M I N U T E S

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

May 18, 2011
Noon

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

Her Honor Mayor Kitty Piercy called the May 18, 2011, work session of the Eugene City Council to order. The council was joined by Human Rights Commissioners Elizabeth Andrade, Iva Boslough, Raydeen Cuffe, Toni Gyatso, and Martha Fish. Councilor Pat Farr represented the council on the commission. Assistant City Manager Sarah Medary, Keli Osborn, Francisca Johnson, Raquel Wells, Holly LeMasurier, and Michelle Mortensen of the City Manager's Office were also present. Public Works Director Kurt Corey and Central Services Director Kristi Hammitt, executive liaisons to the City's Human Rights Board, also participated.

A. WORK SESSION: Human Rights Project Listening Session

Mayor Piercy recognized that much of the work done in the past by the Human Rights Commission (HRC) had been institutionalized and carried forward by other entities. The commission was evolving toward a new role. She suggested the purpose of the meeting was to keep the HRC moving forward in a meaningful way taking advantage of the contributions those present could offer. She expressed appreciation to the HRC for its work and commended its strong and admirable history.

City Manager Jon Ruiz facilitated the meeting. He recognized the pending departure of Human Rights Analyst Holly LeMasurier and thanked her for her work on behalf of the City of Eugene. Those presented recognized Ms. LeMasurier's contributions with a round of applause.

City Manager Ruiz recalled that during the council's meeting with the HRC in March the council expressed interest in having a broader conversation with the community about the HRC and human rights. He anticipated the outcome of that conversation would be council policy direction about the future focus of the HRC and further definition of how the Human Rights City framework applied to Eugene and the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders in the framework. The meeting was a listening session with the stakeholders represented by the HRC; its input would be added to the other input collected for presentation to the council when staff sought more specific policy direction about the framework.

At the request of City Manager Ruiz, those present introduced themselves, described how they were connected to human rights work in general, and why it was important the City was connected to human rights and equity work. The following reasons were mentioned in response to the question of why it was important the City was connected to human rights and equity work:

- The City can model human rights and be a community leader for human rights. The City has legal obligations to protect human rights. Its service delivery and budget priorities reflect the City's human rights priorities. (Osborn)
- It is important to keep up with emerging issues affecting the diverse groups that live in Eugene so the City organization can make necessary adjustments and changes. The City must provide equal protection and accessible services to all citizens. The HRC serves as a sounding board for residents to share their human rights concerns. (Poling)
- The commission could help the City track the social equity element of the Triple Bottom Line (TBL). The HRC could help the council define social equity, help ensure that social equity occurs, and monitor the City's progress in achieving it. (Farr)
- The HRC has a legacy of leadership. Other communities look to Eugene for its expertise in piloting new programs, its support for diverse voices, and its leadership in community education. The City's work on the Human Rights Framework would put it on the cutting edge and give it an opportunity to demonstrate continued leadership. The Human Rights Center and HRC play a role in the work of the Police Auditor and Sustainability Commission. The HRC helps to lift community voices that are otherwise unheard. (LeMasurier)
- It is important that the City support the work of the HRC to maintain social justice for all citizens. (Andrade)
- It is important that the City protect the political, social, and economic rights of citizens. The City needs to evolve as the culture evolves. (Gyatso)
- The City's visions and values are in part based on the pillar of human rights because of its fundamental importance to the community. The HRC embodies the importance of that value. (Pryor)
- It is important that elected officials and City employees, as representative of the entire community, demonstrate value for human rights or they cannot expect other community members to. The City should use its powers and tax dollars wisely to ensure they reflect the value of equity in all its applications—social, economic, and environmental. (Ortiz)
- Eugene should be involved in human rights because people of color encounter overt racism in the community all the time. Eugene needs more community education about human rights so that when people witness acts of racism they know how to react. (Boslough)
- While the community has made progress, it is clear there is more work to be done as evidenced by signs of hate around us. It is important to continue the work. The TBL is a real effort to create equitability in every decision the City makes. The City also has an important role to play in community education and in teaching people to stand up and speak out against injustice so that all feel welcome in Eugene. The City's budget is also related to human rights because of the services that give people the means to live and work safely. (Piercy)
- It is important to integrate human rights into everything we do. The City must set the example. One of the City's visions is to value all people, and it is important that all voices be heard. The HRC is a forum for those voices. The HRC also serves to help protect human rights and expand them where appropriate. The HRC could help the City to make progress on the social equity element of the TBL. (Zelenka)
- The City has a role in human rights as well as a calling and duty to protect the weak and disadvantaged. Eugene has a long way to go and there is much work to be done. (Brown)
- The City has the duty to embrace all the different voices in the community and determine how the community could benefit from all their different contributions. The Human Rights Center is a welcoming place for those quiet voices that often do not feel safe coming forward, but who could express their concerns to the HRC with confidence they would be heard and they would receive a response. (Mortensen)

