

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Virtual Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

June 16, 2021
12:00 p.m.

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

Mayor Vinis opened the June 16, 2021, work session of the Eugene City Council in virtual format.

1. **WORK SESSION: 2020 Census and Ward Population Update**

Policy Analyst Jason Dedrick gave a presentation on this topic.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Groves - commented that it's hard to extrapolate much meaning from only 100 respondents to the survey; asked what outreach efforts were used to get survey responses; reported that he reached out to the neighborhood association leaders in his ward and shared some of their remarks; asked if consideration should be given to business districts; commented that there should be no special accommodation for where an incumbent official lives.
- Councilor Zelenka - asked for a sense of how much neighborhoods are broken up by boundaries, including historical and current practices; commented that Council should strive to make any changes as painless as possible; said the ward maps are meticulous and compact, noting the need to keep the neighborhoods intact; pointed out that wards one and three need to shrink and six, seven and eight need to grow in size to equalize population numbers; shared some ideas how this can happen; supported the staff recommendations on how to move forward.
- Councilor Keating - shared the potential implications of the data on Ward 3; shared information about other wards being either over or under in target populations; compared the current number of rentals in his ward versus those in a neighboring ward; offered ideas on how to meet population targets; asked how a neighbor would go about advocating their position and how City staff is working with state boundaries and county partners in making these changes.
- Councilor Clark - shared his understanding of how the boundaries work, noting that neighborhoods that are vastly different in size should be considered; commented that the 11 percent growth in Ward 3 is probably due to increased student housing developments; asked for clarification of the language used to describe criteria about where elected officials could reside, specifically the words, "advantaged" and "disadvantaged;" asked colleagues to consider the possibility that a candidate who files to run and is elected might no longer live in that ward after redistricting.
- Councilor Syrett - requested clarifying information about timelines; said that adoption of an ordinance would be in January 2022 and reminded Council that this conversation is about the criteria, not the boundaries; encouraged people not to be concerned about the public outreach so far since there will be robust input once maps have been drawn; shared that the City should be able to forecast where it is going to grow because of Envision Eugene; commented it would be problematic to redistrict a Councilor out of their ward and felt it is not a good value to have; encouraged other thinking around these criteria and consideration of language changes.
- Councilor Yeh - said she felt these are good recommendations and that people are waiting to see what ward lines are adjusted before forming opinions; agreed that having multiple councilors in a neighborhood is a benefit and does not want to see colleagues moved out of their wards; shared there are many other things neighborhood associations do besides political activities.

- Councilor Semple - supported the criteria as a good starting point; commented that council is looking at the ward boundaries not the neighborhood boundaries, noting it is critical to have greater outreach and to hear from the neighborhood associations.
- Councilor Groves - agreed there is an advantage to having multiple councilors advocating and representing neighborhood associations; said he felt the same rationale used for economic equity should be applied to the business community in terms of representation.
- Councilor Keating – agreed about the need to find a balance regarding distribution of businesses throughout the wards; commented that someone could file, move, and then file again, noting that it is common for people to move; stated the current system is set-up to largely benefit landowners; asked if Council could explore the creation of an at-large council seat as opposed to someone who is connected to a physical boundary, noting it could be beneficial to the overall health our democracy and the community.
- Councilor Zelenka - stated that UBG expansion areas are not a good indicator of where growth will occur and shared facts about Ward 3 growth in the last 10 years; commented that criteria should not try to map out existing residences of councilors but should mark their residence on maps for continuity; asked for this to be added to the motion.
- Councilor Syrett - shared some suggested language for how motion could read.
- Councilor Keating - asked for clarification of what “current” means in terms of timing.
- Councilor Semple - shared some confusion, feels the wording does not make sense, asked for another suggestion.

