

MINUTES

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

February 26, 2018
5:30 p.m.

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

Mayor Vinis opened the February 26, 2018, Work Session of the Eugene City Council.

1. Committee Reports and Items of Interest from Mayor, City Council, and City Manager

Council Discussion

- Shelter and Supportive Housing Committee on Poverty and Homelessness Board update.
- Inclusionary zoning is no longer on council's upcoming work sessions list; should be rescheduled.
- Speeding, particularly in school zones, is a growing problem.
- Would like to see downtown activities getting started earlier in the year.
- Implementation of the Climate Recovery Ordinance is a top priority for City Council.
- The City's tree plan is 27 years old; an update is needed.
- Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson, from Gary, Indiana, will offer a talk on March 1 entitled, "Building Strong, Resilient Communities Through Education, Not Incarceration."
- Metropolitan Policy Committee is addressing the proposed Federal infrastructure package, and its efforts to push costs onto local government.

2. WORK SESSION: Railroad Quiet Zone and Safety Improvement Project Funding Strategy

City Engineer Mark Schoening presented information on a funding strategy for improving safety and livability at the seven west-end rail crossings.

Council Discussion

- There may be higher community priorities that should be funded before this project. For projects of this magnitude, the decision to spend millions of dollars should be made by a vote of the people.
- Many residents have asked Council to implement a quiet zone. The Council agreed and should now figure out how to pay for it.
- Although there would be many benefits derived from implementing a quiet zone, the funding could go towards many other equally worthy projects.
- Support using different funding sources rather than taking it all from one pot.
- Important to minimize the effect on the general fund for this project.
- Council only giving direction at this point; will have an opportunity to debate during budget conversations,
- Acknowledge the concerns from Whiteaker Community Council that there may be a raise in property value and rents with the implementation of a quiet zone.

MOTION: Councilor Clark, seconded by Councilor Taylor, moved to direct the City Manager to include funding for the safety improvements for the seven west-end rail crossings and the additional fencing in the FY19 budget from a combination of Road Fund and General Fund (Marginal Beginning Working Capital).

MOTION TO AMEND AND VOTE: Councilor Zelenka, seconded by Councilor Evans, moved to add “and minimize the amount from the general fund” to the original motion. **PASSED 8:0.**

VOTE ON AMENDED MOTION: PASSED 6:2, Councilors Semple and Taylor opposed.

3. WORK SESSION: Housing Affordability and Missing Middle Housing

Long- Range Community Planner Terri Harding and Affordable Housing Grants/Programs Manager Stephanie Jennings presented information about the role middle housing types could play in helping to address housing affordability issues in Eugene.

Council Discussion

- More than 40 percent of people in area spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing; a problem that has reached the crisis level.
- Information needed about how our population has actually grown compared to the numbers projected by Portland State University which were used as the basis for long-range planning. That discrepancy is now contributing to this growing problem.
- More information requested about comprehensive costs in renting vs. owning a home compared to other comparably sized cities on the West Coast.
- Consider strategies for creating realistic incentives for developers to build missing middle housing types and remove barriers that discourage such development.
- People worry that multi-unit, affordable housing is unattractive; effort should be made to ensure aesthetically pleasing development.
- Consider dedicating a full-time staff person to work on this issue.
- Support actions that preserve existing moderately priced housing stock and expand opportunities to create more such housing stock for renters and home owners.
- Important to clarify and understand definitions of housing types – affordable housing, such as subsidized housing vs. housing that is affordable.
- By incentivizing systems development charges, the City is losing money that should be available for community development projects.
- Missing middle housing includes housing that requires less maintenance costs due to smaller size, smaller yards, and the fewer external walls.

MOTION: Councilor Clark, seconded by Councilor Taylor, moved to direct staff to return with ideas for potential actions to further housing affordability.

MOTION TO AMEND: Councilor Syrett, seconded by Councilor Zelenka, moved to amend the motion to include language that would go at the end of the motion that would read,” with an emphasis on actions that will help preserve existing moderately priced housing stock and expand opportunities to create more such housing stock for both renters and homeowners.

Council Discussion

- Amendment to motion is intended to acknowledge concerns about gentrification.
- A lot of the work of the Housing Policy Board includes preserving existing buildings to keep rents down, even though improvements have been made.
- Not meant to be exclusive of other strategies; desired outcome is to give everyone more housing options regardless of income level.

VOTE ON MOTION TO AMEND: PASSED 8:0.

VOTE ON AMENDED MOTION: PASSED 8:0.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Elena Domingo
Deputy City Recorder