- It is important to recognize the gap in understanding that exists among people and broaden the community's knowledge of human rights. Human rights should be both an umbrella philosophy and a lens through which all City decision-making occurs. (Hammitt)
- Consider the City's role in terms of the white privilege model; the City is a major landowner with the right to make and enforce laws and determine what services to provide, and it is important that decisions related to those areas are made through a human right lens to ensure they are the right decisions. (Medary)
- The City has a responsibility to create bridges and opportunities for those who cannot look out for themselves or share their perspectives. The HRC raises awareness of those voices and the poor conditions that people sometimes live in. (Wells)
- The principles of diversity, equity, and human rights form the underpinnings for a respectful work place. A respectful work place is necessary to allow those who provided services to the community to work at their highest level, which is what the community expects and needs. That strengthens the organization, which helps reinforce a similar culture in the community. (Corey)
- It is important to protect human rights because people are sometimes treated differently because of how they look. Anti-immigrant sentiment adds to that, and sometimes the community is not safe. Eugene has a municipal model that works but it needs to be revised in response to changes in the community so Eugene is open and safe for everyone. (Johnson)
- The purpose of government is to protect people's rights and establish justice. The best work of the HRC helps the council to achieve those goals. (Clark)
- The HRC helps to keep commissioners connected to accessibility and homeless issues. (Fish)

Those present briefly discussed the symbolic nature of local resolutions directed at actions taken by governments in other states, such as a resolution directed against the laws passed in Arizona related to illegal immigration, as opposed to potentially more effective resolutions aimed at actions taken by units of governments more directly related to the City of Eugene.

City Manager Ruiz asked those present to consider what issues addressed by the council would benefit from a human rights perspective.

Mayor Piercy could think of few topics the council discussed that lacked a human rights component and suggested the question was better cast as what was the appropriate role of the HRC. She suggested that the HRC could bring items to the council that it believed required more attention.

Ms. Taylor suggested the commission could offer input on the Downtown Public Safety Zone.

Ms. Andrade believed that more community education about human rights in general was needed.

Mr. Poling suggested the HRC could help the City transition its current focus on fostering affordable housing and employment in downtown to accomplishing those same goals in other areas of the community.

Ms. Mortensen emphasized the HRC's interest in homelessness and its desire to place more energy on the topic. She advocated for the creation of a more fluid communication system between the HRC and the council. She questioned whether the council-commission "buddy" system worked as effectively as possible and called for more discussion of that. She thought such communication was vital.

Mr. Pryor asked the HRC for its perspective on whether human behaviors as opposed to human conditions justified something like the Downtown Public Safety Zone. He also asked for HRC discussion

on what constituted a behavior as opposed to what constituted a condition and what the City could do to address both.

Mr. Zelenka indicated that it was his expectation that the HRC would raise emerging issues with the council. He also anticipated the council would hold shorter and more frequent meetings with its advisory bodies to increase communication levels. He asked the HRC to assess the strategies and tactics coming out of the Envision Eugene process.

Speaking to the subject of council committee assignments, Ms. Ortiz suggested the council discuss what she termed the "imaginary line" that kept one councilor from becoming involved in another councilor's assignment. She considered that a barrier.

Ms. Ortiz hoped the City's boards and commissions training included education on the City's Human Rights Program.

Mayor Piercy said the council shared the commission's concerns regarding homelessness because of its implications in so many areas, such as public safety and livability. She acknowledged the scope of the problem and the many service areas it touched upon and advocated for development of a work plan focused on homelessness.

