MINUTES

Eugene City Council
McNutt Room—City Hall
777 Pearl Street—Eugene, Oregon

April 11, 2012
Noon

COUNCILORS PRESENT: George Brown, Pat Farr, Betty Taylor, Andrea Ortiz, George Poling, Mike Clark, Chris Pryor, Alan Zelenka.

COUNCILORS ABSENT: Betty Taylor.

Her Honor Mayor Kitty Piercy called the April 11, 2012, work session of the Eugene City Council to order.

Mr. Pryor asked the manager to prepare a memorandum for the council regarding a recent newspaper report about a neighborhood association that suggested a developer make a contribution to the association to avoid an appeal of the developer's project. Mr. Pryor wanted to know the City's position on that issue and noted that he had received many constituent contacts expressing concerns about what looked like extortion to some people. As Mr. Pryor believed that it would take more than two hours for staff to prepare a response, he requested council endorsement of his request.

> Mr. Pryor, seconded by Ms. Ortiz, moved to ask the city manager to prepare a memorandum outlining what the council had been talking about in terms of an investigation of allegations or claims that a neighborhood organization, acting in its official capacity, is requiring the payment of money by developers in order to approve or agree to their requested development. The motion passed, 6:2; Ms. Taylor and Mr. Brown voting no.

A. WORK SESSION: Opportunity Eugene Report and Recommendations

Community Programs Analyst Michael Wisth was present for the item. He was joined by Claire Syrett, Dan Bryant, David Mandelblatt, and Michael Carrigan of the Opportunity Eugene Task Force.

Mr. Wisth led the council through a PowerPoint presentation that provided background on the membership and charge of the task force and highlighted the task force's recommendations:

- *Identify and establish potential sites.*
- *Create and support day use community centers.*
- *Improve traditional and non-traditional health care access.*
- *Continue and expand existing services to the homeless.*
- *Improve laws and ordinances that criminalize and block homeless individuals.*
- *Create a commission to continue to explore homelessness solutions.*

Mayor Piercy and the council recognized the work of Mr. Wisth and Chuck Crockett of the City Manager's Office and extended thanks to the facilitators, Laurel Singer and Peter Harkema of Oregon Consensus, and to task force members.

Mr. Pryor thought creation of a commission was critical given the many issues that remained to be worked through. He did not think the council could adopt the report without additional discussion. He was particularly concerned about what the establishment of potential sites meant. Were such sites transitional housing or were permanent encampments, and what was the City's role? He wanted to continue with the work and explore the solutions available to the council.

Mr. Farr agreed with Mr. Pryor.

Mr. Brown shared the history of Dignity Village in Portland, Oregon. He predicted that in the absence of council action, such an encampment would spring up without City involvement. Speaking to the question of a site, Mr. Brown reported that the Jefferson/Westside Neighbors Board of Directors had expressed support for a homeless camp at the site of the former armory. He intended to poll the neighborhood for its support.

Mr. Wisth offered to provide additional information about Dignity Village.

Mayor Piercy believed each task force recommendation was substantial and needed to be further defined. She asked task force members to comment.

Mr. Bryant said he frequently presided over the annual memorial for the homeless on December 21 and typically more than 20 people who died on Eugene's streets were memorialized. He believed the task force's recommendations would save lives. He emphasized that the task force was recommending that people be provided with a legal, safe place to be; the form that took was unknown.

Ms. Syrett encouraged the council to move forward on the recommendations related to the review of local laws and ordinances and improved health care access while it considered the formation of a homeless commission.

Mr. Mandelblatt encouraged that more restrooms downtown, such as those at City Hall, be better signed.

Mr. Carrigan emphasized the unique opportunity represented by the recommendations and called for new and innovative solutions to build on the work performed by local social service providers. He also emphasized that the task force identified housing as a basic human right as recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He briefly noted the local effort to establish a homeless camp based on the Dignity Village model.

Mr. Zelenka expressed support for the task force's recommendations.

Ms. Ortiz asked about the status of the zone change that would allow for additional beds at the Eugene Mission.

