

MINUTES

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

January 12, 2011
Noon

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

COUNCILORS ABSENT: George Poling, Chris Pryor.

Her Honor Mayor Kitty Piercy called the January 12, 2011, work session of the Eugene City Council to order. She noted that Mr. Poling and Mr. Pryor could not be present. Mr. Farr participated via speaker phone.

A. WORK SESSION: Envision Eugene Update – Social Equity

City Manager Jon Ruiz introduced the topic, reminding the council that the City was evaluating the Envision Eugene process through the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) framework. He recalled that the council had held a work session on the economic element of the TBL and staff was now present to discuss the social equity element. A work session on the environment element of the TBL was scheduled. City Manager Ruiz acknowledged that the question of the location of the urban growth boundary (UGB) was the catalyst for the Envision Eugene process, but he believed the process encompassed a much broader conversation about where the community wanted to be in the future and how it could move toward that vision.

City Manager Ruiz reviewed the Seven Pillars of Envision Eugene:

- *Support a sustainable family wage economy.*
- *Provide affordable housing for all income levels.*
- *Plan for climate and energy uncertainty.*
- *Promote compact urban development and efficient transportation.*
- *Protect, repair, and enhance neighborhood livability.*
- *Protect and restore natural resources.*
- *Provide for adaptable and flexible implementation.*

Human Rights Program Manager Raquel Wells and Senior Planner Terri Harding led the council through a PowerPoint presentation on the topic, copies of which were provided to the council and audience. Planning Director Lisa Gardner, Community Development Manager Stephanie Jennings, and Community Group Members Bill Slattery and Julie Grossman were also present for the item. The presentation framed the concept of social equity as it related to access to employment opportunities; housing opportunities; services, transportation, and educational opportunities; and making Eugene livable for all. The presentation highlighted community issues and trends in the areas of employment and wages, poverty and financial hardship, housing affordability and transportation costs, access to services, and community

safety. The presentation also highlighted the best and worst outcomes for each area developed by the Community Resource Group (CRG) after its meetings with various stakeholder groups in listening sessions, as well as strategies for achieving the best outcomes.

Mayor Piercy solicited comment from the members of the CRG.

Mr. Slattery said it was his personal opinion as a builder that the community needed more land for new housing. He thought it would be a mistake if the community was not prepared to expand when the need existed. That required long-term planning. He believed the community needed to identify where it was going in that regard and then address the issues highlighted in the presentation. He had great hope because he believed the process had opened doors and given residents like him a voice in an environment where they often considered the "bad guys." He said he was not the enemy and wanted to do his job in cooperation with others. Mr. Slattery expressed appreciation for the work of the council and for the opportunity to participate in the CRG process. He commended the work of City Manager Ruiz.

Ms. Grossman said while the process had been cumbersome and frustrating at times it was always rewarding. She felt hopeful about the outcome of the process. In regard to the presentation, Ms. Grossman said the YMCA saw about 100 potential members monthly who sought financial assistance to join, and when the agency inquired about their extenuating circumstances it often heard that mortgage and rent were the extenuating circumstances. That put a very personal face on the issue.

In regard to the process, Ms. Grossman acknowledged that when such a large conversation occurred it could be circular, with many themes rising to the top. The themes that continued to resonate with her were the challenge of planning when one could not predict the future and the need for flexibility given that fact. She said that many people wanted to invest their time, energy, and money in improving the community but it was often a challenge to get through local processes. She thought that was unfortunate. Ms. Grossman suggested that no one disagreed with the concepts highlighted in the presentation, but the "devil was in the details." She reiterated the importance of flexibility and of responding quickly to those who wished to make the community a better place to live.

Mayor Piercy observed that the new downtown projects had not been easy to put in place and they took much determination on the part of the City and developers to bring them to fruition. Even if one wanted to do the right thing it was not easy, particularly in this economy.

Mayor Piercy thanked Mr. Slattery and Ms. Grossman for their work on the CRG.

Mayor Piercy solicited council comments and questions.

