

MINUTES

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

November 16, 2011
Noon

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

COUNCILORS ABSENT: George Poling.

Her Honor Mayor Kitty Piercy called the November 16, 2011, work session of the Eugene City Council to order.

A. WORK SESSION:
Human Rights Commission FY12/13 Work Plan

The council was joined by Eugene Human Rights Commission (HRC) Chair Toni Gyatso and Vice Chair Ken Neubeck. Central Services Director Kristi Hammitt and Equity and Human Manager Raquel Wells were also present for the item.

Mr. Neubeck and Ms. Gyatso reviewed the goals and objectives in the HRC's work plan. Ms. Gyatso said that the HRC's work plan reflected the community input the commission received as a result of its recent Listening Project.

Ms. Hammitt, the executive liaison to the City's Human Rights and Equity Board, reviewed some action items from the City's Diversity and Equity Plan and noted their relationship to the HRC work plan.

Mayor Piercy thanked the commissioners. She looked forward to International Human Rights Day. She recommended the HRC take advantage of the current community focus on economic inequity to disseminate the commission's message and involve people in the event. She appreciated the work plan's focus on the unhoused and suggested it was timely given the discussions generated by Occupy Eugene, particularly about the need for the homeless to have a safe place to be during the day. She encouraged the HRC to help move that discussion along. She said the plan's emphasis on youth had a connection to homelessness and presented another opportunity for partnering. Mayor Piercy suggested the HRC could also work on bias against the homeless.

Ms. Ortiz determined from Ms. Wells that the Eugene Disability Advisory Committee would be a department advisory committee that advised Central Services. Ms. Ortiz looked forward to the upcoming Hate Crimes Conference and suggested that the HRC invite Morris Dees to speak. She was happy to hear about the proposed Youth Committee and hoped the commission sought out people who had not been involved before as members.

Ms. Ortiz suggested the council spend some time at its retreat discussing where it envisioned the City was going in terms of human rights and human services.

Mr. Pryor commended the work plan. He was pleased that the HRC was able to see the connections between the work it did and the work of other groups and organizations. That approach created a much stronger network and helped the City make progress toward its goals. He looked forward to seeing how the HRC could make that network and its collaborations even more effective.

Mr. Farr believed the HRC could accomplish what Mr. Pryor desired through its coordination with other entities and its focus on the third leg of the Triple Bottom Line, social equity. He suggested that other commissions consider scheduling a regular agenda item regarding social equity.

Mr. Zelenka commended the work plan as exactly what he wanted to see and recognized that it reflected the council's listening session with the HRC. He asked how other listening sessions had affected the work plan. Ms. Gyatso said the work plan reflected many of the major themes the HRC had been able to identify as a result of the listening sessions. Mr. Neubeck agreed. He described the scope of the HRC's outreach, which involved more than 600 people. He said as a result of the project the HRC's work program was more flexible and responsive to the community and the concerns expressed by the council. He said the HRC's main challenge had been organizational, and commissioners had agreed to restructure the meeting format so more time was spent on the individual work groups.

Ms. Wells added that staff had interviewed present and past commissioners and heard about the issues they had struggled with. The HRC also heard heart-breaking stories from the community about people's lives. Those stories gave the commission and staff a sense of the scope and interconnectedness of the problems people were facing. That required the commission to consider its allies and how to be more intentional with its resources and time. The HRC had solicited solutions from the community as well as issues, and approached the work plan by thinking about it could be achieved and how the commission could be accountable to the work plan.

Mr. Zelenka endorsed the proposed meeting structure, the work plan's focus on homelessness, and the commission's liaison system. He determined from Ms. Wells that the former members of the Accessibility Committee would serve on the new Eugene Disability Advisory Committee to assist with the transition.

Ms. Taylor asked if the commission was doing anything to prevent homelessness for those who became homeless because they could not pay large utility bills. Ms. Gyatso said that utility bills resulting in homelessness had not been raised as a topic but it was something that the HRC could consider.

Ms. Taylor recalled that a former commissioner suggested to her the HRC did not care about human rights for those who were not part of a protected class. Ms. Wells said the HRC listened to everyone, including people who did not support the HRC's existence. Human Rights staff attempted to assist all those who came to the City with concerns, not just those in protected classes. Ms. Taylor was happy to hear that.

