

MINUTES

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

October 11, 2010
5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Mike Clark, Betty Taylor, Jennifer Solomon, George Poling, Chris Pryor, Andrea Ortiz, George Brown, Alan Zelenka.

Her Honor Mayor Kitty Piercy called the October 11, 2010, work session of the Eugene City Council to order.

A. COMMITTEE REPORTS AND ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM MAYOR, CITY COUNCIL, AND CITY MANAGER

Mayor Piercy expressed appreciation for the turnout for the Susan G. Komen *Race for the Cure*, reporting that about 7,000 people participated in the October 10 event.

Mayor Piercy called residents' attention to Eugene Financial Planning Day, an event sponsored by the City of Eugene and the Financial Planning Association of Mid-Oregon, scheduled for October 23 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Sheldon Community Center. Financial advisors would be present to offer free one-on-one advice to residents on a variety of topics.

Mayor Piercy reported that she would be unable to attend the Metropolitan Policy Committee meeting scheduled on October 14 because she would be at the State of Civil Rights Oregon Forum on the University of Oregon campus as co-chair of the Oregon League of Minority Voters, which was also a co-sponsor of the event.

Mayor Piercy reported that on October 15, she would participate on a City Club panel discussing the topic *Place Making and Parochialism: The Conundrum of Mid-Sized Communities* with Shelley Poticha, Director for the Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Corvallis Mayor Charlie Tomlinson.

Mr. Clark said that the annual Willamette River Clean-up occurred on October 2, and he thanked Recreation Equipment, Inc., and river advocate John Brown as well as other residents for their work in cleaning up the river.

Mr. Clark said and Ms. Ortiz attended the Oregon Department of Transportation's October 4 Beltline Steering Committee meeting, at which ODOT presented some high-level policy considerations and the Stakeholder Advisory Committee report. The advisory committee recommended taking some of the existing options off the table and adding the importance of recognizing safety considerations and safety improvements to the policy direction underlying the project. Mr. Clark and Ms. Ortiz had suggested to ODOT that it provide the City Council with another project update. He would poll the council on a work session date for the update. He noted that the next step in the process was the federal National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) process.

Mr. Poling reported that on September 29 he had met with the consultants working for 4J School District on the replacement of Superintendent George Russell. Later that same day he met with residents of Sandy Drive regarding the potential of future improvements to Sandy Drive. Eric Jones of the Public Works Department had been present at the meeting to answer questions. He thought it was likely that residents would approach the Budget Committee about the possibility of funding the project.

Mr. Poling noted that he had also attended the Emerald Awards put on by Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce and congratulated all the winners.

Mr. Poling reported that he met with new Eugene Water & Electric Board's General Manager Roger Grey, who had some interesting proposals.

Mr. Poling concluded by reporting that the Harlow Neighbors were sponsoring a forum for the candidates running for positions on the Board of County Commissioners on October 13, 2010, at the Garden Way Church.

Ms. Solomon expressed appreciation for the council's monthly receipt of the commendations received by members of the Eugene Police Department. She thanked residents who took the time to write the City about their positive experiences with the department.

Ms. Ortiz hoped the community understood that the Beltline project was a council priority and the project was intended to improve safety conditions in the corridor and address concerns about emergency vehicles reaching PeaceHealth at River Bend. She invited residents to contact her or Mr. Clark with questions about the project.

Ms. Ortiz reported she had attended the Neighborhood Summit and said it was an interesting event with a good turnout.

Ms. Ortiz said Eugene Police Department Officer Randy Ellis was honored at a recent event at City Hall for his 40 years of service to the City. She hoped that the council had the opportunity to honor Officer Ellis as well.

Ms. Ortiz noted the upcoming Prevention Convention at Sheldon High School on October 16.

Mr. Zelenka thanked Officer Ellis for his service.

Mr. Zelenka agreed that the Neighborhood Summit had a great turnout. Good information was traded among leaders. He believed the summit accomplished its purpose in that regard and he thought the City needed to think more about how to encourage such cross-fertilization.

Mr. Zelenka reported he met with PeaceHealth representatives about that organization's plans to rehabilitate its University District property. He looked forward to the construction jobs that resulted from the project and anticipated a nicer facility.

