

## MINUTES

**Eugene City Council  
Harris Hall, 125 East 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Eugene, Oregon 97401**

**July 22, 2019  
5:30 p.m.**

**Councilors Present:** Betty Taylor, Emily Semple, Alan Zelenka, Jennifer Yeh, Mike Clark, Claire Syrett, Chris Pryor

**Councilors Absent:** Greg Evans

Mayor Vinis opened the July 22, 2019, work session of the Eugene City Council.

- 1. EXECUTIVE SESSION: Pursuant to Oregon Revised Statute 192.660(2)(e)**  
City Council met in executive session pursuant to Oregon Revised Statute 192.660(2)(e).

- 2. Committee Reports and Items of Interest**

**MOTION:** Councilor Semple, seconded by Councilor Syrett, moved to adopt a resolution condemning white nationalism and alt-right activities and groups.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Semple – read parts of the proposed resolution brought forth on behalf of the Human Rights Commission.
- Councilor Clark – expressed frustration with some of the wording of the resolution because he believes white nationalism and white supremacy are abhorrent and it is appropriate to enact laws that address actions that stem from those beliefs; explained his discomfort with language condemning people’s beliefs; shared concerns that the government should only concern themselves with actions and not beliefs; said he has a proposed amendment that will allow him to vote for the resolution.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked why the motion didn’t specifically reference the resolution brought forward by the Human Rights Commission.
- Councilor Syrett – thanked members of the Human Rights Commission for bringing this resolution forward; talked about the challenges of supporting free speech while also taking a strong stance against the views represented in the resolution, because the City Council does not have to agree with and support that speech; said that passage of the resolution is important to help ensure members of the community feel safe because these views lead to physical and psychological harm directed at members of the community.
- Councilor Pryor – said that over the last few years the thoughts and beliefs of a certain group of people have become more the actions of their belief structure; said they have to be mindful of the fact that our thoughts become our words and our words become our actions; said that while the City Council should not oppose religion, opinions, or beliefs, the resolution addresses a form of hatred and bigotry and suppression of other people; said that it was important and appropriate to use the format of a resolution to say what City Council believes in.
- Councilor Clark - said that if this were a statement of intolerance or violent actions, he would agree with Councilor Pryor; said actions or intimidation or violence are

repugnant and have no place in our community, but the resolution talks about what people believe and he does not want to officially condemn people for their beliefs.

- **MOTION TO AMEND:** Councilor Clark, seconded by Councilor Taylor, moved to remove reference to people's beliefs in this resolution.
- Council Discussion:
- Councilor Clark – clarified that he would like to remove anything that talks about a group or individual's beliefs and the City Council condemning them for those beliefs; addressed factual mistakes in the resolution.
- Councilor Zelenka – thanked the Human Rights Commission for writing the resolution; addressed Section H, which highlights Oregon's ugly history on race and the importance of including that in the resolution; talked about the reason for this conversation and the current climate in our country where people are openly presenting themselves as white nationalists and the City Council needs to stand against this hatred, bigotry, and discrimination.
- Councilor Syrett – talked about the important distinction that the resolution language is not condemning the people who hold these beliefs, but taking a stand against these beliefs that claim that white people are better than other people; said she wants to make a statement affirming that all people in the community deserve to be safe and welcome without fearing violent or harassing action against them.
- Councilor Yeh – said that Section C seems to be a definition of white nationalism and she wouldn't be in favor of removing it; shared appreciation for those who wrote the resolution and included next steps and reference to Oregon's history.
- Councilor Semple – said she understood some of Councilor Clark's concerns because she wouldn't want to say someone couldn't believe or think something; discussed what the definition of condemn means and said a person can believe whatever they want but can't do bad things because of it.
- Councilor Pryor – said it was an interesting point to think about where belief ends and action begins and this resolution is intended to show City Council's belief and policy is around this issue.
- Councilor Taylor – said she didn't see the need for the resolution because there are already laws that prevent people from doing bad things.
- Mayor Vinis – talked about the Civil Rights movement and how this resolution doesn't break any new ground by making a statement about the kinds of behavior that are considered unacceptable as a community.
- Councilor Clark – said that the resolution isn't saying that someone's beliefs are illegal, but that City Council is condemning those beliefs; said the problem with condemning people with certain beliefs is that there may be a future City Council made up of people with different beliefs; expressed discomfort with naming the official belief of the City of Eugene.
- Councilor Syrett – talked about how protectors of free speech say that the best way to combat speech is with more speech; said they should both defend people's right to express their views and, in the right circumstance, condemn views they find dangerous and unacceptable.
- Councilor Semple – asked for Councilor Clark to restate the motion to make it clear.
- Councilor Clark – restated the motion to remove all references to any person or group's belief; said he would support a motion if the references to beliefs were changed to actions.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked Councilor Taylor if she would support the resolution if the changes referenced in the motion were made.

**VOTE ON MOTION TO AMEND: FAILED 3:4**, Councilors Semple, Taylor, and Clark in favor.

**MOTION TO AMEND TITLE OF RESOLUTION:** Councilor Semple, seconded by Councilor Taylor, moved to amend the title of the resolution by removing the last two words of the title of the resolution, “and groups.”

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Pryor – supported a unambiguous statement by the City Council that it condemns white nationalism.
- Councilor Clark – said he believed the change was a good one but would still not vote in favor of the resolution because the council majority is defining who gets condemned and it’s wrong to condemn people as opposed to actions.

**MOTION TO AMEND TITLE OF RESOLUTION WITHDRAWN:** Councilor Semple, with permission from Councilor Taylor, withdrew her motion to amend the title of the resolution.

**VOTE ON ORIGINAL MOTION: PASSED 4:3**, Councilors Semple, Taylor, and Clark opposed.

**3. WORK SESSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: An Ordinance Concerning the Downtown Riverfront Land Use Adoption Package (An Ordinance Amending the Whiteaker Plan; Repealing the EWEB Downtown Riverfront Specific Area Plan; Amending Chapter 9 of the Eugene Code; Amending the Eugene Zoning Map and Overlay Zone Map; Rescinding the Willamette Greenway Permit Approved by Ordinance No. 20513 and Approving a New Willamette Greenway Permit; Approving a Tentative Subdivision; Approving a /WR Water Resources Overlay Zone Standards Review; and Providing an Effective Date.)**

Community Development Director Mike Kinnison, Urban Development Manager Will Dowdy, and Senior Planner Gabe Flock answered questions about the Downtown Riverfront Land Use Adoption Package from a previous work session.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Zelenka – expressed concerns he had related to setbacks and lessons learned from the Capstone project, including design oversight; addressed parking concerns for future development.

**MOTION:** Councilor Taylor, seconded by Councilor Semple, moved to adopt an Ordinance Concerning the Downtown Riverfront Land Use Adoption Package (An Ordinance Amending the Whiteaker Plan; Repealing the EWEB Downtown Riverfront Specific Area Plan; Amending Chapter 9 of the Eugene Code; Amending the Eugene Zoning Map and Overlay Zone Map; Rescinding the Willamette Greenway Permit Approved by Ordinance No. 20513 and Approving a New Willamette Greenway Permit; Approving a Tentative Subdivision; Approving a /WR Water Resources Overlay Zone Standards Review; and Providing an Effective Date.)  
**PASSED 7:0,**

**4. WORK SESSION: Protections for Individuals Ordinance Update**

This item was postponed until Wednesday, July 24, 2019.

The meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Beth Forrest*

Beth Forrest  
City Recorder

*(Recorded by Elena Domingo)*

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