

## MINUTES

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

**September 18, 2019  
12:00 p.m.**

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

**Councilors Absent:** Alan Zelenka, Greg Evans

Councilor Taylor opened the September 18, 2019, work session of the Eugene City Council in Mayor Vinis' absence.

### **1. WORK SESSION: Digital Signs**

Senior Planner Jenessa Dragovich introduced the topic, defining digital signs, providing some examples, and outlining the benefits, drawbacks, and regulation options.

#### Council Discussion

- Councilor Semple – expressed concern about the safety of digital signs, particularly considering the City's Vision Zero policy; would prefer to reduce signage for both safety and aesthetic reasons; asked staff for the legal minimum of what the City would be required to change.
- Councilor Syrett – asked when Springfield changed its code to allow digital signs; asked whether there could be a limit on the number of digital billboards within the city, and whether those signs could be limited to billboards currently in existence; supported digital signs generally, though would like their number to be limited.
- Councilor Yeh – requested input from the Vision Zero advisory body; asked for a copy of the City of Springfield's code; asked about the energy use difference between lighting for existing billboards and digital signs; asked staff how the City could use the billboards for Amber Alerts and nonprofit use; noted that digital signs make advertising less expensive for nonprofits and small businesses; expressed support for the draft motion contained in the materials.
- Councilor Pryor – asked staff for statistics on accidents associated with digital signs; thought the content of a sign determined its level of distraction, not the medium itself; supported exploration of regulations to address and enable new technology.
- Councilor Clark – supported the motion, noting that digital signs were economical and effective for mass communication; thought they could be a helpful tool for communicating with residents in emergency situations.
- Councilor Taylor – agreed with Councilor Semple that digital billboards were distracting and not aesthetically pleasing; supported efforts to limit or reduce the number of signs; supported making the message on the Hult Center readerboard static.
- Councilor Syrett – said that opinions about what is attractive or distracting are subjective; would also like to receive the answers to Councilor Yeh's questions; noted that regulations are key to maintaining livability and public safety.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** Councilor Pryor, seconded by Councilor Syrett, moved to initiate land use code amendments to allow digital billboards and digital readerboards within the city and to implement changes to the sign regulations identified by staff that are legally required or necessary to clarify the current regulations. **PASSED 4:2**, Councilors Taylor and Semple opposed.

## 2. **WORK SESSION: Alley Access Lots**

Principal Planner Alissa Hunter Hansen introduced the topic, explaining what an alley access lot is, where they are permitted, and the standards that currently apply to them.

### Council Discussion

- Councilor Pryor – thought the issue needed to be addressed within the confines of House Bill 2001; supported opportunities to add to the community’s housing stock while ensuring and protecting neighborhood livability.
- Councilor Syrett – expressed concern that many building requirements for alley access lots were different from regular lots; supported looking at regulations that only mitigate unique issues such as size and privacy considerations.
- Councilor Semple – supported efforts to create more housing, including on alley lots; agreed that regulations for building on alley access lots should be the same as regular lots except where unique aspects need to be addressed; asked questions about who is responsible for maintaining and improving the alleys, what width an alley is required to be, and what parking requirements there are for alley lots.
- Councilor Clark – noted that tiny or smaller homes are not necessarily more affordable; construction and operation costs are expensive.
- Councilor Taylor – said the restrictions on alley access lots make a lot of sense and are the product of a detailed process; warned against making casual changes to current laws.

The meeting adjourned at 1:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Beth Forrest

(Recorded by Cas Casados)

[View the webcast of this work session here.](#)