

MINUTES

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

February 22, 2012
Noon

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

COUNCILORS ABSENT: Andrea Ortiz.

Her Honor Mayor Kitty Piercy called the February 22, 2012, work session of the Eugene City Council to order.

A. WORK SESSION: Envision Eugene

Planning Director Lisa Gardner, Planner Jason Dedrick, and Planner Alissa Hansen joined the council for the item and shared a PowerPoint presentation entitled *Envision Eugene: Project update for City Council Work Session, February 22, 2012*. Mr. Dedrick led the council through the first segment of the presentation, which outlined the staff proposal for flexible implementation of the recommendations coming out of the Envision Eugene process as called for in the Seven Pillars of Envision Eugene. The proposal relied on several strategies: 1) an ongoing monitoring system that might require the development of new systems or tools, 2) ongoing reporting that summarized current and trend data, 3) development of a plan to address emerging needs, 4) periodic evaluations that could lead to adjustments to planning assumptions or regulations, and 5) City collaboration in various regional planning activities. Councilors asked questions clarifying the details of the presentation.

While she acknowledged the proposal called for five-and ten-year evaluations, Mayor Piercy encouraged staff to provide the council with more iterative and frequent updates over the monitoring period. She also recommended that the council review the list of monitored items to confirm they were the right things to monitor. She wanted the City to approach its monitoring from the point of view of what the council wanted to achieve, and advocated for better way of knowing that the City was moving in the direction that the council agreed upon. She wanted the reporting to provide the public with both the underlying data and the conclusions. Mayor Piercy asked that the monitoring address the subject of how Eugene was doing in protecting its neighborhoods and whether its interventions were helping or not helping.

Mr. Clark agreed with Mayor Piercy. He said technology that provided real time analysis was available now and asked why the City was not using such technology. Ms. Gardner said that real-time analysis was the City's goal but the question was what platform to employ. She noted that there was also the issue of cost and compatibility with existing City permit tracking and land use application systems. The City's goal would be to have something that worked on a daily basis and provided long-term tracking as well.

Mr. Clark advocated for a focus on where the council wanted to be rather than where it thought it should be. He preferred to take a more aspirational approach rather than a “safe harbor” approach that merely complied with State law.

Mayor Piercy suggested there was a tension between the short-term goals, the aspirational, and what appeared to be long-term trends. She was unsure how to address that tension.

Mr. Zelenka agreed with the remarks of Mayor Piercy and Mr. Clark. However, he thought the City needed to take a more holistic and long-term approach; it was good to know “where we are on the dial” but he did not want to make abrupt adjustments because growth was not a smooth steady line. He thought the staff proposal made sense.

Mr. Brown supported the staff proposal but observed the trend charts related to population and employment growth shared by staff demonstrated much was out of the City’s control. He supported continued regional planning and noted the many service delivery and planning partnerships that already existed, such as the Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission.

Mr. Farr agreed with Mr. Clark about the need for real time analysis so the land use system was able to respond more quickly. He advocated for having a plan in place to support that response.

Mr. Pryor suggested the City could benchmark on a more frequent basis but he believed the council should be deliberative about the changes it made based on the trends it found. He thought the staff proposal addressed that concern. Mr. Pryor advocated for a focus on the “best reality” possible based on the data the council had about trends.

Mayor Piercy advocated for an innovative rather than reactive approach and suggested monitoring and analysis would help guide the City toward that goal. If the City had better information it could be better prepared to weather downturns and maintain a more level course.

Mr. Poling agreed with Mr. Clark about the importance of real time analysis, which would allow the council to evaluate progress more frequently and make needed adjustments. He wanted to use the analysis so the community could carve out its own destiny rather than let destiny happen to it.

Ms. Taylor suggested residents had different aspirations in regard to the future. She said the council could influence outcomes through regulations and take actions at the appropriate time to make things happen.

Mr. Farr agreed with Ms. Taylor. He wanted to ensure the staff proposal provided a balanced approach that recognized people aspired to different things.

Responding to a question from Mr. Zelenka, City Attorney Emily Jerome conceded that it was not likely that all the planning assumptions being used were correct but staff believed the periodic evaluations that would occur would allow for adjustments and reduce the for land reserves. If evaluation indicated more land was needed, it would be relatively easy to bring it into the UGB because of the work that had already been done by staff.

Ms. Hansen then led the council through the second phase of the presentation, an update on the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) Study Areas that included more detailed information on the first priority lands within the study areas and the urban services currently in place. Councilors asked questions clarifying the details of the presentation.

Mr. Poling advocated for a distinction between “usable” acres and “available” acres to counter legal arguments that the City was bringing in too much acreage.

Mr. Farr found the presentation exciting and noted that the areas identified were adjacent to existing development and constituted some of the nicest areas of the community. However, he was concerned that there had been no discussion about how the City would provide transportation services to those areas. Ms. Gardner anticipated that the council would make policy decisions about the needed infrastructure when it selected the areas for expansion. She did not think that taking land from all the identified areas was the most efficient use of resources.

Mr. Clark agreed with the remarks of Mr. Poling and Mr. Farr. He determined from Ms. Gardner that Planning was working with Public Works to provide the council with the best possible information regarding the infrastructure needed to serve the expansion areas, including long-term financing.

Mr. Zelenka requested a memorandum with a short explanation of why an area was selected and the methodology used by staff to calculate density. He also asked for a high-level explanation of how infrastructure was paid for and what share the City bore when development occurred.

Mayor Piercy adjourned the meeting at 1:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Forrest

Beth Forrest
City Recorder

(Recorded by Kimberly Young)