Mr. Clark commended the commission's work plan. Referring to Objective 3.3, *Respond to and advocate for the removal of impediments to immigrant integration within the Eugene community*, Mr. Clark asked what was envisioned in that regard. Mr. Neubeck anticipated the HRC would work with community groups who worked with immigrants, such as Centro Latino Americano. The focus of the effort would be on how to make immigrants feel welcome, safe, secure, and included in the community. He said the HRC would make connections with those groups and lend a hand to work already in progress.

Mr. Brown also commended the work plan and its emphasis on homelessness. He was happy to have more people working on the problem. He commended the HRC's intention to reach out to the schools

because that was where negative attitudes were often established. Mr. Neubeck reported that Ajamu Baraka, the key note speaker for International Human Rights Day, would visit area schools during his visit and network with local youth.

Ms. Taylor, seconded by Mr. Brown, moved to approve the Human Rights Commission's fiscal year 2012-13 Work Plan. The motion passed unanimously, 7:0.

B. WORK SESSION:
Bascom Village

The council was joined by Grants Manager Stephanie Jennings and Housing Financial Analyst Becky Wheeler. Ms. Jennings and Ms. Wheeler provided a PowerPoint presentation on the results of the 2011 Affordable Housing Request for Proposals (RFP) as well as related affordable housing funding policies and processes. Ms. Jennings summarized the City's guiding plans for affordable housing, the annual Housing RFP process, and the Eugene Landbanking Program for Affordable Housing and Housing Dispersal Policy. Ms. Wheeler then provided an overview of the County Farm landbank site. She noted the zone change process that preceded the RFP process, the release of the RFP, and the subsequent evaluation and public input processes.

Ms. Wheeler reported that the Housing Poling Board (HPB) recommended that the City Council approve funding for the development of Bascom Village, a 101-unit development affordable to those at or below 50 percent Area Median Income. She described the proposed development and noted that St. Vincent de Paul proposed to construct 53 units in Phase 1 and the Housing and Community Services Agency of Lane County proposed to construct 48 units in Phase 2.

Ms. Wheeler acknowledged the concerns expressed by neighbors regarding the proposal and directed the council to Attachment E of the Agenda Item Summary (AIS), which included responses to those concerns. Those concerns included traffic, the City's Housing Dispersal Policy, and schools. She noted the letter attached to the AIS from Barb Bellamy of Eugene School District 4J in response to concerns about schools. The letter supported Bascom Village.

Ms. Wheeler noted the options before the council, which included approval of Bascom Village, issuance of a modified RFP, or exploration of another site. The council was scheduled to take action on November 28.

Mr. Pryor, a City's representative to the HPB, said the HPB acknowledged the community's concerns and slowed the process by building in additional steps to ensure those concerns were heard and accommodated to the degree possible. He had reminded the HPB of the need to consider the proposal in the context of the City's work on Envision Eugene. The HPB's recommendation for approval came after consideration of all testimony and its own review of the conditions and criteria and the board recognized the council might need to consider policy issues that went beyond its mandate. He thanked the members of the HPB for their work.

Mayor Piercy also thanked the HPB. She said affordable housing was a long-standing priority in Eugene and was even more so today.

Mr. Clark said he would like to see Envision Eugene do a more effective job in addressing the market for affordable land that resulted in affordable housing for all rather than subsidized housing for a few. He thought affordable housing was directly related to the availability of land.

Mr. Clark referred to Policy 2 of the Housing Dispersal Policy, which discouraged the creation of large areas characterized by low-income families, and pointed out there was already low-income housing in the area in question. In addition, the City had a guideline that no development should be larger than 60 units. Bascom Village would be constructed right next to an existing multi-family housing development that was also densely built and had a shallow setback. That development also took access onto County Farm Road, and he was concerned about the impact of adding more traffic to the street.

Mr. Farr advocated for a deliberative approach that took into account the legitimate concerns of nearby residents. His overarching concern was the community's lack of affordable housing, both subsidized and unsubsidized. He agreed the decision needed to be kept in context of the Envision Eugene process. He hoped to see more low-income housing in south Eugene.

