

## MINUTES

### Eugene City Council Work Session and Urban Renewal Agency Meeting Eugene, Oregon 97401

February 28, 2024  
12:00 p.m.

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

Mayor Vinis opened the February 28, 2024 meeting of the Urban Renewal Agency in a virtual format.

#### 1. WORK SESSION and POSSIBLE ACTION:

- A. 1059 Willamette Redevelopment – Financial Assistance
- B. 1059 Willamette Redevelopment – Revised Terms
- C. 1059 Willamette Redevelopment – MUPTE Application

City Manager, Sarah Medary, introduced Development Programs Manager, Amanda D'Souza, who provided information related to the property located at 1059 Willamette.

#### Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Evans – asked what challenges exist for construction of the project; noted challenges with the demolition's cost, execution, and impact on surrounding buildings; asked if the City received an updated estimate on the asbestos abatement since 2019 or if the calculations were added into the project cost; asked if the estimate had accounted for an inflationary increase.
- Councilor Groves – noted excitement for the project and thinks it will benefit the City despite increased costs; asked what the City can do to help minimize the impact of construction; noted he hopes the City will work with the developer to set the project up for success; noted that it's much harder to develop when there are close quarters between existing buildings.
- Councilor Semple – noted she was Council Liaison for the project and worked on a request for proposal (RFP); noted excitement for the project and emphasized the need for more housing downtown; thinks this project warrants Urban Renewal money and the Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption (MUPTE); noted interest in the mixed income levels; noted that the City needs to make the project as easy on surrounding properties and as safe as possible.
- Councilor Clark – asked what the cost to the district was to acquire the property; clarified the City's investment is around \$5.5 million; asked how tall the building will be once complete.
- Councilor Keating – noted enthusiasm for the mixed use, affordable housing, and market rate housing approach; noted appreciation for the continued partnerships with Hope and Safety Alliance and efforts for pet accommodations and disability

justice; indicated the project is an example of building up, not out, by combining mixed use, mixed economy, affordable housing, and market rate housing while partnering with service providers in the entire state; noted he will recommend the approval of the use of \$740,000; asked if the requested funding is enough.

- Councilor Zelenka – noted excitement for the project and the need for more housing downtown; believes the project will enhance the area; noted the cost increase is understandable; noted he likes the affordable housing aspect of the project as over 50 percent of the units are affordable housing, differing from most other MUPTEs; noted the City only gets affordable housing that it subsidizes; stated the City currently has zero market-based affordable housing units; noted the exception for him on a MUPTE is the affordable housing aspect; thinks it is an appropriate subsidy.
- Councilor Groves – asked for clarification of the prevailing wage on the project; asked how approval of a MUPTE would impact prevailing wage under state requirements.
- Councilor Keating – noted Council should have a future work session on the prevailing wage aspect of the project and would support reform of it in the future.

**MOTION:** Move to approve the use of \$740,000 of Downtown Urban Renewal tax increment funds to support the 1059 Willamette project. **VOTE: PASSED 8:0**

Mayor Vinis closed the February 28, 2024 meeting of the Eugene Urban Renewal Agency and convened the February 28, 2024 work session of the Eugene City Council.

**MOTION:** Move to approve the revised terms in Attachment A and to authorize the City Manager to amend the development agreement consistent with the revised terms included in Attachment A. **VOTE: PASSED 8:0**

**MOTION:** Move to adopt a Resolution Approving A Multiple-Unit Property Tax Exemption For Residential Property Located At 1059 Willamette Street In Eugene, Oregon (Applicant 1059 Willamette Investment, Llc).

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Semple – asked how the extra four units are fit in; asked if the units make the building bigger or if some of the units are smaller.

**VOTE ON MOTION: PASSED 8:0**

## 2. **WORK SESSION: Overview of Charter Review and Amendment Process**

City Manager, Sarah Medary, introduced the Chief of Staff, Brooke Freed, to provide an overview of the 2002 Charter Review and Amendment process.

### Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Keating – noted interest in presenting a motion that would direct the City Manager to return to Council with a focused recommendation on the review of the Council-Mayor compensation to be considered at a future work session, implemented in 2025 with citizen input; noted interest in conversation about the potential motion regarding equity and the opportunity to get more individuals involved.
- Councilor Yeh – noted she is open to having work sessions on the various topics discussed; indicated that if compensation is reviewed, it should be clear what problem Council is trying to solve as there may be other barriers impacting one's ability to serve on Council.
- Councilor Semple – noted concern with the mayoral election timing as half of the Council could run for Mayor without losing their seat but for the other wards, Councilors must give up their seat to run; noted interest in revisiting Council compensation; stated in her first years as Councilor she worked more hours than full-time; noted she is discouraged by the lack of competition for Council races; noted interest in revisiting the conflict surrounding election cycles.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted interest in having limited conversations on the stated topics and what problems will be solved; understands equity concerns with Council compensation but raised concern with the timing of the conversation due to Council's revenue ask.
- Councilor Clark – noted Council should be specific about expectations in future conversations regarding compensation; noted the Mayor's position was previously expected to be part-time, but the Mayor is now expected to be accessible full-time to the public; noted Council positions are expected to have another job; indicated a Council compensation discussion should be clear about expectations and duties of a Councilor; noted the timing for compensation conversations is not ideal; noted interest in keeping other areas of review limited.
- Councilor Groves – noted interest in future discussions on specific topics and in modernizing language in the charter to current standards; noted interest in balancing out the specificity of sections in the charter; indicated interest in the compensation conversation but does not think the timing is right; noted concern with a change in Council compensation leading to individuals running for office that are not dedicated to the people ; noted interest in having a plan before deciding on Council compensation.
- Councilor Leech – noted that timing is difficult and that other barriers could be lowered to attract people to run for Council; noted one barrier could be childcare; stated that Portland has adjusted its Council compensation and has seen a greater pool of candidates in election cycles; thinks the City should engage the community and support people who might not otherwise be able to run.
- Mayor Vinis – stated she does not want to invest City resources into a major charter review process and thinks narrower goals are appropriate; noted appreciation for the discussion regarding barriers to running for office; noted it may be helpful to bring the Equity Panel to discuss barriers; stated revenue conversations and Council compensation discussions should not be happening concurrently.
- Councilor Evans – noted equity issues in the charter regarding those who work full-time and their ability to serve and receive a stipend; noted that Portland recently

switched to a whole different governing model; stated Portland's process could have included discussions about adding more Councilors, Councilor responsibilities, and how those responsibilities interact with the City Manager form of government; noted he does not think Council is ready to address those questions; stated that budget challenges could result in Council asking voters to cut services or for a levy or revenue increases to maintain City operations.

- Councilor Zelenka – asked if any change made to Charter requires a vote of the electorate; asked what a general language review would include; suggested staff work with individual Councilors to define problems and bring them back to a work session.

**Motion:** Councilor Zelenka, seconded by Councilor Semple, moved for the City Manager to work with the City Councilors who have ideas about items for review of the Charter to specifically define the problem, bring that back to Council in a future work session for up-down vote for inclusion in conversation about potential amendments of the Charter.

#### Council Discussion:

- Councilor Keating – noted he was going to make a motion directing the City Manager to return to Council with a work session that reviews Council-Mayor compensation options and explores comparable municipal analyses to be implemented in 2027 pending voter approval; noted the motion would give time to recognize budget constraints and address the different cycles of Council; noted he could make the motion at the future work session mentioned in Councilor Zelenka's motion; noted support of Councilor Zelenka's motion.
- Councilor Groves – noted he wants to keep the motion as simple as possible; noted hesitation as Keating's proposed motion has a lot of specificity rather than Councilor Zelenka's motion.
- Councilor Clark – noted in the previous iteration of Charter review that there was more public involvement than what is currently proposed; stated any process recommending public vote on the Charter should have public involvement at some step in the process; noted his support of Councilor Zelenka's motion.
- Councilor Zelenka – inquired if staff talked to all Councilors and created a list of topics to review; noted he does not want the Charter review to be large process, rather it should be limited conversations on the problems presented.

**VOTE ON MOTION: PASSED 7:1** (Opposed by Councilor Evans)

Mayor Vinis adjourned the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Katie LaSala  
City Recorder

*(Recorded by Natalie Venhuda)*

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