the June 9, 2021, work session of the Eugene City Council.

#### 1. WORK SESSION – 1059 Willamette Redevelopment

Business Development Analyst Amanda D'Souza and Economic Development Planner Anne Fifield provided an overview of the proposal by deChase Miksis and Edlen & Company and provided direction on next steps for disposition and redevelopment of 1059 Willamette.

#### Council Discussion:

- Councilor Syrett – asked staff if there is an estimate of the tax deferral for the Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption (MUPTe) this project intends to apply for and what the estimated taxes on the building will be once it is developed; stated the proposal does meet the Request For Proposals (RFP) criteria; shared she likes the intent of keeping the income-qualified housing component in place for 35 years rather than the typical 20 years, that it will be a pet-friendly building, and that one of the developers resides and has roots in Eugene; stated she would like to see the rents at the HUD Fair Market rate and wondered what options Council has to fill the \$2 million gap in funding.
- Councilor Groves – thanked staff for the presentation and work; shared he likes that this proposal comes from a local developer; asked clarifying questions regarding the affordable housing criteria numbers and the discrepancy between the tax appraisal and market appraisal; stated he is supportive of adding more compact housing such as this project.
- Councilor Keating – asked questions of staff regarding parking and if bus passes for residents will be available from service providers; shared he likes the pet-friendly aspect and hopes any barriers regarding weight restrictions for pets can be mitigated.
- Councilor Semple – shared she served on the evaluating team for this project and likes that it has mixed-income housing and contributes to downtown revitalization; pointed out this project is for middle-income and not low-income individuals; stated it is not surprising that people concerned about low-income and affordable housing do not like this proposal since it gives public land and public money to private developers; stated she thinks Council should wait to decide on this proposal.
- Councilor Yeh – thanked staff for the presentation and agenda materials; shared she likes that this project partners with two local non-profits, Womenspace and Cornerstone Community Housing; asked if the developers are projecting a \$2 million gap with the MUPTe and if the project can move forward while the City works to identify gap funding.
- Councilor Zelenka – thanked staff for providing a clear presentation; stated housing and affordable housing are needed downtown and he likes that 51 percent of the units will be at 80 percent of Area Median Income (AMI); stated he also likes the partnerships with local non-profits, the designation of 10 units for Womenspace, the Leed certification, the 35-year

affordability period, the pet-friendly aspect, and that money from the Gordon Lofts MUPTE will be used to fund the project; stated the architecture is uninspired; shared he thinks the \$1.1 million public investment used to leverage a \$30 million private investment is exactly what is trying to be accomplished in projects like this; stated the proposal is responsive to the RFP and has many public benefits which make him supportive of it.

- Councilor Clark – asked staff to provide an overview of the RFP process and asked clarifying questions; pointed out to those of the public who feel another use for the building should be explored that the RFP process was equitable and provided adequate time for proposals to be developed and submitted.
- Councilor Syrett – asked staff to explain the utility allowance for this proposal; clarified that from inception this project was envisioned as a middle-income development and moving forward with this project does not preclude the building of a publicly funded shelter or additional supportive housing; stated if there was a way to fund the \$2 million gap she would still want to keep the 35-year housing affordability timeline.
- Councilor Semple – stated she likes this project but does not like giving public money to private developers; stated if funding for the \$2 million gap could be identified and used to lower rents it could help significantly, but she does not want the money to come from the City; expressed concern over how much is being given away with the free land; stated she does not like the architecture and does not want a building that will be torn down in 50 years; reminded Council that Councilor Evans is not present and stated she would like Council to postpone making a decision on this proposal.
- Mayor Vinis – shared she agrees with her colleagues that think this is a strong proposal; stated it is important to remember each housing project meets a specific part of the housing need in the community, and the non-profits included in the project are trusted partners in our community and that is a very important component; stated she does not see any particular reason to postpone the vote, as this work session has already been postponed by a month.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** Councilor Yeh, seconded by Councilor Syrett, moved to direct the City Manager to a) enter into exclusive negotiations with the deChase Miksis/Edlen & Company development team for the disposition and redevelopment of 1059 Willamette and b) return to Council with the proposed terms for action. **VOTE: PASSED 6:1**, Councilor Semple opposed.

**MOTION:** Councilor Syrett, seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved to ask the City Manager to bring back to Council options for filling the proposed \$2 million gap in this project in order to set the rents at the HUD Fair Market housing value.