MOTION AND VOTE: Councilor Yeh, seconded by Councilor Syrett, moved to approve the criteria as recommended by staff with the following amendments: to add that boundary options should be developed that neither disadvantage nor advantage incumbent elected officials; however, the new boundary should not be drawn to remove any incumbent’s residence from their ward. **PASSED:** 7:1 (Groves opposed)

2. **WORK SESSION: Northwest Natural Gas Update**

City Manager Sarah Medary presented an update on Northwest Natural Gas.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Yeh - asked if the money for projects comes from the rate payers; asked if there was a way to estimate the rates for future projects; shared her appreciation for continued efforts to find something to agree on and be partners; asked if an update on CAP 2.0 can be scheduled before the NW Natural projects come back to Council to understand the larger picture in meeting the City’s 2030 goals.
- Councilor Clark - commented that any agreement does more for carbon reduction than none and is therefore a plus; asked if the senate bill, ordinance, or statute will be the first formed in the state and if Eugene will be the first to make use of it; commented this is a way to show leadership.
- Councilor Syrett – said she felt the proposal is a creative compromise in the right direction for the City; shared the timeline is rational and said she likes the increased fee over five percent and other criteria; shared some ideas about the use of additional funds.
- Councilor Zelenka - shared his appreciation for the innovative approach to being creative and moving forward, and said he likes the focus on the low-income parts of this program; commented it gives more certainty going forward which is a good approach; shared his hope that everyone agrees to use the money to reduce greenhouse gases not to fill holes in the general fund.
- Councilor Groves - stated that Council will accomplish more working cooperatively with Northwest Natural then in a disconnected and potentially adversarial way; shared an

expectation to come together in good faith and be reasonable in finding ways to close the gap in climate recovery work.

- Councilor Keating - shared his support for getting an update on CAP 2.0 and climate recovery goals; asked what oversight the City has for fossil fuels use and emissions; asked about motives for fossil fuel companies to reduce the one thing they make a profit from; shared concern that while negotiating fossil fuels agreements, the fossil fuels industry has been luring people away from electric by offering rebates; asked how a fossil fuel company will voluntarily reduce emissions unless the City has robust regulatory oversight, and what the Council legally and reasonably can do to meet the City's carbon reduction goals, provide proper oversight and transition off of fossil fuels for the future of the planet.
- Councilor Semple - agreed the money from the fee increase should go to greenhouse gas reduction efforts; said she was looking forward to EWEB's report and feels it is time to have a work session on CAP 2.0 progress; shared concerns about infrastructure and what council can do on this subject.
- Councilor Evans - appreciated the efforts to negotiate with NW Natural, noting the previous offers were advantageous only to NW Natural and did not take into account community members' input and meeting the City's climate goals; shared the response to rapid climate change is slow and the Climate Recovery Ordinance goals need to be adhered to by NW Natural.
- Mayor Vinis - shared that when the process began the goal was to make sure the franchise agreement aligned with the City's climate goals; asked about exploring the other strategies included in the CAP 2.0; said it is crucial that the door remains open to explore other strategies, noting the proposed direction aligns with the City's climate goals but does not encompass everything that could be done.
- Councilor Syrett - said the majority of residents are not ready for Council to limit options to electrification and suggested that conversations about this possibility should be planned; stated this agreement is a compromise and recognizes contradictions and Council must work harder towards City climate recovery goals; offered suggestion of reinforcing climate recovery goals and encouraging the permit department to proactively provide the benefits of electrification so customers are informed that gas does not have to be included in design plans; noted Multnomah County made a commitment that all new construction of government buildings will not include natural gas.
- Councilor Yeh - agreed this is one part of a larger effort and supported having a work session to get an update on CAP 2.0; shared there are 17 identified gap strategies, and many include items that are directly affected by fossil fuels, noting many of the issues councilors mentioned are embedded in the gap strategies.; supported the idea of money being directed towards efforts to meet City climate goals.
- Councilor Syrett - clarified the way this proposal is laid out the City Manager would say yes or no to the project proposal from NW Natural; said she was willing to put the motion on the table and asked for it to be restated.
- Councilor Keating - asked to see the text of the motion; voiced concern that he has several questions that require further discussion and is not comfortable moving forward without answers to questions.

MOTION AND VOTE: Councilor Syrett, seconded by Councilor Clark, moved to support the approach of working with Northwest Natural Gas on carbon reductions and a new franchise agreement and specially:

- Authorize City Manager to negotiate and approve NWNG emissions reduction program application to the PUC with emphasis on energy efficiency on lower income households; and

- Direct the City Manager to schedule a public hearing in the fall on a new franchise agreement as outlined in the work session. **PASSED:** 6:2, councilors Keating and Evans opposed

The meeting adjourned at 1:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Beth Forrest
City Recorder

(Recorded by Niyah Ross)

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