Ms. Osborn recommended that the council provide specific direction to the HRC on such issues as homelessness when it seemed appropriate. Ms. Wells concurred. She said clear direction and focus helped the commission achieve tangible wins. She asked if the council had any questions it wished the HRC to ask the community during the course of the Listening Project and to share those with her via e-mail. She also envisioned that the council's requests for assistance defining the social equity element of the TBL could be a separate commission work plan item.

Ms. Gyatso agreed with Ms. Mortensen that the communication between the HRC and council needed to be improved. Ms. LeMasurier suggested that the council could employ its liaison to the HRC, Mr. Farr, to provide direction to the HRC.

Ms. LeMasurier shared comments made by commissioners unable to attend the meeting, who wished her to mention the re-establishment of the Human Rights Support System (HRSS) and the need for staff support of that function. She said many commissioners and community members were interested in the HRSS and wanted the City to be able to do more local enforcement of human and civil rights in areas such as housing and discrimination in public places.

City Manager Ruiz posed the following question:

> *What advice do council members and the mayor have for HRC members for enhancing commission effectiveness and the relationship between the council and commission?*

- Utilize this commission more in making decisions (include Human Rights lens).
- Make sure Councilor Farr knows what you'd like council to know or respond to. He can and wants to help.
- Use memos to inform us.
- If there is a problem communicating or otherwise, let us know. We want to help.
- We all read the e-mail.
- Help to revise the old ordinance because the structure of the current commission no longer works for the work needed.
- Help move forward with less bureaucracy.

- Open communication.
- Match who you place on the HRC with what actually work you would like to see done. Make sure skills are what you are looking for.
- Provide HRC with specific topics to focus on.
- Let us know what you want from us.
- More robust discussion of annual HRC work plan to be sure it is focused and in alignment with council.
- Regular check-ins on progress and emerging issues.
- Facilitate more fluid conversations with commissioners.
- E-mail us at mayorandcc@ci.eugene.or.us . If there is anything at all that you feel is important and not getting any traction. That really does get my attention.
- Ability to access members/council.
- Report back to both commission/council.
- Provide opportunities for direct communication—either at meetings or one-on-one.
- Once a month each commission rotates on council chamber to meet and talk about issues.
- Establish comfortable communication options—identify roles, how things work, what's okay, what works, what are barriers.
- Give us direction about issues to focus on. There are so many emerging issues that we sometimes get sidetracked.
- Verbally, whenever possible, state your support of human rights.
- Listen to us more carefully, in our needs to help the community.

What is your advice to HRC to strengthen relationship with City Council?

- Continue to bring forward concerns and issues to council attention.
- Create a HRC report quarterly or more often to let us know what you're hearing.
- Be clear if you speak for yourself or HRC.
- Give us perspectives that we might not normally consider or think of.
- Be a conduit for issues within HRC communities.
- Advise the council of the human rights implications related to decisions we are making.
- Meet with us to answer questions.
- Re-start advocacy program with adequate resources to work on case-load.
- Provide quarterly reports to help individual council people.
- Don't let any single issue consume you and get bogged down, losing sight of other issues.
- Continue "HRC Buddy" communications and monthly/weekly updates of activities/issues.
- Bring emerging issues to councils' attention as soon as possible even if there is no plan of action in place.
- More robust discussion of annual HRC work plan to be sure it is focused and in alignment with council.
- Regular check-ins on progress and emerging issues.
- Bring emerging issue and critical issues to the council's attention and if possible ask for council action.
- Use multiple communication venues: one-on-ones, memos to council, liaisons, meetings with council, in work sessions.
- Ability to access members/council.
- Personal invitations to outreach efforts—specific to wards.
- Report back to council success/failure.
- Report back to both commission/council.
- Stay tuned to council tentative agenda. There are issues you may want to ask questions about, weigh in on, etc.

- Liked what Chris said would love to read result of that conversation (referencing the behavior versus condition conversation).
- Help council see all the flavors and sides and colors of what a just city would look like to you.
- Communicate how we get there.
- Focus your efforts, don't spread yourself too thin, be reasonable about what is possible.
- Remember you are part of the "City structure" and advisory to council should be a main focus.
- Be proactive not reactive. Focus on small wins and successes.

Mayor Piercy adjourned the work session at 1:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Forrest
City Recorder

(Recorded by Kimberly Young)