- Councilor Zelenka – asked Councilor Syrett if any source of funding is stipulated in her motion.
- Councilor Clark – stated he does not think the funding options should include general fund money or any sort of facility reserve.
- Councilor Semple – asked if these suggestions would also include non-public funds because she may not support doubling the City's subsidy.
- Councilor Syrett – stated she would like to see an array of options including general fund money though all may not be supported; stated she intended for these options to be funds within the purview of City Council to grant, however she is open to having non-City options brought back as well.
- Councilor Keating – asked Councilor Syrett if this motion could benefit from specificity of the year of the utility allowance used.
- Councilor Syrett – replied to Councilor Keating that she is referring to figures offered by staff in today's presentation.

- Councilor Zelenka – stated he thinks this motion will be good as an educational process for Council and the public but not because it will result in any solutions; stated the project has a \$2 million gap because there are no other options besides a public subsidy, and with a general fund deficit looming in the millions it does not make any sense to him to publicly fund the gap.

**VOTE: PASSED 7:0**

## **2. WORK SESSION – Vision, Values, Goals and Process**

City Manager Sarah Medary led a discussion to finalize the council’s Vision, Values, Goals and Operating Agreements, and suggested voting could be postponed to June 14 due to Councilor Evans’ absence.

### Council Discussion:

- Councilor Clark – stated he would like the vote on these items to be postponed until all councilors can be present; stated that included in this work are good goals but he doesn’t think Council works very hard to accomplish them, and gave as an example the inclusion of all points of view in a conversation; asked the City Manager how this will frame her work and direction to staff, and other implications of this work; clarified his comments refer not only to how the council interacts with each other, but also how it ensures that members of the community are able to voice their point of view.
- Councilor Keating – suggested a helpful tool for Council would be to have the Vision, Values and Goals printed and laminated for all to keep handy and review; suggested that Council consider extending the time limit for which the public can sign up to speak at the Public Forum after the Council meeting begins.
- Councilor Zelenka – regarding the Operating Agreements, stated he is concerned about how late in the evening priority goal consent actions often take place and wonders if “consent” should be deleted and priority goal actions should take place before the Public Forum; stated he feels the Public Forum is too long and gets in the way of business that needs to be done and suggested 60 minutes would be sufficient; also suggested that individuals who spoke at the last two Public Forums be moved to the bottom of the next Public Forum to allow more new speakers to participate; stated he would like more than just consent action items to take place before the Public Forum.
- Councilor Semple – agreed that priority goal actions should not take place late at night but it could also be problematic when the discussions go long to have them before the Public Forum, making the public wait; stated she would like to find adequate time for these discussions before the Public Forum or at another meeting; inquired why sign-ups for the Public Forum now begin at 7:15 p.m. when it used to begin at 7:00 p.m. when meetings were in-person; stated she supports the Public Forum sign-up time being extended from 7:35 to 7:40 p.m.; shared she does not feel it is effective to have a number of people come to Public Forums to read the same testimony again and again, and wants the public to be aware that this begins to work against them; encouraged the public to make petitions instead of engaging in email campaigns that fill councilor inboxes with form emails.
- Councilor Groves – stated he agrees with Councilor Zelenka’s comments and has heard from constituents that can’t break into the Public Forum queue, yet Council hears from the same people saying the same thing week after week; would like to find a way to give new voices a chance to be heard and feels that is part of Council’s responsibility.
- Councilor Clark – shared he agrees with the comments made by councilors regarding the repetitive nature of some of the testimony; stated he would prefer to move action items to earlier in the meeting and not pay staff to wait through a Public Forum until they are needed which is inefficient and a waste of money; proposed maintaining a spreadsheet of speakers at Public Forums and allowing a speaker to give testimony eight times per year, after which they

move to the bottom of a Public Forum queue, and stated he feels this is fair and will allow more voices to be heard.

- Councilor Syrett – regarding effective communication to Council, shared that much of the written testimony received about the 1059 Willamette redevelopment project was an identical form email in opposition, with the exception of about a dozen individuallycrafted emails in support which Councilor Syrett especially appreciated because people took time to write their own thoughts and personal perspectives.

Mayor Vinis left the meeting at 1:29 pm.

Councilor Yeh adjourned the meeting at 1:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Beth Forrest".

Beth Forrest  
City Recorder

*(Recorded by Jessica Gebb)*

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