Mr. Zelenka agreed about the need for more affordable housing. He believed the Housing Dispersal Policy had worked well. He pointed out Policy 2 was aspirational rather than binding. He determined from Ms. Jennings that a previous council had changed the policy to be aspirational to reserve for itself the flexibility to balance Policy 2 against other City goals. Ms. Jennings pointed out the density being proposed at the site was less than other sites because of its size.

Mr. Zelenka asked questions clarifying the site's designation and zoning, the school district's response to inquiries about the impact of the development of district schools, and the proposed development's access.

Mayor Piercy pointed out to Mr. Farr that there was a considerable amount of low-income development south of the Willamette River.

Mr. Pryor acknowledged that the proposal raised a collision of values and interests, specifically a collision between neighborhood character and livability and the need for affordable housing. There was far more need for housing than available housing and the City would make no progress if it was able to subsidize only 100 units per year. Other approaches were needed. He said that the conversation about neighborhood livability was a big one and it was happening throughout the community. He thought it important to place it in the context of other goals.

Mr. Pryor pointed out to Mr. Clark that the existing unattractive housing Mr. Clark had mentioned was privately built and the City would have the ability to influence the appearance of Bascom Village because of the size of the site and the fact the proposed densities were lower than allowed. He said a private developer could develop the site much more densely. Mr. Pryor reiterated that the decision was representative of the collision between neighborhood livability and character and the council's larger conversation about how to provide housing and the housing mix ratio. He hoped future higher density developments more closely resembled the proposed Bascom Village development than the existing development along County Farm Road.

Ms. Ortiz cautioned the council that neighborhood character and livability meant different things to different people. She said that livability meant security in the Trainsong neighborhood. She believed that neighborhood would welcome such a project as the ones she had toured were all attractive and well-managed. She looked forward to more discussion as the council continued its work on Envision Eugene.

Mr. Brown also believed the Housing Dispersal Policy was working and pointed out to Mr. Farr that south Eugene had 15 affordable housing developments south of Willamette Street. There were 17 such developments in Ward 1 and 7 in the Bethel neighborhood. He said he would like to see social services more widely dispersed. He believed the area in question was right for such a development. Mr. Brown

said that St. Vincent de Paul's projects were well-constructed, attractive, and occupied by residents who were employed but rent-burdened. He was sympathetic to the neighbors' concerns but believed they had been addressed. Mr. Brown was enthusiastic about and supportive of the project.

Mr. Clark agreed with Mr. Pryor that the issue concerned a clash of values. He supported the Housing Dispersal Policy but did not think the City was following it. He suggested Policy 2 was contrary to the goals of Envision Eugene in that it created higher densities at the periphery. He continued to be concerned about the development's impact on area schools and questioned the numbers provided by the school district. He called for additional public input before the council made a decision.

Mr. Clark, seconded by Mr. Farr, moved to postpone the decision scheduled for November 28 until the council has a public hearing in order to accommodate people being heard on the matter at the council level, where the decision is to be made, and for the council to have a good informed decision.

Mr. Pryor, seconded by Mr. Zelenka, moved to extend the meeting for ten minutes. The motion passed, 6:1; Ms. Taylor voting no.

Ms. Ortiz regretted that the City lacked a map similar to the map showing the dispersal of low-income housing that could illustrate the relative concentration of social service providers along Highway 99, which created a challenge for the neighborhood.

Councilors briefly discussed the timing of a public hearing in relationship to the scheduled decision date and the State of Oregon's funding cycle for such projects. City Manager Jon Ruiz indicated a public hearing on the Bascom Village proposal could be scheduled for November 21.

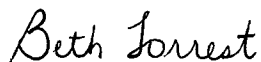
Mayor Piercy determined from City Attorney Glenn Klein that the proposed public hearing would not be considered a land use hearing.

Councilors were generally supportive of holding a public hearing.

The motion passed unanimously, 7:0.

Mayor Piercy adjourned the work session at 1:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Beth Forrest
City Recorder

(Recorded by Kimberly Young)