

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Virtual Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

September 22, 2021
12:00 p.m.

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

Mayor Vinis opened the September 22, 2021, work session of the Eugene City Council in virtual format.

1. WORK SESSION – Climate Action Plan 2.0 Additional Strategies Update

Sustainability Manager Chelsea Clinton, Transportation Planning Manager Rob Inerfeld and Waste Prevention Program Analyst Anna Reid provided an update on the City's Sustainability Program, including a review of the Climate Recovery Ordinance and a comprehensive overview of additional strategies related to the Climate Action Plan 2.0.

Council Discussion:

- Mayor Vinis – thanked staff for their hard work; recognized that some items have not moved forward at the original pace but said she understands ongoing staff efforts will make positive progress.
- Councilor Evans – asked if any strategies can be accelerated, and if so, what means are required to do so; asked about home energy score program and if there could be mobile application support for reporting/monitoring to make it easier to report and assist in efficient data collection.
- Councilor Groves – thanked staff for their hard work and approach; asked for any insight into the impact on hydroelectric power generation in the wake of recent federal decision to reduce dam output to protect endangered species; asked how the drought is impacting hydroelectric power output; asked where the Eugene Water and Electric Board (EWEB) Electrification Study fits into these strategies; asked what additional data is needed to facilitate an honest and well-informed discussion as council moves forward with discussions/goal setting; said he is hopeful for robust options for local carbon offset options; noted that Climate Action Plan 2.0 uses the Eugene Urban Growth Boundary data, and asked for confirmation that any regulations can only be applied within the city limits; said he is interested in seeing how consultants projected city growth within the Urban Growth Boundary year-over-year; asked all to consider how to modulate the societal appetite for energy consumption, and the growing need to increase personal awareness and community education about usage reduction.
- Mayor Vinis – reminded all that the Electrification Study is first topic on the agenda for the upcoming joint meeting with EWEB.
- Councilor Clark – thanked staff for the presentation; asked about EWEB's work from approximately one year ago and when the complete report will be published; asked if cost and capacity will be included in report; asked about cooperative efforts and if there were no agreement with NW Natural, how that would impact the Sustainability Program's modeling and planning; asked if the City is better off working with them or regulating as it sees fit; said understanding whether it is better to work with or without them is an important consideration;

questioned whether there is enough information available to make any significant decisions at this time.

- Councilor Keating – thanked staff for information; asked to return to the presentation slide showing 32 percent of greenhouse gas emissions originating from building energy-related sources; asked for a further breakdown of these figures between clean energy and natural gas, as well as a breakdown of these figures between residential and commercial properties; noted his rough calculations show 90 percent of building emissions are related to natural gas versus 10 percent for electricity, and one-third of building emissions are residential versus two-thirds commercial; stated his interest in exploring steps to implement mandatory smart energy programs and asked all to consider the ongoing impacts on renters whose homes require them to sign up for natural gas service; confirmed that only two percent of renewable hydrogen has been explored at the local level; said he was excited to hear mention of Governor’s Executive Order 20-04, which empowers agencies to use the full extent of their respective authority in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated that the additional strategy related to lobbying for state and federal actions was only expected to account for a quarter of the City’s reduction goal; however, recent state-level climate protection programs/incentives are likely to have further positive impact on City goals; noted that 87 percent of future emissions come from current housing/buildings so it is important to maintain focus there; noted that for the approximately 30,000 customers using gas heating, it could cost upwards of \$200 million to retrofit these homes for electric heating.
- Councilor Yeh – thanked staff for the presentation; agreed that the City should continue working with partners such as NW Natural whenever possible, but it does take time and all options should nonetheless be considered; asked if the City can work with landlords in apartment complexes to establish dedicated charging spaces for electric vehicles.
- Councilor Syrett – thanked staff; asked about the home energy score and commercial benchmarking programs and the Sustainability Program’s recommendation of managing a broader building framework with the support of a half-time employee, and to elaborate what services this would provide above and beyond what already exists; asked what council action would be needed to make home energy score a mandatory program; encouraged fellow councilors to keep an eye out for opportunities to move that forward; asked about the carbon offset program and why there is such a large range of potential reduction amounts; noted that the Eugene Airport has an option on their website to purchase local offsets for flights; asked if staff needed any direction from council to perform outreach to property managers regarding electric vehicle charging stations.
- Councilor Semple – thanked staff; said she was looking forward to the Transportation System Plan and believes its potential impact will be great; asked about exploring additional incentives and outreach to the public on the growing affordability and viability of electric vehicles; concurred that the home energy score program is an essential component of the Climate Action Plan and participation should at a minimum be required whenever a home is sold; noted that the community innovation fund aligns well with Eugene culture, but requires ongoing community education and outreach; stated there are many current advocates of regulating energy/infrastructure providers, which also has her support.
- Mayor Vinis – asked if there are any Housing and Urban Development regulations which require electric vehicle charging stations for new builds.
- Councilor Clark – asked about the inclusion of provisions for autonomous vehicles in the Transportation System Plan; asked about the efficiency loss when using natural gas to create electricity; asked what percentage of EWEB electricity is created using natural gas; asked what increase in fossil gas burning will be necessary to meet increasing energy demands.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted that one of largest biogas fuel projects in the state is progressing and will be of considerable help to greenhouse gas reduction; stated that there are many, including himself, who are eager to move forward with the home energy score program; stated that

implementing the City's electric vehicle program will be a great help toward greenhouse gas reduction goals.

- Councilor Keating – asked for clarification on the best ways to close gaps on the regulation of natural gas, for which he is in support of strict, robust regulation.
- Councilor Evans – noted his role representing council on the Lane Transit District greenhouse gas planning committee; asked to what extent the Climate Recovery Ordinance is referenced in discussions at the City's Strategic Planning Committee; asked about the effect of partners in the Lane Transit District framework not participating at a high enough level.
- Mayor Vinis – thanked everyone for their efforts and discussion, stated that they are all of like mind when it comes to doing the right thing for our community with regard to clean energy, affordable housing and sustainable economic growth, and that she looks forward to future conversations advancing these topics.

Mayor Vinis adjourned the meeting at 1:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Brooke Freed
City Recorder AIC

(Recorded by Jay Ferris)

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