

MINUTES

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

May 11, 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 11, 2011, work session of the Eugene City Council to order.

A. WORK SESSION:

Authorize Additional Street Preservation Projects to Use Anticipated Bond Proceeds Remaining Upon Completion of 32 Streets Identified in Bond Measure

City Engineer Mark Schoening joined the council for the item. He introduced members of the Street Repair Review Panel present, who included Howard Bonnett, John Barofsky, and Janet Calvert. Other members of the panel included Jim Wilcox, Steve Lee, Gary Wildish, Paul Holbo, Dan Brown, Paul Adkins, Bob Kline, Clayton Walker, and Bruce Mulligan.

Mr. Schoening presented the panel's recommendations for street projects to be funded using the remaining moneys from the Bond Measure to Fix Streets. He anticipated \$10 million would remain after the 32 projects listed in the measure were completed. He sought council approval to fund additional projects. Mr. Schoening anticipated that if the council approved the project list, the City would begin to work immediately with the goal of commencing construction in 2013.

Mr. Schoening briefly described the process used by staff to identify the initial project list. The panel reviewed the initial list and narrowed it to a list of geographically distributed projects that cost about \$6.5 million. He reported that the panel was in the process of considering additional projects.

Mr. Schoening called attention to the project list, reflected in Attachment A of the Agenda Item Summary (AIS), entitled *Additional Streets to be Repaired with Proceeds from the Street Bond Measure*. He invited questions.

Mayor Piercy expressed appreciation for the projects on the list, noting many of the streets had been discussed as needing repairs for a long time. She solicited questions and comments from the council.

Mr. Zelenka determined from Mr. Schoening that the surplus funding was a result of the recession and the bidding climate, the cost of interest, and the paving technique used, which allowed contractors to recycle the roadway materials in place and reduced the number of trucks needed. In addition, some of the streets identified in the measure were in better condition than anticipated because of good design and the failure did not extend to the street base, which lowered the project costs.

Mr. Zelenka commended the list. He asked about the status of the projects reflected in Attachment B, *Additional Streets Not Endorsed by the Street Repair Review Panel*. Mr. Schoening anticipated that those projects would be part of a larger pool of future projects.

Mr. Zelenka determined from Mr. Schoening that the projects were done by private contractors using specialized equipment. Mr. Zelenka asked when the council could expect to see the next project list. Mr. Schoening anticipated the council would review the list after the panel completed its review. Mr. Zelenka noted his past advocacy for a project list that included geographically distributed projects, which helped with the passage of the bond measure. He believed that it was important future project lists continued that distribution.

Responding to a question from Mr. Poling about the final year of the current bond, Mr. Schoening said the final year of construction was 2013. Staff hoped to get the initial list completed this year and the added projects in 2013. Mr. Poling asked about the timing of the next bond. City Manager Ruiz suggested that was part of a larger financial discussion.

Mr. Poling determined from Mr. Schoening that as a result of the added projects, the entire length of Coburg Road would be rehabilitated in the next two years.

Mr. Poling advised Mr. Schoening that the east end of Willakenzie was in poor shape and the pavement was beginning to alligator.

Mr. Clark was pleased about the approach the council took in the last bond. He thought staff had done a fantastic job of implementing the bond and commended the City's management of the bond funds, which allowed it to make more progress on the maintenance backlog.

Mayor Piercy praised Mr. Schoening for the innovations, good management of the bond proceeds, and the use of best practices that reduced projects' impact on the environment and reduced carbon emissions.

Ms. Taylor, seconded by Mr. Brown, moved to authorize the additional streets shown on Attachment A to the list of streets to be repaired with bond measure proceeds. The motion passed unanimously, 8:0.

B. WORK SESSION:
Update on Ridgeline Park Acquisitions

The council was joined for the item by Natural Resources Manager Eric Wold and Parks and Open Space Division Manager Johnny Medlin. Mr. Wold provided an update on the Ridgeline Park acquisitions with a focus on the acquisitions made possible by the passage of the parks bond measures passed in 1998 and 2006. He shared maps to provide context for the location of the ridgeline, summarized the vision and policy documents that pertained to the ridgeline, highlighted a recent acquisition and its funding sources, discussed capital improvements made in the park, and highlighted the funding gap for operations and maintenance and capital funding backlog. Councilors asked questions clarifying the details of Mr. Wold's presentation.

Mayor Piercy expressed appreciation for the work done by staff and to the public for its support. She also recognized the volunteers and donors who made the park possible. She suggested there must be good economic benefit to the community from the city's parks and open spaces. They attracted people to visit and live in Eugene. She believed the parks system was another element of the City's economic story.

Ms. Taylor commended the presentation. She said that the City was building on what people living in earlier times had started, which she thought was great. She asked if there were still gaps in the Ridgeline Trail to be filled. Mr. Wold said yes. He identified two areas on a map where those gaps existed. He said in addition, the City had acquired some land in other areas for the trail but had not been able to financially afford to construct the trail.

Ms. Taylor asked if there was a plan for bicycle parking at the west end of the trail at 52nd Avenue and Willamette Street. She suggested that if such parking existed, people could ride their bicycles to the trail and leave them to access the trail. Mr. Wold did not believe there was bicycle parking at any trailhead in the system and said he would give the matter some thought.

Responding to a question from Ms. Taylor, Mr. Wold confirmed that there were rattlesnakes living on Spencer Butte. He further confirmed that the signage on the Spencer Butte trail had been improved, and many of the planned capital improvements were intended to address conditions on that trail, including muddy conditions. Ms. Taylor asked how the City addressed vandalism at the trailheads. Mr. Wold acknowledged that such vandalism was a challenge for many of the City's remote sites. He reported that the main parking lot at Spencer Butte was equipped with digital motion-sensitive cameras to capture images and staff continued to work to improve that system and the images that it produced. He hoped it served as some deterrent.