Mr. Zelenka said he had done a Town Hall event with the mayor to discuss the riot that happened in the West University Neighborhood. He wanted the City to consider the potential of more party patrols wanted to look into, to consider expanding the authority of the University of Oregon Department of Public Safety to address minor offenses outside its boundaries such as MIP, and to embark on a partnership between the

City and University of Oregon to provide more activities for students the weekend prior to the start of school. Mr. Zelenka also suggested the amount the University of Oregon had allocated to substance abuse was still “just a drop in the bucket” even though it was recently significantly increased.

Mr. Pryor reported the Housing Policy Board met the previous week to do a status check and had reviewed some of its funding sources and planning documents. He had also attended the Emerald Awards and acknowledged all those who were recognized for their efforts to make Eugene a better place. He said the event was nice and there was a great crowd.

Ms. Taylor said she had attended the Emerald Awards, which she agreed was a nice event, and had also attended the Neighborhood Summit, which she thought was better organized this year than last. She had attended the Toxics Alliance’s Ten-Year Anniversary celebration on October 10 and said it was great to see how successful the organization had been since its founding.

Ms. Taylor thought it was rather sad to see the balcony closed at the Farmers Market and pointed out that meant people could not get out of the rain. She said youth downtown needed a place to gather out of the weather, such as a youth center.

Ms. Taylor noted two recent letters to the editor about pedestrians being hit downtown. She was aware of similar incidents and expressed concern about unsafe pedestrian conditions downtown. She hoped that the City could do something about that.

City Manager Jon Ruiz thanked Neighborhood Services Program Manager Michael Kinnison and his team for putting together the Neighborhood Summit. He thought a lot of value came out of the event.

Speaking to Ms. Taylor’s remarks about the closure of the balcony at Saturday Market, Mayor Piercy said the closure of the area in question was done at the request of the Saturday Market and was done because of the level of drug dealing going on in the area. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) was brought into the discussion and did not seem to think the closure infringed on the Free Speech Plaza.

Mayor Piercy said she believed the community faced a growing problem with homelessness and reported she had been talking to the City Manager about the status of the City’s current intervention activities and possible options for the future. She thought the problem would continue to be bad given current economic conditions.

B. WORK SESSION:

Funding Gap for Maintaining Current and Future Parks and Recreation Facilities

The council was joined for the item by Parks and Open Space Division Director Johnny Medlin, Recreation Director Craig Smith, Facilities Division Director Mary Beth Perkins, and Design and Construction Manager Mike Penwell of the Facilities Division.

Mr. Medlin presented a PowerPoint presentation on the subject of the funding gap for parks and recreation facilities. He provided information on new City parks and recreation facilities built in the last 12 years and briefly overviewed budget data that indicated current operation and maintenance (O&M) funding was at 1998 levels, leaving a \$1 million funding obligation that the City was unable to meet. Even though many new facilities had been brought online recently, many facilities, including some of the relatively new ones, were in need of repair. Increasingly, staff was having trouble keeping up with maintenance,

and the entire system was in decline. Mr. Medlin shared examples of unanticipated maintenance demand, which included vandalism, graffiti, clean up of homeless camps, and trail damage.

Mr. Medlin reported the division's park condition rating system was in its infancy but was producing important information that indicated that most of the community's developed parks and natural areas were in good condition.

Mr. Medlin estimated that the General Fund required \$5.5 million to address the costs of O&M for developed parks, with \$4.2 million available now, and \$800,000 annually to address O&M for natural areas, with about \$300,000 available now. He suggested there was an appropriate \$1.5 million funding gap.

Mr. Smith provided information on Recreation facilities owned or contracted by the City and Mr. Penwell reviewed data regarding the condition of existing facilities.

Mr. Smith provided a brief overview on the recreation facilities shared by the 4J School District and City of Eugene. He reviewed the Recreation budget for fiscal year 2011. He said that the "Eugene Counts" process demonstrated high levels of support for recreation services, and that was confirmed by rising program participation. He anticipated that senior services would be an area of increased need and that the division would need to be equipped to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population.

Mr. Medlin shared information showing future development costs for Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) projects by priority ranking. Mr. Smith then shared a series of maps showing the location of City community centers and the geographic distribution of program registrants.