Mr. Clark acknowledged he did not support establishment of a permanent homeless camp; he found no dignity in such a concept or in permanent homelessness. While he agreed the streets were a dangerous place, he questioned whether the creation of a homeless encampment created more potential for unsafe behaviors by bringing many people dealing with many different issues together. He asked what the City knew and did not know about such encampments. He wanted to ensure the City was creating safe

conditions for vulnerable people. Mr. Clark endorsed recommendations that provided people with avenues for greater dignity, and cited day centers that provided storage, showers, and laundry facilities as an example.

Mr. Farr was excited about the possibility of establishing a homeless commission. He also advocated for early action on what he considered the recommendations easiest to accomplish, such as the addition of bathroom facilities and rezoning the Eugene Mission. He acknowledged that it would take the council longer to work through some of the other task force recommendations.

Mr. Brown envisioned that Eugene would need multiple homeless encampment sites to serve different homeless populations. He said that Dignity Village was considered transitional housing that fell under State of Oregon building codes governing campgrounds, which provided the camp with legal zoning status.

Ms. Taylor suggested the possibility the City could use empty jail beds for temporary shelter.

Mr. Poling questioned how creating a homeless camp helped address the issue of homelessness. He suggested the City should focus on those who were homeless for reasons beyond their control. He asked staff to quantify the cost of the task force recommendation and wanted to know where the needed funding would come from.

B. WORK SESSION:
Council Committee on Human Service Funding Recommendations

Mr. Pryor led the council through a PowerPoint presentation entitled *Council Subcommittee on Human Services Funding*. The presentation described the differing service levels and range of funding mechanisms discussed by subcommittee members, which included Mr. Pryor, Mr. Brown, Ms. Ortiz, and Mr. Farr, and foreshadowed the potential of a regional approach with regional funding. Mr. Pryor highlighted the subcommittee's recommendations for ongoing human services funding and shared the preliminary revenue estimates from a utility consumption tax and monthly public service fee. He asked the council to discuss whether the City should pursue a new revenue source, and if yes, to consider what needs were funded, funding mechanisms, and the timing and duration of such a tax or fee.

Ms. Ortiz and Mr. Poling encouraged early discussion with the Eugene Water & Electric Board, the agency that might potentially collect a City utility consumption tax.

Mr. Brown called for more information about the financial impact of ending the Riverfront Research District so the City could use the revenues from the district to support human services.
Mr. Poling expressed concern about the increased demand on City resources when other local governments began to reduce their contributions to human services and questioned how the agencies that were provided with additional funding by the City would distinguish between City and non-City residents. He advocated for a public vote on any new taxing source.

Mr. Clark believed human services funding was a countywide issue that required a countywide solution. He questioned asking Eugene residents to support a new tax in the current economic environment. He said increasing the tax base would help support human services, and tied that issue to the decisions the council faced regarding expansion of the urban growth boundary.

Ms. Taylor suggested that an increase in the tax base would result in increased service demand. She also wanted to discuss the dissolution of the Riverfront Research District, although she had other purposes in mind for the revenues. Ms. Taylor supported a public vote on any new taxing proposal. She expressed concern about utility fees as she perceived they could contribute to homelessness.

Mr. Zelenka supported further council discussion of additional funding sources for human services.

Mr. Pryor acknowledged the many tradeoffs that existed and other potential revenue sources, but the subcommittee had wished to communicate that the status quo was not sustainable and gauge whether there was council support for discussion of additional revenues.

Mayor Piercy emphasized the local nature of the homeless problem and the fact that Eugene was the county seat, so people logically came to Eugene for those services. Eugene could not avoid the fact it was the county seat and shared that responsibility with County government.

Mr. Brown pointed out that of all the options presented, dissolution of the Riverfront urban renewal district did not require taxes to be raised.

Mr. Farr agreed with Mr. Clark that the best way to increase revenues was to grow the tax base. He concurred with Mayor Piercy's remarks about Eugene's role, characterizing it as the "belly button" for services.

Mayor Piercy adjourned the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Forrest

Beth Forrest
City Recorder

(Recorded by Kimberly Young)