Mr. Clark also thanked Mr. Slattery and Ms. Grossman. He acknowledged that the social equity element of the TBL was the most challenging to him in terms of knowing the wisest choices to be made. He questioned the use of words like "access," which had different connotations to people depended on how it was used. He said "access" as used in the presentation seemed to imply affordability. Ms. Wells said that was part of it. Mr. Clark asked if access to health care implied affordability. Ms. Wells said that access meant both physical access and economic access. There were many access barriers that were not economic in nature. Ms. Gardner added that increasingly, access to Web-based programming and services was an issue.

Ms. Jennings suggested the issue of access was related to creating an environment that facilitated access to affordable housing, health care, etc., and was also related to the line between the role of government

versus the role of the private sector and the individual seeking access. The CRG had extensive discussions of how to create such an environment.

Mr. Clark determined from Ms. Wells that the City had data that indicated where under-served populations lived.

Speaking to the issue of access to transportation, Mr. Clark suggested that the Lane Transit District's plans for EmX would make transit less accessible to residents and suggested it might be better if bus service was more integrated into neighborhoods. Ms. Gardner indicated that accessibility in the transit industry was based on industry standards and was related to the level of service provided.

Ms. Ortiz suggested that the City's role could be considered one of facilitating residents' access to various services in collaboration with those who provided the services.

Ms. Ortiz questioned how the City would integrate Attachment A, which was a memorandum from a group of neighborhood leaders to the CRG entitled *Envision Eugene "Neighborhood Livability" Theme* into the process. She asked how the process would address the conflict between those who wanted to grow out and those who wanted to grow up. Ms. Harding said that a lot of community work had been done to identify opportunity sites where more people could be accommodated without destroying neighborhoods. That was the goal of the infill compatibility and opportunity siting work that had been done, and she thought there was much in that work that could be carried forward into the strategies that implemented Envision Eugene.

Ms. Ortiz observed that she was challenged when she heard phrases such as "holding sacred the character of communities" because it brought to mind sundown laws and racial redlining, although she understood that was not the intent of the phrase. She pointed out that she lived in a neighborhood dominated by industrial uses. Residents were working to improve their neighborhood, and the phrase did not resonate with her in the same way it might with others.

Mr. Zelenka thanked staff and the members of the CRG and commended the work that had gone into the process.

Mr. Zelenka emphasized the importance of access to multi-modal transportation systems. He commended the definition of community safety for its mention of economic security, safe transportation, and safety from discrimination.

Mr. Zelenka suggested that protecting neighborhoods meant protecting the things that people liked and adding the things they did not have. Speaking to the issue of affordable housing, Mr. Zelenka acknowledged that it was a complicated issue that encompassed questions of the land supply, the housing mix, and the incentives needed to achieve the mix.

Mr. Brown thanked the CRG members for their comments. He emphasized the importance of neighborhood livability and said it was one of the pillars the City could have an effect on. He asked City Manager Ruiz to remind the CRG of its importance and ensure it was integrated into his recommendations.

Mayor Piercy asked the CRG members to comment on the group's discussion of livability.

In response to Ms. Ortiz's question about addressing the conflict between those with different growth approaches, Ms. Grossman believed there was a consensus among the CRG that if and when the

community grew up, or out, or both, it had to be growth based on rationale discussion, real data, and research. She did not get the impression there was a strong camp in opposition to one approach over another, although she acknowledged there was a perception that was the case at the beginning of the process. She thought the CRG had worked hard to overcome that perception.

Mr. Slattery acknowledged he entered the process with bias because of the economic challenge of doing density infill development in neighborhoods that opposed it and because he did not consider such infill a reasonable offset to UGB expansion. Neighborhood groups opposed density infill because much of what had been constructed was ugly. He suggested the City had been aggressive in encouraging infill because of the potential it would offset the need for UGB expansion. He believed the approach had gotten somewhat out of control because he did not think anyone anticipated what had resulted. It provoked a community reaction, as expressed through the CRG membership, of "don't mess with our neighborhood." He cited the University area as an example of a neighborhood where residents were dissatisfied with the nature of the infill development that was affecting the neighborhood.

