

MINUTES

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

February 8, 2012
Noon

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

COUNCILORS ABSENT: Mike Clark.

Her Honor Mayor Kitty Piercy called the February 8, 2012, work session of the Eugene City Council to order.

A. WORK SESSION

Resolution 5055 Requesting that the United States Congress Refer to the States an Amendment to the US Constitution Declaring that Corporations Do Not Possess the Constitutional Rights that Natural Persons Possess

Mr. Zelenka presented proposed Resolution 5055, which advocated for a constitutional amendment to overturn the United States Supreme Court decision in *Citizens United versus the Federal Election Commission*. He expressed support for such an amendment as restoring the voice of the people, which was being crowded out by the voices of the very wealthy. Mr. Zelenka asked the council to postpone action on the resolution until February 15, 2012.

Mr. Farr believed the council was elected to make decisions for Eugene and when it diverged from that mission it confused the citizens. He did not support the resolution.

Mr. Brown did not object to the suggested delay. He supported the resolution. Mr. Brown asked why the resolution mentioned unions. He did not believe the magnitude of union campaign contributions was at the same scale as that of corporations.

Speaking to Mr. Brown's concern, Mr. Poling recalled he had e-mailed the council earlier in the week requesting that the resolution be modified by the inclusion of unions and special interests. He said the Supreme Court's decision was specific to those groups and Mr. Poling thought because of that the revision was warranted. He believed money had a negative influence on campaigns at all levels and suggested the council schedule a discussion on local campaign financing.

Speaking to a concern voiced by Mr. Poling about the need for uniform campaign contribution limits for all elections, City Attorney Glenn Klein anticipated that the United States Congress would establish uniform limits for federal elections in all states and states would determine what, if any, limits to adopt for state and local elections.

Mr. Pryor concurred with the revisions suggested by Mr. Poling and supported language that mirrored the Supreme Court's decision to the degree possible. He questioned the inclusion of Section (L), which

spoke to the intent of corporations, and said he did not want to guess at intent. He did not think that (L) represented a solid argument in support of the resolution and was not comfortable with its inclusion.

Ms. Taylor believed that the inclusion of Section (L) argued against any mention of unions in the resolution. City Attorney Klein noted that the decision in question was specific to both unions and corporations. Ms. Taylor did not find unions and corporations to be comparable.

Speaking to Mr. Farr's concern, Ms. Taylor believed the council's consideration of the resolution was appropriate as the actions of the federal government affected the community.

Mayor Piercy suggested that people facing foreclosures in Eugene would agree that the decisions of the federal government affected them.

Ms. Ortiz thought the resolution made sense. She believed that consideration of such resolutions was within the council's purview, recalling the council's consideration of the DREAM Act. She pointed out to Mr. Farr that the council responded to community requests and it was the council's job to do its homework regarding such issues and determine how to frame such resolutions.

Mr. Farr maintained the council was taking time away from work that it was charged to do while a dozen staff people waited in the room for the next item. The council had no jurisdiction over Congress. He believed the resolution was a waste of time and apologized to those who had to wait.

Mr. Brown believed the resolution was important and deserved the same attention as the next agenda item, particularly since many people had spent a lot of time on the issue.

B. WORK SESSION

Envision Eugene: Commercial Employment, Mixed-Use and Multi-Family Housing

The council was joined by Metro Community Planning Manager Carolyn Weiss, Assistant City Manager/Planning and Development Director Sarah Medary, and Senior Planner Robin Hostick. Rick Duncan and Sue Prichard of the Technical Resource Group (TRG) were also present for the item. Mr. Hostick led the council through a PowerPoint presentation updating the council on the progress of Envision Eugene with a focus on multi-family housing, commercial employment, and redevelopment/interventions. Councilors asked questions clarifying the details of the presentation.

Mayor Piercy solicited comment from Ms. Prichard and Mr. Duncan. Ms. Prichard emphasized there was more work to be done regarding the projections, particularly those related to commercial employment. Mr. Duncan concurred.

Mayor Piercy thanked the members of the TRG for their hard work.

Mr. Farr wanted to hear more about how tax exemptions were used across the country because they were one of the few tools available to Eugene. He was encouraged to hear about the availability of land adjacent to Greenhill Road, which could help meet job demand, and asked how that acreage would be accessed. Ms. Weiss agreed that access was challenging but crucial and suggested the timing of the timing of the Envision Eugene process worked well with the timing of the Transportation System Plan update. Mr. Farr said the council needed to ensure that its decisions regarding transportation facility supported more jobs and an improved economy.

Mayor Piercy believed there were many elements to the transportation discussion and suggested the council receive an update about the work the Oregon Department of Transportation was doing in regard to flexible transportation planning.

Ms. Ortiz hoped staff was considering the redevelopment potential at the existing PeaceHealth campus site.

Mr. Brown expressed concern about the level of consistency in the projections. He believed they were inaccurate and largely represented guess work but the council would rely on them to determine how many acres of land were needed to meet the demand for projected employment. He suggested that staff use current employment rates and current job categories to serve as a baseline for the sake of consistency. Assistant City Manager Medary acknowledged Mr. Brown's concerns and the fact that numbers had been drawn from different sources. She said staff would attempt to tie that information together in a way that made sense.

Mr. Farr emphasized the importance of intervention tools to offset the fact that construction was currently not very attractive due to its cost and the relatively small return on investment.

Mayor Piercy suggested the market rather than the City would drive what development occurred in the community. The City could put tools in place to facilitate private investment but ultimately business owners would decide their properties' destiny. She acknowledged that the City's existing unused industrial properties were too small and did not match the needs of companies.

Mayor Piercy reminded the council that much of what staff presented was embedded in the Joint Elected Officials Regional Prosperity Plan, which the City had developed in conjunction with its jurisdictional partners, and the employment information the council received was predicated on the region rather than the metropolitan area.

Mr. Brown requested clarification about the figures being presented to the council.

Mr. Brown suggested that flat rental rates might not be good for developers but they were good for retailers and small businesses as well as their customers.

Responding to a question from Ms. Ortiz about the impact of waiving systems development charges for a business over 70,000 square feet, Assistant City Manager Medary said staff was looking into that and would be prepared to talk about it soon with the council.

Mayor Piercy adjourned the meeting at 1:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Beth Forrest
City Recorder

(Recorded by Kimberly Young)