

MINUTES

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

January 26, 2011
Noon

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

Her Honor Mayor Kitty Piercy called the January 26, 2011, work session of the Eugene City Council to order.

A. WORK SESSION: Envision Eugene Update – Environmental Stewardship

City Manager Jon Ruiz introduced Rusty Rexius, Larry Banks, and Kate Perle of the Community Resource Group (CRG), who were attending the presentation to offer the council their perspective on the topic. Planning Director Lisa Gardner, Metro Community Manager Carolyn Weiss, Associate Planner Heather O'Donnell, Senior Planner Rob Hostick, and Climate and Energy Analyst Matt McRae were also present for the item.

City Manager Ruiz led the council through the first part of a PowerPoint presentation on the Environmental Stewardship element of the Envision Eugene process, and Mr. Hostick and Mr. McRae continued the presentation by framing the environmental stewardship concept in more detail. Councilors asked questions to clarify the specifics of the information presented.

Mayor Piercy solicited comments from the CRG members present.

Mr. Banks said that architects such as he had “drank the Koolaid.” They believed in the information that had been outlined in the presentation and were striving to convince people it made sense to address the issues involved. He said it was important to watch the community’s investments in its transportation system, and to use the system to facilitate greater density within the current urban growth boundary and close to the core. He anticipated that transit corridors would create synergy for the investments made. Mr. Banks suggested that fixed-route transit was an incentive for private development. He acknowledged there were questions about some of the data supporting the process and that the process might not be perfect, but he believed that overall the process had been very good.

Ms. Perle said the Envision Eugene process had been an educational opportunity as well as an exercise in coalition building. She then went on to speak of her interest in preserving agricultural land for local food production and suggested that the community needed to go beyond the State requirements for 20-year land supplies to ensure a livable, thriving community in the future and make the best use of the land inside the UGB. She believed that would result in more gain for the community and create a synergy that led to a viable, livable, workable, compact community.

Ms. Perle acknowledged she had been skeptical at the outset of the process but over time had been convinced of its utility and believed it could lead to a workable future.

Mr. Rexius spoke to the differing points of view the process had brought together. He said if the recommendations the CRG forwarded to the council were considered viable by the council, a community fight would be avoided. He hoped to avoid a community conflict over the process recommendations.

Mr. Rexius suggested that the challenge to densification was that the goal was at odds with the City's current transportation planning approach. If the City were to place more people in a small area, it would have more people to move around. He emphasized the importance of addressing that need, and hoped the council was considering that issue.

Mr. Rexius discussed his concerns about the industrial land supply, emphasizing that they were more focused on quality than on quantity. He said the CRG had discussed the potential of land assembly to create bigger parcels in the core, but that could bring industrial traffic downtown where it was not wanted. He said the community needed to locate its industrial land in a place where its traffic impacts could be minimized.

Mayor Piercy said she had been impressed with the contributions of all the CRG members, who clearly loved and valued their community and wanted to ensure that it had a good future. She also commended the City staff who worked on the process.

Mayor Piercy solicited council comments and questions.

Mr. Clark expressed concern about the potential liability that Eugene might face because of its assumption of responsibility for unimproved County roads in the urbanizing area. It would cost a great deal to bring those roads to City standards, and they represented a large liability for which there was no funding. He also expressed concern about the dry wells in the Santa Clara area because they did not meet new guidelines for stormwater runoff. He asked if the City had a plan to address the dry wells. Ms. O'Donnell said staff was aware that new standards required greater separation for drywells, and was working to identify those wells and to develop a plan for their replacement. She noted the potential impact of the issue on the City's buildable land supply.

Mr. Pryor expressed appreciation for the aspirational nature of the process and the way it had been managed. He said that Envision Eugene was the community's attempt to plan intentionally and collaboratively for the future. He felt that such planning was critically important. He thought that staff and the CRG were going in the right direction.

Mr. Zelenka said the nature of the CRG process lead to compromise and agreement. He applauded staff for the process, and said it had worked out very well. He commended both staff and the CRG, adding that the amount of time CRG members dedicated to the process demonstrated their love for the community. He felt more confident about the process now than he had earlier because he believed the process had begun to "gel." He commended the civility of the CRG process.

Mr. Zelenka also praised the staff presentation, saying it had been clear and specific about what the process meant. He underscored the importance of an integrated land use and transportation approach.

Mr. Zelenka expressed appreciation that the early work done on infill and opportunity siting was beginning to be integrated back into the process. He commended the manager's approach as both aggressive and realistic.

Mr. Farr also commended the CRG process. He said that initially, some members were resistant to the process, but over time that attitude had changed. He said that despite the different positions that different

members came from, CRG members had moved toward each other's positions. He was optimistic and confident about the work of the CRG.

Mayor Piercy adjourned the work session at 1:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Forrest

Beth Forrest
City Recorder

(Recorded by Kimberly Young)