Mr. Slattery said that people he thought would oppose any discussion of the UGB had been very open to the discussion. He believed the CRG members had been open to each other's input. He predicted the process was not going to end in February because so much remained to be done.

Mayor Piercy said she saw many discussions at the CRG about the best way to accommodate anticipated growth in a way that best preserved existing neighborhoods.

Ms. Taylor emphasized the importance of design standards to avoid inappropriate or incompatible development that impinged on existing housing. She cited housing built too near existing housing or multi-story housing in a neighborhood of single-family housing as examples of incompatible development. She commended good examples of development such as Cascade Manor and suggested there was more room for such development.

Ms. Taylor believed that accessibility depended on a living wage and advocated for council passage of a living wage ordinance that affected the City of Eugene and its contractors to serve as an example for the community. She said any company that received subsidies to relocate to Eugene should have to pay its employees a living wage.

Mr. Zelenka suggested a future benefit of the Envision Eugene process would be the community education about planning that occurred. He believed such education was essential to residents' understanding of planning, which had a big impact on residents' lives. He suggested a lack of planning for the West University Neighborhood led to the fact it was largely dominated by rental housing with its associated problems.

Mr. Zelenka agreed with Ms. Taylor's remarks about the importance of a living wage to social equity and hoped the City did something about that as well. He said the City could only set an example.

Mr. Zelenka believed that some of the objections to infill development was based on the fact neighbors did not feel heard. He recalled that the City Council had amended the code to require developers to talk to neighborhood associations about their projects with the hope that communication would result in better, more compatible projects. He believed the change had resulted in more acceptable and compatible projects.

Mr. Clark determined from City Manager Ruiz that the Seven Pillars were intended to guide the Envision Eugene process. Mr. Clark suggested that he might not agree with those as the most overriding process

values and asked how they were developed. City Manager Ruiz said staff had developed the pillars as one way to provide the community with a “snapshot” of what the process was trying to accomplish. They were not all encompassing for everything that occurred in the community.

Mr. Clark suggested that a pillar that stated support for compact urban development suggested a predisposition for one approach over another. City Manager Ruiz did not think so. He offered the concept of ‘phantom capacity’ as an example. He said the CRG had acknowledged the City could not plan for something it had no chance of achieving. For example, the City could not direct that all new growth go into a two-block area of downtown. However, the principle recognized that compact growth was what the community generally wanted to accomplish, and it did not preclude other choices that allowed other values to be satisfied.

Mr. Clark hoped to have council discussion of the pillars given that they could be the lens through which the council was offered choices. City Manager Ruiz anticipated that would occur.

Mayor Piercy also anticipated more council conversation about the Seven Pillars. She did not think support for compact urban development precluded other approaches or the flexibility the community needed to move forward with different solutions. City Manager Ruiz concurred, and emphasized the importance of future check-ins that gave the community the opportunity to make changes in direction.

Mayor Piercy also emphasized the importance of being prepared to respond to State initiatives and mandates.

City Manager Ruiz said that whatever strategies the council adopted, staff intended to implement them, and he anticipated discussion of the resources that would require.

Mr. Slattery anticipated that the City Code would need to be amended to implement the mixed-use vision that was emerging from Envision Eugene. He also believed that affordability and financing had to be considered. He agreed with the mayor about the importance of flexibility, but believed there were some very difficult questions to be asked and answered driving some of the outcomes that had not yet been discussed. He emphasized the importance of keeping supply and demand in mind, because when the supply of land was restricted, its price went up, which added to the cost of housing. Mr. Slattery commended the manager for creating an open process where people could express themselves freely. He thought the process would have an impact beyond the question of the UGB’s location.

Mayor Piercy adjourned the work session at 1:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Forrest

Beth Forrest
City Recorder

(Recorded by Kimberly Young)