

## MINUTES

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

**July 24, 2019  
12:00 p.m.**

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

**Councilors Absent:** Greg Evans

Mayor Vinis opened the July 24, 2019, Work Session of the Eugene City Council.

### **1. Committee Reports and Items of Interest**

Mayor Vinis proposed postponing the City Manager's Performance Rating Average motion to after summer break because of all the other items on the agenda.

**MOTION:** Councilor Pryor, seconded by Councilor Semple, moved to reconsider Monday night's Resolution Condemning White Nationalism and Alt-Right Activities and Groups.

#### Council Discussion

- Councilor Pryor – explained that he wanted to reconsider the resolution because it would be nice if City Council provided greater and more forceful support for this particular resolution to demonstrate clearly that the City is opposed to the level of racism and activity going on.

**VOTE ON MOTION: PASSED 7:0.**

#### Council Discussion

- Councilor Semple – said she was proud to have brought this resolution forward and had fully intended to vote in favor of the resolution on Monday night, but was concerned that they might be condemning thoughts; noted it was against her values of freedom of speech and civil rights and wanted more time to consider this unintended path; said she would like City Council to pass a unanimous resolution consistent with their commitment to creating a welcoming and safe community and is grateful for the opportunity to change her vote to yes.
- Councilor Clark – said he wanted to vote in favor of this resolution; talked about the comments calling him a racist and wanted to be clear that he does not think any race is inferior to any other; said the problem with the resolution was that parts of it were incendiary and factually questionable and he made edits that he sent to City Council that would create a resolution he would be happy to vote in favor of.

**MOTION TO SUBSTITUTE:** Councilor Clark, seconded by Councilor Semple, moved to substitute the language that he emailed for those places in the resolution so that the council might have a unanimous vote.

### Council Discussion

- Councilor Clark – clarified language proposed because he had put forth multiple options, choosing Republic in the first instance and emphasizing in the second; said he thinks it's important to make this statement and wants to vote in favor of the resolution after removing areas that are condemning people's beliefs; read the proposed changes:
- All mentions of us as a Democracy be changed to a Constitutional Republic. (or a Republic)
- Item C - Replace "...the belief that..." with "...the promotion of the idea that..."
- Item D - Strike "and alt-right" and "many of which have been emboldened by the national political dialogue."
- Item E - Replace the word "maintaining" with the word "promoting" or "emphasizing".
- Item H - Strike all that begins with "For example.....(begin again with).....The State of Oregon also has..."
- Councilor Pryor – said it feels as if the council will be saying that they want to condemn racism and racist actions, but that it's okay to be a racist and that sits uncomfortably with him because there are certain things that it's not okay to be; said that in the current political climate being a racist is very difficult to hide because it comes out in words and if you are the group in power saying things about groups not in power, that in its nature is intimidating and needs to be condemned.
- Councilor Syrett – said she could support the motion with all proposed changes except the striking of the word "maintaining" because she believes the purpose and scope of white supremacy is to maintain that regime; said that we should not make space in our community to accommodate or tolerate the robust expression of beliefs such as white supremacy and does not want to be silent or timid in the face of these beliefs.
- Councilor Clark and Semple accepted Councilor Syrett's suggestion as a friendly amendment.
- Councilor Clark – said he would be willing to give up changing all mentions of "Democracy" to help meet in the middle.
- Councilor Taylor –said that when people have to hide something, it becomes more dangerous.
- Councilor Zelenka – said he was bothered by two of the changed proposals, including striking "many of which have been emboldened by the national political dialogue" noting that this conversation is happening because of the national political dialogue; said he could see the problem with the wording in Item H implying that white supremacist groups called for the deportation of Japanese-Americans following Pearl Harbor.
- Councilor Pryor proposed amending the substitute motion to read, "Extreme racial prejudice resulted in the deportation of Japanese-Americans following Pearl Harbor..." in Item H.
- Councilor Clark and Councilor Semple accepted Councilor Pryor's proposal as a friendly amendment.
- Councilor Zelenka – supported the friendly amendment but is still bothered by striking text about the national political dialogue.
- Mayor Vinis proposed rewording the sentence in Item D to read, "We recognize that there has been a rise of white nationalist and white supremacist groups in the United States, and that the national dialogue reflects that racist tension."
- Councilor Clark and Councilor Semple accepted Mayor Vinis' proposed rewording as a friendly amendment.
- Councilor Yeh – said she was not comfortable striking the sentence, "Today, white supremacy groups, including militias, are advocating for the apprehension, detention and deportation of Central American refugees legally seeking asylum in the United States."
- Councilor Clark – said he had a problem with the statement that anyone who believes in deportation of illegal immigrants is a racist.

