

MINUTES

**Eugene City Council
Harris Hall, 125 East 8th Avenue
Eugene, Oregon 97401**

**January 16, 2019
12:00 p.m.**

Councilors Present: Emily Semple, Jennifer Yeh, Alan Zelenka, Mike Clark. Chris Pryor, Betty Taylor. Greg Evans

Councilors Absent: Claire Syrett

Mayor Vinis opened the January 16, 2019, Work Session of the Eugene City Council.

1. WORK SESSION: Single-Use Containers and Utensils

Solid Waste Analyst Michael Wisth presented information about single-use plastics, their impacts on the environment, and potential strategies to reduce or eliminate their use.

Council Discussion

- Councilor Semple – supported the proposed ban and said the time is right to take action on this issue; supported moving the issue to a public hearing and considering a ban that goes further than those enacted in test case cities.
- Councilor Clark – expressed frustration that the only option being presented is to vote yes or no; more helpful to outline all pros and cons of those votes; legitimate concerns raised on both sides of the issue, including sanitary and equity/cost considerations.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked questions about limiting access to plastics at the retail level; data analysis about the life cycle of materials; effects of polystyrene ban in Portland.
- Councilor Evans – asked questions about and urged consideration of emerging technologies that could replace current materials; best practices in other communities; and organic-based alternatives.
- Councilor Pryor – thanked staff for the good, myth-busting presentation; said it's important to act but to consider when and at what scale; expressed concern about the undue negative consequence on lower-income population who may rely on the use of banned materials.
- Councilor Taylor – agreed that it's important to consider the unexpected consequences of a ban; noted that not all cardboards are compostable; supported ban on polystyrene.
- Mayor Vinis – stated that the proposed ban represents a request for behavior change; plastic is cheap to manufacture and that factor should be considered when comparing to other products; it will be helpful to recommend alternative when presenting the proposed ban.
- Councilor Zelenka – said that charging for alternative materials adds value to them and helps change behavior; encouraged addressing food waste to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; noted that most compostable materials must be processed at a commercial facility.
- Councilor Taylor – expressed concern that if restaurants charge for to-go containers, customers will decline to take their leftovers, resulting in more food waste.
- Councilor Clark – said legitimate issues and questions were being raised; encouraged council to return for more robust conversation about the potential impacts of their decision to ban single-use plastics.
- Councilor Semple – supported providing free bus passes, the use of paper bags and reusable containers, and continued efforts on the food waste issue to address climate goals; said a public hearing will provide the council with good information.

MOTION: Councilor Semple, seconded by Councilor Zelenka, moved to direct the City Manager to prepare and schedule a public hearing on an ordinance that prohibits caterers, restaurants, grocery stores, and non-profit food servers from 1) providing plastic straws, except on request; 2) serving or packaging food and beverages in products made of polystyrene or other single-use plastic products, including containers and wrappers, plates, bowls, cups and lids, stirrers and utensils, and condiment packages.

Council Discussion

- Councilor Clark – offered a friendly amendment to substitute an additional work session for a public hearing to give staff the opportunity to present information about the pros and cons of potential impacts of a ban.
- Councilor Zelenka – agreed that he was not yet sure about the specifics of a proposed ban and hoped to learn more about the issue to help develop ordinance language; encouraged the public to provide testimony at Public Forums.
- Councilor Evans – suggested looking at practices that create barriers for reusable materials (e.g. sporting events) and then identify strategies for removing those barriers.
- Councilor Pryor – supported continuing the council discussion of alternatives at another work session.
- Councilor Semple – accepted the suggestion to eliminate the specific list of plastic products; supported making a big statement with the council’s proposed legislation.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted that aluminum is a good alternative to plastic as it’s recyclable and readily available.

RESTATED MOTION AND VOTE (*including friendly amendment*): Councilor Semple, seconded by Councilor Zelenka, moved to direct the City Manager to prepare and schedule a work session on an ordinance that prohibits caterers, restaurants, grocery stores, and non-profit food servers from 1) providing plastic straws, except on request; and 2) serving or packaging food and beverages in products made of polystyrene or other single-use plastic products. **PASSED 7:0**

2. WORK SESSION: Home Energy Score

Waste Prevention and Green Building Analyst Deveron Musgrave, Sustainability Manager Chelsea Clinton, and Climate Recovery Ordinance Analyst Mark Nystrom presented information about the Home Energy Score program and next steps for implementation in Eugene.

Council Discussion

- Councilor Evans – asked about the specific emission difference between buildings heated with natural gas and those heated with electricity; that information will be important to convey to the public.
- Councilor Clark – urged consideration of systemic capacity if more homes are converted from gas to electric; important to ensure that council is having its discussion of the issues with accurate data.
- Councilor Zelenka – reported that the natural gas provider is moving quickly towards renewable natural gas; the Home Energy Score is much-needed information for potential home-buyers and renters; allows choices based on information that has significant bottom-line impacts.
- Councilor Taylor – supported moving forward with Home Energy Score program; consider which model would be most effective in Eugene.
- Councilor Semple – agreed that program is valuable and will contribute to City’s climate recovery goals; Home Energy Score will provide valuable information to buyers and renters and incentives to owners to improve energy efficiency.

- Councilor Zelenka – said Portland’s experience implementing the program provides good lessons for Eugene; costs of program are paid for by the consumer – minimal resources required from City.
- Councilor Evans – asked questions about how renewal natural gas work and what the net effect is on lowering greenhouse gas emissions.
- Mayor Vinis – appreciated comments about the equity component of the issue and the potential for the program to result in better quality housing.

The meeting adjourned at 1:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Beth Forrest
City Recorder

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