

MINUTES

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

April 24, 2024
12:00 p.m.

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

Councilors Absent: Jennifer Yeh

Mayor Vinis opened the April 24, 2024, Eugene Urban Renewal Agency Meeting in a virtual format.

1. **WORK SESSION: Steam Plant Redevelopment**

Agency Director, Sarah Medary, introduced Community Development Director Will Dowdy, who provided information on proposed revisions and the requested additional \$6.0 million of Riverfront Urban Renewal funds.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Groves - noted his support for the project.
- Councilor Clark - asked staff if the current development team working on the project is largely the same, or if there have been any changes; asked about the development team's ability to perform the work to develop the plant; asked staff to explain the leadership component of the project and whether that means working with the University.
- Councilor Zelenka - noted his support for the project; noted appreciation for the changes outlined and the inclusion of a hotel element; noted he is unsurprised with the increased costs and supports spending the \$6 million dollars.
- Councilor Keating - noted interest in a potential Community Benefits Agreement that prioritizes diversity and equity in the project workforce, incorporates sustainability objectives in the design and construction phases, and requires the utilization of State and Federally approved training and apprenticeship opportunities; asked if the project needs to be approved today or if the decision could be delayed and passed in May; asked if there was the ability to bring this decision back in June so that a Community Benefits Agreement could be incorporated.
- Mayor Vinis - asked if the project includes a prevailing wage agreement; asked staff to speak to some of the elements of the design Councilor Keating referred to.
- Councilor Groves - asked for the cost comparison of converting the existing steam plant versus building a similar building from bare ground; noted he was

unaware the existing building is closer to the river than a new building could be placed; supports contributing more public money towards a project that is using prevailing wage; noted Council extended the Urban Development District knowing more investment in infrastructure was needed and to get the desired type of construction completed.

- Councilor Semple - noted support of the project despite not favoring Urban Renewal; noted prices will continue to increase; thinks from historical and economical perspective the project should move forward and the building be saved; thinks adding hotel rooms and maintaining open space for the general public makes it a great amenity; stated she was not in favor of delaying the decision.
- Councilor Leech - noted support of the project; stated the increased costs of the project is understandable; noted she is open to a Community Benefits Agreement discussion but does not want to delay the project; thinks transparency and direction are important as the project uses public dollars.
- Councilor Clark - noted interest in what other community benefits the City might leverage with this project; noted concern that the developers may not be willing to do a required community benefit and then the project would stop; asked if there is an opportunity cost for the additional \$6 million in Urban Renewal District (URD); clarified the cost to have City Hall retrofitted; inquired about the URD long term fund capacity; asked if Council could swap out some of the facility reserve money going towards the Eugene Water and Electric Board (EWEB) building without giving up capacity or opportunity cost.
- Councilor Keating - indicated he plans to make a motion.
- Councilor Zelenka - noted the plan for using the capacity has been in the project since the beginning; noted the project has prevailing wage, and is built by Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) qualified developers; noted concern with potential motions that could delay the project; thinks it's unfair to give developers new requirements this late in the process; noted if Council does agree to this process, it should apply to projects after policy adoption, not before; suggested a work session poll rather than a motion.
- Councilor Semple - noted she thinks it's unfair to the developers to change the parameters and delay the project further; noted the City has few historical buildings and while this project has a high cost, Council has the money for it and the demand is there; noted energy and solutions have already gone into the project; stated that Council can discuss adding more climate restrictions for future buildings but does not support doing so for the current project.
- Mayor Vinis - noted she wants Council to move forward on the project; noted this defines an economic development project and creates development that increases the tax bases and provides jobs; noted many elements of a community benefits agreement are incorporated in the project; does not want the project to be delayed.

- Councilor Keating - noted his intent to move the project forward; thinks it is important to cement the need for a local workforce to keep their money local; thinks a motion to delay does not take it off the table but rather enhances it.

MOTION: Councilor Keating moved to delay any action on the steam plant redevelopment until earliest possible date in May. **Not seconded.**

MOTION: Councilor Keating, seconded by Councilor Groves, moved to approve the use of \$6 million of Riverfront Urban Renewal Front to support the revised terms in Attachment A and authorize the director to enter into a development agreement consistent with the revised terms in Attachment A.

VOTE: 7:0 PASSED

Mayor Vinis closed the meeting of the Eugene Urban Renewal Agency and convened a meeting of the Eugene City Council.

MOTION: Councilor Zelenka, seconded by Councilor Groves, moved to hold a work session on a potential Community Benefits Agreement.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Clark - asked what as the Community Benefits Agreement would be for; noted the City already has a Community Benefits Agreement for the Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption (MUPTE); inquired if this would apply when no tax dollars are involved; asked if the motion is to change the current MUPTE Benefit Plan; asked if it's for Urban Renewal.
- Councilor Zelenka - noted he created the work session poll to provide better direction for staff; stated he could come back with more detail if the motion passes.
- Mayor Vinis - indicated another option would be to release a work session poll with a detailed question; noted the motion on the table would need to be withdrawn.
- Councilor Keating - noted interest in Councilor Zelenka's suggestion; noted he wrote language based on the Lane Community College Board's Community Benefits Agreement that could be distributed in a poll.
- Councilor Groves - asked for clarification on if there is a Community Benefits Agreement for MUPTEs; asked if any time government assistance was provided that the prevailing wage kicked in; asked what happens if the property is sold for \$1; thinks another work session is needed for Council to have a common understanding of what the City currently does.

MOTION WITHDRAWN: Councilor Zelenka withdrew his motion. Councilor Groves accepted the withdrawal.

2. WORK SESSION: Intergovernmental Relations - 2024 OR Legislative Session and United Front Summary

City Manager, Sarah Medary, introduced Intergovernmental Relations Manager, Ethan Nelson, who provided a summary of the 2024 Oregon Legislative Session and the 2024 United Front Delegation Trip.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Clark - asked staff to define Senate Bill 1530 and 1537 relative to the previous session's Senate Bill 3414; noted Senate Bill 1537 passed and both Senators representing the Eugene area voted no, noting their reasons for voting no was that the City of Eugene had concerns with the bill; clarified the City received funds for projects within the Urban Growth Boundary; clarified Senate Bill 1537 passed despite local Senators voting against it and the City lobbying against it.
- Councilor Groves - noted there are many concerns, but Council needs to continue on its course to know what the next step should be.
- Mayor Vinis - noted the City had a couple of significant wins in the legislative session, including the infrastructure investment on Crow Road, support to develop more housing, and the conversation about support for the City's alternative shelters; noted Measure 110 revisions were a high priority for Council and many things the City advocated for came through in that amended legislation; noted the win of \$1.3 million for Emergency Medical Services.
- Councilor Keating - noted despite the City's transitional housing not falling under the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) definition of emergency housing, Council and the intergovernmental relations team advocated appropriately for their definitions to be changed or funds to be expanded; asked staff how Council can partner in broadening the definition or delivering vital resources to help support the rest stop models.
- Mayor Vinis - noted the United Front Trip this year was successful; stated the focus of United Front was on ice storm damage, emergency response, and other climate-related disasters; noted Chief Caven was a knowledgeable advocate for the kind of investment the City needs; noted Senator Wyden assisted with a call the Chair of the Federal Communications Commission; noted she builds relationships with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and HUD each year on this trip.

Mayor Vinis adjourned the meeting at 1:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Katie LaSala

City Recorder

(Recorded by Natalie Venhuda)

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