

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

June 24, 2024
5:30 p.m.

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

Councilors Absent: Greg Evans

Council President Keating opened the June 24, 2024, work session of the Eugene City Council in hybrid in-person and virtual format at 500 E. 4th Avenue, Eugene, OR 97401, North Building.

1. WORK SESSION: Mayor's Blue Ribbon Panel on Economic Development

City Manager Medary introduced Michael Bradley, Business Liaison, Anne Fifield, Economic Development Section Manager, and Erik Parrish, local business owner, who presented the recommendations from the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Panel on Economic Development.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Groves – stated his appreciation for those who participated in the panel; noted the need for buildable land to attract new businesses; stated expanding the City's economy would help its financial issues; noted his eagerness to support the work of the panel.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated his appreciation for those who participated in the panel; asked how the panel addressed climate change and related federal legislation; asked if the panel discussed federal funding to create climate and energy jobs; asked if the panel discussed ways to increase efficiencies for existing businesses; asked if the panel discussed how to take advantage of subsidies and credits to increase business's energy resiliency; asked about the long-term communication strategies with local businesses.
- Councilor Semple – noted her appreciation for the presentation and those who participated in the panel; stated the importance of developing jobs and housing; stated the importance of working with local businesses; noted the importance of communication.
- Councilor Yeh – stated her appreciation for those who participated in the panel; asked about the timeline for implementing the recommendations; asked if it is possible to implement the communication plan more quickly; asked for updates on progress before the end of the year.
- Councilor Clark – stated his appreciation for those who participated in the panel and the process; asked if there were topics panelists were interested in discussing but not able to due to limitations of time and scope; asked if addressing homelessness and land use issues were important to the panelists; noted the report recommended increasing the availability of buildable land; clarified the City would not be subsidizing land purchases, but rather working to increase the supply of buildable lands, thereby increasing its affordability.

- Councilor Leech – stated her appreciation for the work of the panel; noted her support for moving forward with an action plan; noted she is on the board of the Lane Workforce Partnership and is supportive of workforce development; stated the importance of supporting skill acquisition for the local workforce as well as attracting and retaining talent; noted a voluntary business registry may exclude community members and create equity gaps; suggested developing a plan to increase community participation in a potential registry.
- Councilor Keating – stated his appreciation for those who participated in the panel; noted his support for an action plan; noted he would have expected the panel to focus on housing, public safety, and transportation; stated he was impressed with the breadth of the work; asked about the panel’s recommendations for increasing housing supply; stated support for further meetings with the business community; asked how the business registry will be structured.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted the City has worked with the business community in the past to streamline the building process and reduce costs; asked about potential strategies to reduce the costs of buildable lands.
- Mayor Vinis – noted her appreciation for the work of the panel; noted the panel kept discussions high level due to time constraints; noted the panel covered issues that are not regularly heard by the City.

MOTION: Councilor Groves, seconded by Councilor Zelenka moved to accept the recommendations of the Mayor’s Blue Ribbon Panel on Economic Development, and direct the City Manager to provide an action plan to implement the Panel’s recommendations. **VOTE: 7:0 PASSED**

Mayor Vinis left the meeting.

2. **WORK SESSION: Downtown Core Housing Initiative – Accelerated MUPTE**

City Manager Medary introduced Amanda D’Souza, Development Programs Manager, and Will Dowdy, Community Development Director, who presented an Accelerated Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption (MUPTE) pilot program proposal.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Semple – stated the importance of this work; noted the accelerated process was thoughtfully created.
- Councilor Groves – stated the importance of the MUPTE review panel; asked how the accelerated process will maintain transparency; asked to continue working on improving communication with the public; noted miscommunications can cause community mistrust.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked how decreasing the minimum number of required units will affect the total number of units built; noted the accelerated MUPTE process will decrease the time needed to move a project through the approval process; noted the next steps are to develop the ordinance and move it to a public hearing.
- Councilor Clark – noted the local business community has asked the City to reduce the complexity, cost, and time involved in constructing housing; stated his support for the motion; stated he is looking forward to community participation at the public hearing.

- Councilor Keating – noted his recent attendance at the housing focused Community Solutions Summit hosted by the Eugene Chamber of Commerce; stated he is in favor of accelerating the MUPTE process; noted he will support the motion; asked about the timeline and plan for the goal to increase housing 50 percent; asked about the percentage of rentals versus owner-occupied housing units in the downtown core; asked how many of the anticipated new units will be affordable housing; noted increased density in downtown will increase parking needs; asked if the accelerated MUPTE addresses parking; asked how to increase electric vehicle parking in downtown; clarified the City cannot supersede Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities (CFEC) parking guidelines; suggested additional avenues for media announcements.
- Councilor Groves – asked about the ratio of affordable to market-rate housing in the downtown area; asked how the ratio compares with the rest of the community; asked how the amount of market-rate housing affects the economic viability of downtown businesses; asked how people telecommuting to work post-pandemic has affected downtown businesses; stated his support for affordable housing; stated the importance of balancing affordable housing against the needs of a healthy economy.
- Councilor Clark – asked for an update on the distribution policy for affordable housing in the City; stated the importance of organizing the distribution of affordable housing.
- Councilor Keating – noted Eugene is a great place to live, work, and play; stated supporting the proposal would aid in Eugene becoming a greater place to live, work, play, and stay.

MOTION: Councilor Groves, seconded by Councilor Zelenka, moved to direct the City Manager to prepare a draft ordinance to implement the Accelerated MUPTE program as described in Attachment B and to schedule a public hearing on the ordinance. **VOTE: 7:0 PASSED**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Katie LaSala
City Recorder

(Recorded by Cherish Bradshaw)

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