- Councilor Yeh – reiterated her opposition to striking this sentence or striking reference to “alt-right” groups; proposed rewording the sentence in Item H to read, “Today, groups are advocating for the apprehension, detention and deportation of Central American refugees legally seeking asylum in the United States.”
- Councilor Clark and Councilor Semple accepted Councilor Yeh’s rewording as a friendly amendment.
- Councilor Taylor – proposed postponing this item because she objected to re-writing the resolution language in this way at the table.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked clarifying questions about postponing motions to reconsider; said it was important that if they’re spending time amending the resolution, they’re doing it to get to a unanimous decision; shared concerns that Councilor Taylor’s suggestion to postpone the item might mean she won’t vote in favor of the amended resolution.
- Councilor Taylor – said she would prefer to consider the amendments thoroughly and vote on the resolution after break because this process was messy.

**VOTE ON SUBSTITUTE MOTION (with friendly amendments): PASSED 7:0.**

**VOTE ON MAIN MOTION AS SUBSTITUTED: PASSED 7:0.**

- Mayor Vinis – said this was an important conversation to have but encouraged councilors IN the future to make edits to a proposed resolution in advance and not during a City Council meeting.

## **2. WORK SESSION: Implementation of Construction Excise Tax and Use of Affordable Housing Trust Funds**

Community Development Director Michael Kinnison, Grants Manager Stephanie Jennings, and Building Permit Services Director Lydia Kaye provided an update on the Construction Excise Tax (CET), a timeline for its implementation, and the outcomes and potential focus areas for use of CET funds.

### Council Discussion

- Councilor Clark – asked staff about the pilot assistance program; talked about his challenges with the Construction Excise Tax because it makes housing more expensive and generates more rental housing instead of home ownership; said he would prefer to make it easier for low-income folks to buy homes and would support 15 percent or more of residential CET revenue set aside for down payment assistance.
- Councilor Syrett – said she liked the makeup of the proposed committee; asked who the committee would be making recommendations to; said her priority focus areas are included on the proposed list, including both renter and homeowner assistance; asked if this funding could be used for permanent supportive housing; said she supported this fund because of its flexibility and will be looking for creativity in the recommendations from the advisory committee and staff to make the best use of CET dollars.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked about the status of the renter protections task force and survey and how that gets integrated into this process; talked about the affordable housing task force group and their focus on more affordable housing, noting very few people in that group were renters so the focus was not on renter protections; said he thinks this money should be focused on people not losing their homes with assistance to renters and homebuyers, including help with down payments, rental deposits, housing navigators, and a single rental application process.
- Councilor Yeh – agreed that the money should be focused on the three proposed potential focus areas and that the City should be looking at setting aside more than 15 percent of the

residential revenue for down payment assistance; asked what a housing consumer advocate is; said that it would be helpful if the recommendations were created within some context related to other programs.