Mr. Medlin called attention to Attachment D of the meeting packet, which reflected page 5 of the PROS Comprehensive Plan and listed 18 different funding sources. He emphasized the high value placed on parks and recreation services by residents, as well as the community value for the equitable provision of services. Mr. Medlin said the question before the council was how the City could continue to meet community expectations.

Mayor Piercy suggested that the need for parks and recreation services was increasing as the community became more stressed. She agreed the issue was how to continue to meet expectations.

Mayor Piercy asked for information about the impact of vandalism and people living in the parks. She acknowledged the public safety aspects of the issue and invited suggestions on how to address them. Mr. Medlin indicated staff would return with a response. Mayor Piercy also requested more information about the park condition rating system mentioned earlier by Mr. Medlin.

Responding to a question from Ms. Ortiz about volunteerism in the department, Mr. Medlin noted the number of volunteer hours and fact the department had three full-time volunteer coordinators as well as a Parks Development Coordinator working with the Parks Foundation and other fund-raising organizations. He emphasized the amount of coordination that effort required. Mr. Medlin said some organizations wishing to volunteer had a clear idea about what they wanted to do. He said the department worked with those volunteers to get their projects done in a way that did not increase maintenance costs for the City. There was considerable give and take involved. Mr. Medlin said that sometimes the division had to decline projects, but volunteers in general were a great resource. He suggested that beyond the monetary contribution, the value of volunteers was in neighborhood building, the ownership such projects gave residents, and the extra "eyes and ears" on the parks that volunteers provided.

Ms. Ortiz questioned if there was a way to allow residents to adopt a park and do minor maintenance of the facility. Mr. Medlin said the City had an “adopt the park” program and was open to volunteer maintenance as long as the City was notified and could coordinate the effort and ensure it met applicable regulations and practices.

Mr. Pryor expressed appreciation for the presentation. He recalled that in 2006, Mr. Medlin proposed a bond measure to the council for maintenance and acquisition. The council declined to place such a measure before the voters, and instead decided the proceeds of the bond would be completely dedicated to acquisition. He regretted the council’s failure to accept Mr. Medlin’s proposal. He said the existing situation was not due to staff, which had been diligent in bringing forward its best recommendations. Mr. Pryor acknowledged the budgetary constraints facing the City and the difficulty of funding parks maintenance given other needs.

Responding to a question from Mr. Brown, Mr. Medlin clarified that the 2006 bond did not include any funds for renovation. He reviewed the projects that would be funded with the remaining money. Mr. Brown asked if there were barriers to using some of that funding to acquire Civic Stadium. Mr. Medlin suggested that was a legal question and the answer was dependent on whether one could define Civic Stadium as a community park. Mr. Brown observed that the council had been scheduled to discuss the issue of Civic Stadium in September but that discussion had not occurred. He suggested the possibility of a land exchange to free up money from the bond to buy Civic Stadium.

Responding to a question from Mr. Brown, Mr. Penwell clarified that \$3.2 million was the current replacement value for the buildings at Laurelwood Golf Course. Mr. Medlin estimated the land itself was valued at approximately \$250,000/acre, and there were approximately 80 acres in question.

Mr. Clark asked how much money was set aside from the bond for acquiring land for Santa Clara Community Park. Mr. Medlin estimated \$1 million was available. He said staff continued to negotiate for the last 16 acre parcel. At this time, the City had acquired less than 24 acres for the park. Mr. Clark asked if the City had enough money to acquire the entire acreage desired for the park. Mr. Medlin said yes; at this time, the barrier to completing the park acquisition was the lack of a willing seller.

Mr. Clark said that during a recent Santa Clara Community Organization meeting, attendees had discussed vandalism in neighborhood parks and many had volunteered to clean up and had asked how they could become involved. He thought many residents would volunteer for graffiti clean-up in their neighborhood parks, which would increase their sense of ownership of such facilities and perhaps decrease City costs.

Mr. Clark agreed that parks and recreation were important to citizens’ quality of life but the City would face many budgetary challenges in the next few years. He said the council needed to consider both how to bridge the funding gap while reducing the cost of providing the same level of services. Mr. Clark was also interested in examining under-used park assets, such as the back nine at Laurelwood Golf Course, for possible disposition.

Mr. Zelenka reminded the council that he had proposed the work session and said it was due to his concern about the status of funding for parks O&M. He contrasted the higher cost of rehabilitation to the lower cost of regular maintenance and suggested the council was being short-sighted in not adequately funding O&M.