Responding to a question from Mr. Poling about who made the determination that an area had high habitat value, Mr. Wold said those areas were identified in a series of public meetings and with the assistance of staff from various public agencies. He clarified that the intent was not to acquire all the private lands that contained high-quality habitat, but rather that the habitat values might be preserved through the efforts of willing private owners. Mr. Poling asked how much bond money was left for ridgeline acquisitions. Mr. Wold said once the pending acquisition was completed, the money for ridgeline expenditures would be exhausted.

Responding to a question from Mr. Poling about funding sources for operations and maintenance, Mr. Wold believed there was the potential to secure some grant funding for capital restoration and trail work. He said more routine operations and maintenance activities were generally not grant-eligible. Staff attempted to be as efficient in its operations and maintenance practices as possible.

Mr. Poling asked if the operations and maintenance backlog would grow as quickly as the transportation system backlog. City Manager Ruiz said yes. He said all infrastructures had a similar aging curve and at some point deterioration occurred at an increased pace.

Mayor Piercy suggested that the council and staff consider the example of Awbrey Park, where volunteers had assumed some maintenance responsibilities. She asked how the City could continue to build such public investment in the parks system with understanding of the limits of that resource.

Mr. Farr noted the extensive volunteer contributions made to other parks such as Golden Gardens and Irwin parks. Speaking to the mayor's remarks about the economic impact of the City's park system, Mr. Farr said he recently discussed why people live in Eugene with a developer, who believed it was because of the beautiful surrounding environment that existed in the community.

Speaking to Ms. Taylor's question about vandalism, Mr. Farr suggested the City take advantage of the presence of local firms who might be able to help with technology solutions.

Mr. Clark commended the presentation. He confirmed with Mr. Wold that after three years the City would have no funding for operations and maintenance for its most recent acquisition and expressed concern about that. He was happy the City was able to leverage the purchase to such a degree, but was concerned that the addition of the asset would be used as justification for a new revenue stream. He preferred to make what he characterized as “hard decisions” instead.

Mr. Clark recalled that \$10.5 million was identified in the parks bond both for a community park in Santa Clara and for several neighborhood parks. He determined from Mr. Wold that those funds were still set aside. Mr. Medlin reported that one of the thirteen neighborhood parks identified in the bond measure had been completed. The acquisition of Suzanne Arlie Park reduced the amount of funding available. He said it was difficult to find flat in the areas identified for new parks. The City was considering the acquisition of developed properties with the intent of holding them to redevelop as parks.

Mr. Clark asked if the City’s parks systems development charge was based on those planned neighborhood park acquisitions. Mr. Medlin said yes.

Mr. Clark suggested that as the vision in Envision Eugene was implemented and the community grew denser, the need for neighborhood parks would be more pronounced and their acquisition would be harder and more expensive. He suggested the City consider how it might incentivize the acquisition process. He hoped the acquisition of neighborhood parks was the division’s next area of focus. Mr. Medlin said it was the division’s priority but the City’s requirement that the property sellers be willing made the task more challenging. He said the division continued to look at opportunities for grants to leverage other dollars.

Mr. Zelenka asked when residents would be able to walk on the Ridgeline Trail from Lane Community College to Fern Ridge Reservoir. Mr. Wold said it was hard to predict given existing economic conditions but he believed the City had a framework in place to realize that vision.

At the request of Mr. Zelenka, Mr. Medlin provided an update on the City’s attempt to acquire the Beverly property, reporting the acquisition was on hold because the City could not reach an agreement on price with the property owner. Because of other acquisitions and projects, the City lacked the money to buy the site and would have to develop a funding package to move forward. Mr. Zelenka suggested a funding approach similar to that used for the City’s newest acquisition in the system.

Mr. Zelenka believed the council needed to act on the shortfall in funding for operations and maintenance before it became a crisis as well as capital for park development. He suggested the potential of a bond or a levy to address those issues.

Mr. Pryor expressed appreciation for the mayor’s mention of the economic aspect of parks because he believed quality of life and quality of livelihood were connected concepts and mutually supportive. He agreed it was necessary to consider the operations and maintenance needs of City assets and acknowledged that the City felt less pressure to maintain its open spaces than it felt pressure for road maintenance. He did not want to turn away a potential asset because the City could not take care of it right now, but felt the City needed to be cognizant of those obligations, particularly for neighborhood parks. Such facilities required more maintenance than some other types of parks. He believed the City was trying to strike the right balance, but that was not easy.

Mayor Piercy observed that every additional City asset also had a public safety cost related to it.

Responding to a question from Ms. Taylor about the funding that remained to purchase natural areas, Mr. Wold said the City held \$2 million that was designated for the acquisition of Willamette River frontage.

Responding to a question from Ms. Taylor, Mr. Wold indicated staff was not working actively on the Beverly property acquisition. Ms. Taylor felt it was important to keep the property from being developed.

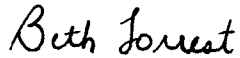
Ms. Taylor suggested that composting toilets be located along the trail.

Speaking to Mr. Clark's remarks, Ms. Taylor said the City needed new revenue streams for the things it needed. She said government existed because people could not do things on their own. If there was not enough money to do the things that needed to be done, the council needed to look for new revenue streams.

Mayor Piercy believed one of the nicest things about the park was that Eugene could share it with the broader community.

Mayor Piercy adjourned the work session at 1:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Beth Forrest".

Beth Forrest
City Recorder

(Recorded by Kimberly Young)