- Councilor Pryor – said his main interest in approving the CET was to provide flexibility and options for spending the money; however, more options means having to decide where that money is and isn't going; said he wanted the fact that housing needs in Eugene are not static or one-size fits all to be considered; said one of his intentions is that the CET funding could be leveraged with other sources of funds to create a bigger impact.
- Councilor Taylor – pointed out that no additional money would be coming in for the first two years; said that helping with down payments and first and last month's rent is crucial.
- Councilor Zelenka – clarified that the SDC offset with general fund money is only temporary for two years and additional money will come in the third year; talked about how many people are housing burdened in Eugene and the need to educate people about helpful housing programs; said he thinks this money should be a source for the renter protections committee recommendations.
- Councilor Syrett – asked about additional outreach and engagement happening with rental housing fund money; agreed with Councilor Yeh that it would be helpful to have context for recommendations that are proposed, including existing programs and how they connect.
- Mayor Vinis – said part of the pressure on renters is that the short supply of housing is driving prices up; said that remediation and protection for renters is critical, but so is the supply and the need to build more affordable housing.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked if there was a method in place to track the number of housing units built since the implementation of the CET; said he wants to be able to point to the incremental changes made by implementing the CET; supported making it clear what the City Council priorities were.

**MOTION:** Councilor Zelenka, seconded by Councilor Clark, moved that the vast majority of the CET funds be used on direct assistance to renters and homebuyers with at least 15 percent of the residential CET revenue set aside for down payment assistance.

- Councilor Syrett – shared concerns about precluding the advisory committee from coming back with recommendations that might not line up with this motion; asked if City Council could change the spending ratio with a future motion
- Councilor Clark – talked about wanting to increase assistance for low-income individuals to help people buy homes rather than rent them; said the community is skewed towards a high number of rentals and HB 2001 will make it even more skewed; noted that prices won't go down as more units are created.
- Councilor Pryor – said the flexibility of the CET funds is one of its strong suits and supported going thorough more of a process and getting more feedback before narrowing down the focus area for the money.
- Councilor Zelenka – clarified that his motion directs a majority of the money in one direction but leaves flexibility for the rest of the funds; said he wants to give the committee that will be formed in August some clear direction from City Council.

**VOTE ON MOTION: PASSED 4:3**, Councilors Semple, Syrett, and Pryor opposed.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** Councilor Pryor, seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved to extend the meeting by 10 minutes. **PASSED 5:2**, Councilors Zelenka and Clark opposed.

### 3. WORK SESSION: Protections for Individuals Ordinance Update

Human Rights and Neighborhood Involvement Manager Jennifer Lleras Van Der Haeghen gave an overview of the Protections for Individuals Ordinance and proposed draft code changes.

#### Council Discussion

- Councilor Syrett – thanked other councilors for reconsidering the resolution condemning white nationalism and hatred and coming to a unanimous vote; said she was proud of efforts the City Council, City Manager, and Police Chief have taken to ensure all residents feel secure doing business with the City and accessing City services without fear that their information will be turned over to another government agency without due process; said she thinks the additional proposed code changes would further strengthen these measures and give clear direction to City employees.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** Councilor Syrett, seconded by Councilor Semple, moved to direct the City Manager to schedule a public hearing on an ordinance substantially similar to the Attachment B from the City Council’s packet dated July 22, 2019. **PASSED 7:0.**

### 4. Committee Reports and Items of Interest

#### Council Discussion

- Councilor Taylor – raised constituent concerns about tents along the bike path, the payroll tax, and questions about why the power lines aren’t being buried during the Willamette reconstruction; mentioned the free symphony in the park event as one of the best things the City does; said one of the worst things the City does is charge library fines, including putting a freeze on accounts that owe more than \$10 and referring fees to a collection agency at \$50.
- Mayor Vinis – talked about participating in the international disabled women’s conference and two upcoming events Mobility International is having that are influential and inspiring; talked about participating in the U.S. Conference of Mayors and associated Climate Summit; said she has chosen to serve on the steering committee for Climate Mayors in hopes of finding opportunities.

The meeting adjourned at 1:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Beth Forrest  
City Recorder

*(Recorded by Elena Domingo)*

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