Mr. Zelenka suggested the City was “semi-rich in lands” and had money for acquiring more land, but lacked a plan to get funding to develop those lands. He wanted the council to recognize the magnitude of the problem that existed and the danger it would worsen if nothing was done. He suggested the danger was that the City would cut costs by closing facilities or letting them deteriorate. He wanted to avoid that and called on the council to develop a plan to address both park funding and development.

Ms. Taylor did not think all parks needed to be developed parks, although she agreed the City needed to maintain its developed assets. She was happy the bond had focused on land acquisition due to the scarcity of land. She hoped the remainder of the bond proceeds were used to acquire crucial lands, especially those that affected the water supply.

Ms. Taylor asked if the O&M backlog was divided into things that should be done now and things that could be put off. Mr. Medlin said staff had looked at different reduction scenarios and different approaches to keeping service levels as high as possible while still cutting costs. He cited mowing as an example, saying that the City cut the mowing of sports fields in half. There were limits to what the City could do in regard to reduced maintenance without seeing consequences. Mr. Medlin said staff discussed how to change maintenance frequencies while maintaining customer satisfaction, and he suggested that determining the appropriate and acceptable level of maintenance would be an iterative process.

Ms. Taylor thought the City needed new sources of revenue and called for a work session on additional taxing mechanisms. She suggested a levy might be possible given residents’ value for parks, and thought the “adopt-a-park” concept mentioned by Mr. Clark might appeal to many people.

Mayor Piercy did not believe the City could provide basic services using only charitable contributions or volunteer labor. She suggested the council needed to talk to the community about concepts such as “adopt-a-park.”

Mayor Piercy invited suggestions to share with the new dean of the University of Oregon’s School of Business, Dennis Howard, who wished to do a big annual signature event with students that left a lasting mark on the community.

Mr. Zelenka agreed with Ms. Taylor that not all parks needed to be developed parks.

Mr. Zelenka believed the staff-suggested motion was adequate for the discussion, but it only addressed half the problem. He called for the development of a plan that included funding options to meet the City’s capital and recreation facilities renovation backlog, which was approximately \$23 million.

Mr. Clark suggested that the issue was not just how to get more money, but how the City could do business differently. He suggested that new and innovative ideas were needed. He said the staff-suggested motion did not cover that concern. Mr. Clark thought the City could look to examples of how services had been delivered differently and innovatively, and cited the Neighborhood Matching Grants Program as an example.

Ms. Ortiz could not support putting out a bond measure this year or next year. She suggested the council consider turning over responsibility for facilities such as the Kaufmann Center to a private party and sell the back nine at Laurelwood Golf Course to cover the costs of fixing the buildings. She pointed out that the council had yet to fulfill its promises of a community center to residents of Santa Clara.

Mr. Zelenka believed that residents considered the back nine at Laurelwood to be a natural area because it had never been developed. He said if the council was to look at natural areas to sell to make money, he wanted to look at all the natural areas the City had purchased to see what made the most sense.

Mr. Zelenka agreed with the mayor that the City could not provide services using volunteers. He did not want the City to find itself in a situation similar to the one it had faced in regard to street maintenance funding.

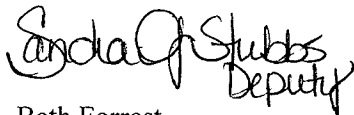
Mr. Zelenka questioned how the City could afford to maintain Civic Stadium given its current budgetary challenges. He was unsure he wanted to take on more maintenance problems, particularly the scope of issues that the stadium represented.

Speaking to the concept of selling City-owned park assets, Mayor Piercy believed that it did not make sense to sell most assets because of their value to the community, but it might make sense to sell some of them. She suggested if the City did so, the council should discuss how to reinvest the funding and grow that money for use in the future.

Mr. Clark, seconded by Ms. Taylor, moved to request the City Manager to develop funding options and innovative methods for City Council consideration for the FY12 budget to sustainably maintain and renovate current Parks, Recreation, and Open Space facilities.
The motion passed unanimously, 8:0.

Mayor Piercy adjourned the work session at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Beth Forrest", with the word "Deputy" written below it.

Beth Forrest
City Recorder

(Recorded by Kimberly Young)