

MINUTES

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

May 22, 2024
12:00 p.m.

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

Councilors Absent: Greg Evans

Mayor Vinis opened the May 22, 2024, Eugene City Council Work Session in a virtual format.

1. WORK SESSION: Charter Follow Up Discussion

City Manager, Sarah Medary, introduced Chief of Staff, Brooke Freed, who presented specific areas of the Charter for further discussion and consideration for additional research.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Semple – supports waiting until the 2026 election cycle to address issues due to budget constraints; noted the timing of the mayoral election concerns her; thinks Council should get a median wage; noted she is not interested in the Eugene Water and Electric Board (EWEB) Compensation topic; classified the topics of Mayoral Election, Mayor/Council Compensation, Vacancy/Interim Appointment Process, Department Head Residency, and Language Review as “Priority Later.”
- Councilor Keating – noted he is not interested in Mayoral Election nor EWEB compensation at this time; classified Vacancy/Interim Appointment Process as “Priority Later”; classified Mayor/Council Compensation, Language Review, and Department Head Residency as “Priority Now.”
- Councilor Zelenka – noted he is not interested in pursuing Mayoral Election, Mayor/Council Compensation, and EWEB Compensation; classified Vacancy/Interim Appointment Process, Department Head Residency, and Language Review as “Priority Later”; noted he is supportive of having the Fire Chief residing in either Springfield or Eugene; noted there should be more flexibility on the residency requirements for staff promoted up into a department head position.
- Councilor Yeh – classified Mayoral Election, Mayor/Council Compensation, Vacancy/Interim Appointment Process, and Language Review as “Priority Later” topics; noted she is not interested in EWEB Compensation; classified Department Head Residency as “Priority Now.”

- Councilor Clark – noted he is not interested in the topics of Mayoral Election or EWEB Compensation; asked why Council must wait to address the issues until 2026; asked staff to confirm the deadline for adding a measure to the 2024 general election; classified Mayor/Council Compensation, Vacancy/Interim Appointment Process, Department Head Residency, and Language Review as “Priority Later.”
- Councilor Leech – noted she is not interested in the topics of Mayoral Election or EWEB Compensation; classified Mayor/Council Compensation, Department Head Residency, and Language Review as “Priority Now”; noted interest in decreasing barriers to being a public servant; classified Vacancy/Interim Appointment Process as “Priority Later”; noted interest in removing antiquated language throughout the charter.
- Councilor Groves – classified Mayoral Election, Mayor/Council Compensation, and Vacancy/Interim Appointment Process as “Priority Later” topics; noted he is not interested in EWEB Compensation; classified Department Head Residency and Language Review as “Priority Now.”

MOTION: Councilor Keating, seconded by Councilor Groves, moved to direct the City Manager to bring back research to inform potential amendments to the charter on the issues identified as “Priority Now” by a majority of Councilors and to revisit the “Priority Later” issues that received interest by a majority of councilors at a later date.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Semple – noted concern with “Priority Now” issues requiring a special election; changed her Mayoral Election and Vacancy/Interim Appointment Process designations to “Priority Later”.
- Councilor Keating – noted interest in addressing all “Priority Later” issues in the 2026 Election; asked if changing his Department Head Residency designation to “Priority Later” would be helpful.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted no issues received a majority of interest from Council for “Priority Now” and several issues did not receive a majority interest for “Priority Later”; thinks Council has different understandings of the motions presented and the timing for “Priority Now” and “Priority Later” issues; noted concern with the expenses of having the issues on a special election ballot.
- Councilor Groves – thinks none of the issues warrant a special election; stated the 2026 or 2028 election cycle should be the soonest time to put an item forward; noted interest in fitting in work sessions on issues to prevent deferring them.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted if the motion passes, the Mayoral Election and Mayor/Council Compensation topics are off the table; noted concern with prioritization of the “Priority Later” topics.

- Mayor Vinis – noted topics can be prioritized based on their “Priority Now” designations.
- Councilor Semple – noted desire to change her designations to align with her desired order of importance; noted opposition to the motion without the Mayoral Election topic included.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted Council can bring the four remaining issues back in successive work sessions or as a group without prioritization.
- Councilor Keating – clarified the motion does not need to be amended.
- Councilor Semple – asked how far in the future the issues will be discussed.

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

MOTION: Councilor Keating, seconded by Councilor Groves, moved to direct the City Manager to bring back research to inform potential amendments to the charter on the issues of Mayor/Council Compensation, Vacancy/Interim Appointment, Department Head Residency, and Language Review.

VOTE: 6:1 PASSED (Opposed by Councilor Semple)

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

2. WORK SESSION and ACTION: Downtown Core Housing Initiative - Downtown Fee Assistance

Agency Director, Sarah Medary, introduced Development Programs Manager, Amanda D’Souza, who presented two resolutions that would implement Downtown Fee Assistance in the Downtown and a portion of the Riverfront Urban Renewal Districts.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Clark – asked if projects using Downtown Urban Renewal District funding must be within the district; wants housing assistance on 6th Avenue and 7th Avenue; asked if places outside of the Downtown Urban Renewal District are ineligible; noted interest in discussing a revenue source to be applied outside of the Downtown Urban Renewal District.
- Councilor Keating – noted interest in exploring other Urban Renewal Districts near 6th Avenue, 7th Avenue, and Highway 99.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked for clarification on the two resolutions included in today’s discussion; noted interest in setting aside part of the funding for and prioritizing affordable housing; noted all affordable housing in Eugene is subsidized.

- Councilor Groves – asked about the housing composition downtown compared to the rest of Eugene; noted interest in increasing affordable housing, but wants the right housing composition to avoid disproportionately impacting any specific area.
- Councilor Yeh – noted the lack of success with non-affordable housing types; noted support for the two proposed motions.
- Councilor Leech – asked how rental rates affect eligibility for Development Fee Assistance; noted support for the two resolutions.
- Councilor Clark – noted the affordable housing shortage in Eugene; noted affordable housing needs additional subsidies beyond the resolutions represented; noted support for the resolutions; asked if there is an affordable housing dispersal policy; noted concern with setting aside part of the funding if it doesn't align with the City's dispersal policy.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted there is no affordable housing in the presented boundary; noted unless Council targets affordable housing, none of the funds will go towards it.
- Councilor Semple – asked what the ceiling amount is for the allocation; asked if more applications can raise the ceiling; asked why affordable housing would get zero funding; noted downtown needs to be dense with other housing; noted support for the resolutions and desire for other affordable housing incentives.

MOTION: Move to adopt a resolution creating a Downtown Fee Assistance pilot program for the Downtown Urban Renewal District, as shown in Attachment B.

VOTE: 6:1 PASSED (Opposed by Councilor Zelenka)

MOTION: Move to adopt a resolution creating a Downtown Fee Assistance pilot program for the Riverfront Urban Renewal District, as shown in Attachment C.

VOTE: 6:1 PASSED (Opposed by Councilor Zelenka)

Councilor Discussion:

Mayor Vinis – noted support for the resolutions and excitement for the section of the Riverfront District chosen for this expansion.

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

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Katie LaSala". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Katie" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "LaSala".

Katie LaSala
City Recorder

(Recorded by Natalie Venhuda)

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