

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Virtual Meeting Eugene, Oregon 97401

September 27, 2021
7:30 p.m.

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

Mayor Vinis opened the September 27, 2021, meeting of the Eugene City Council in a virtual format.

1. COMMITTEE REPORTS AND ITEMS OF INTEREST

- Councilor Syrett – supported consideration of the impacts extreme weather events as a way to craft policy; shared an analogy about EWEB being criticized for constructing emergency water storage tanks; said people will face increased costs whether council decides to electrify or not; suggested the council create ways to mitigate increased costs and balance these needs and goals.
- Councilor Yeh - reported on the September meeting of the Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission, noting it finished the greenhouse gases inventory for FY19/20 and found it was down almost 22 percent compared to FY17/18; shared the Poplar Farm will be filled by the end of this month; shared information about the pilot recycled water program, notably one pilot that is using the recycled water to water City street trees which is going well and moving forward with a grant application; said she participated in a study sending samples to the state for COVID 19 testing and shared the site where the results can be found (trace.oregonstate.edu.)
- Councilor Zelenka - reported on problems that occurred during University of Oregon move-in day due to an on-line app that crashed with no back-up plan in place; shared that university officials apologized for the clogged neighborhoods, streets and delay of emergency vehicles.
- Councilor Evans – expressed concern about Lakewood mobile home park being bought by out-of-state developers, noting it displaces many seniors, disabled and other fixed low-income people and widens the affordable housing gap; stated the City has no policy about or way to know who is buying land in town and for what purposes; stated he plans to put out a work session poll to determine what other cities are doing about situations like this.
- Councilor Keating - shared information from the Human Services Commission and its discussion on vaccine mandates, the housing crisis and inclement weather; voiced appreciation for the vaccine requirements the UO has implemented, but is disheartened by the UO Athletic Department policy of not requiring them for vendors at football games; congratulated the Eugene Emeralds on winning the championship.
- Councilor Groves - shared that the Eugene Emeralds have had a great season and he is sorry about the challenges of sharing the stadium with the UO; shared the City is getting ready to open a safe sleep site that will host 50-60 people will help get people off the streets and out of the parks into a safer place; said he hopes more potential sites will be identified in the near future because more space is needed.
- Councilor Syrett - shared she had friends visit Eugene who saw the camps at Washington Jefferson and commented on how progressive Eugene's approach was and how much more smartly Eugene is dealing with the unhoused issue; said Eugene is doing significantly more than other jurisdictions up and down the west coast.
- Councilor Clark - commented that when compared to larger cities, Eugene's homeless population per capita is dramatically larger; commented that he feels the City is doing a poor

job of getting people on a path to physical and financial wellness and, until that happens, the number of homeless will not decrease and the community will continue to experience excessive criminal activity at WJ Park and other sites; said he felt it is not accurate to characterize what the council is doing around this issues as wise.

- Councilor Zelenka - commented that homelessness is not just a Eugene problem but a problem up and down the west coast; said showing that council is doing something and has data to report such as the numbers of homeless in the streets is a positive step, though more is always needed.
- Councilor Keating - shared that the rest stop in his neighborhood has a 70 percent success rate in connecting tenants to more permanent safe housing; commented that when a constituent says “the City is doing absolutely nothing” it is inaccurate and arguably offensive to the myriad of staff working on this issue and the coalition that includes the Chamber and the for-profit and non-profit sectors working tirelessly together to create housing for the most vulnerable in the community; commented on the disinvestment in mental health services at the federal and state level of mental health services and applauded staff who work on homelessness and everyone who writes to Council on this issue.
- Councilor Groves - commented that the *Register-Guard* article did not mention the situation in west Eugene, the challenges the area has faced, and how people have responded to help with the problem; said his constituents are dismayed that this was completely omitted from the article and are confused how this story was missed; appreciated the business community, workers and some of the residents who have truly tried to place people in housing and get them off the streets onto private property with sanitation, water and electrical hook-ups.
- Councilor Clark - responded to clarify that he feels Council is doing absolutely nothing to compel people to take advantage of the opportunities Council is creating to transition them to a healthier lifestyle; asked why Council is not willing to make people choose; shared that drug use is a big problem in the community and the failure is Council not addressing this problem at a policy level.
- Mayor Vinis - shared she visited Lakewood Park and agrees its an alarming situation where senior citizens could lose their affordable housing; said she would like to see what the City and State can do and explore options; said she sits on the Poverty and Homelessness Board and had a conversation on the status of temporary sites and the challenges being faced; shared that Tod Snyder of Community Supported Shelters commented that his organization has a hard time filling available space because the mental health and addiction needs of some of the people are so profound that it requires very significant staffing in order to support them; commented the greater policy opportunity is at the State level dealing with mental health and addiction, not at the City’s budget to address but it is something that and the Council should be lobbying with its County, State and colleagues; said she looked forward to more conversations around this; noted that Norton Cabell, a champion for people who are struggling with housing and unable to afford housing, passed away and shared information about his service to the community and upcoming memorial service.

2. CONSENT CALENDAR 1

A. Approval of City Council Minutes

May 17, 2021, Work Session

May 24, 2021, Meeting

July 12, 2021, Meeting

September 13, 2021, Meeting

B. Approval of City Council Tentative Agenda

MOTION AND VOTE: Councilor Yeh, seconded by Councilor Syrett, moved to approve the items on Consent Calendar 1. **PASSED 8:0**

3. PUBLIC FORUM

1. Todd Boyle - shared that the bottom 20-30 percent of Eugene residents cannot afford their rent.
2. Jim Neu – said Seneca Sustainable Biofuels LLC is third largest contributor to greenhouse gases.
3. Dylan Plummer - responded to CAP 2.0 issues and noted that almost two years have passed.
4. Jacob Trewe - commented that the City should enforce a COVID-19 vaccine mandate.
5. Dennis Reynolds - shared ways to look at franchise agreements, with an emphasis on equity.
6. William Smith - commented that wireless safety is a complex issue that needs attention.

Council Discussion

- Councilor Zelenka – clarified that EWEB and the State of Oregon both have a solar rooftop net metering law includes solar wind and other renewables.; stated he helped create that law and shared that he has one on his house; stated that information about all the energy programs available through the State of Oregon and EWEB is available online.
- Councilor Syrett - reminded the public that they can access the meeting on Comcast channel 21; stated the webcast will be posted and encouraged people to watch.

4. CONSENT CALENDAR 2

- A. Adoption of a Resolution Annexing Land to the City of Eugene (Assessor's map 17-03-28-40, tax Lot 2103 located at 158 South Garden Way, and Tax Lot 2200 located at 132 South garden Way) (City File: Cornerstone Community Housing: A 21-8)**

MOTION AND VOTE: Councilor Yeh, Seconded Syrett, move to approve the item on Consent Calendar 2. **PASSED 8:0**

The meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Brooke Freed
AIC City Recorder

(Recorded by Niyah Ross)

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