MINUTES

Eugene City Council
Council Chamber—Eugene City Hall
777 Pearl Street—Eugene, Oregon

May 10, 2010
7:30 p.m.

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

ABSENT: Andrea Ortiz.

Mayor Kitty Piercy called the regular meeting of the Eugene City Council to order.

1. PUBLIC FORUM

Mayor Piercy reviewed the rules of the Public Forum.

Mary Leighton, 4046 Normandy Way, Network Charter School, asked the council to direct staff to negotiate a lease agreement between the City and Network Charter School (NCS) for 858 Pearl Street. She said the City's asking price was more than the property was worth. The school had offered to pay for a new appraisal and appraiser Richard Duncan had offered to review the old appraisal at no cost. Ms. Leighton acknowledged it was not the City's job to find the school a home, but suggested that leasing the building to the school was an opportunity to do something that was under the council's control and it could turn what was currently an economic liability into an asset. The school's occupancy would generate funding for the City and provide needed work for the construction community to bring it up to code. Ms. Leighton said the lease was an opportunity to add materially to a vibrant downtown and show support for students who wanted to be downtown.

Jerry Diethelm, 2652 Agate Street, asked the council to help keep the NCS downtown and to direct staff to find a mutually acceptable agreement for a lease for the property at 858 Pearl Street. The school would be out of business by the end of June unless it could find a place to occupy. He believed the site could be made to work and emphasized that the school wanted to remain downtown. He suggested the situation called for council direction to create the financial fit to make it work. He believed urban renewal could impact the school in a positive way. He thought the City's investment in NCS would pay off in many ways, including providing more eyes on the street and creating educational partnerships with Lane Community College. It would help the City reduce its carbon footprint.

Wendy McKenzie, 290 East 38th Avenue, NCS, provided some history about the school's move from the Whiteaker neighborhood to downtown and noted the many places in Lane County that students came from to attend the school. She emphasized the importance of keeping the school downtown to facilitate students' movement to other educational sites, such as Nearby Nature in Alton Baker Park. She suggested that the City could work with the school as it had done with Nearby Nature to facilitate the transaction.

Daniel Sellers, 1008 Crocker Lane, a student at NCS, spoke of the importance of the school to students who did not fit into the traditional school system. He thought the school belonged downtown, should stay downtown, and the council could help with that.

Denise Velasco, a teacher with the NCS, spoke of the concerns voiced to her by students about the potential loss of the school. Students were worried about large class sizes and about being pulled out of classrooms. They were worried about being lost and unheard in their neighborhood school. Many threatened to drop out if the school was not longer available to them. She noted the homeless students who attended the school and who were very affected by its loss.

Nicholas Knight-Meigs, 1587 South Bertelsen Road, spoke in support of NCS. He spoke of his own schooling experience and suggested that it was of the utmost importance that the council assisted the school. He said the school's location downtown was very beneficial to the City. His girlfriend was homeless and had no place to go until she found NCS. She was very happy there while she was able to attend. He wanted every child who attended to enjoy the school and learn from it. He noted the proximity of Lane Transit District and the Eugene Library that benefited the school and were needed for the school to remain functional.

Zach Bryson, 1455 Santa Rosa Street, a student at NCS, said he would not have been able to succeed at a public high school and for that reason went to NCS. It had changed his life and he did not know where he would be without it. He was graduating this year and had never thought that would happen.

Fyona Rose Dahl, 425 South 3rd Street, Cottage Grove, a student at NCS, said many considered the school to be a second home and the students and staff as a family and said they did not know what they would do without it.

Nathan Spain, 1270 Hilliard Street, a junior at NCS, characterized NCS as a community and said everyone knew each other and were friends. He agreed that many considered the school a second home and there was no school they would rather attend. He suggested that was quite rare. Now that the school was facing homelessness and its future was uncertain, people such as him were frightened by the potential it would not be available to them in coming years. He wanted to know that the school could continue to thrive and prosper after he had left. He had benefited from the school considerably and the school helped him grow. It helped him gain confidence and learn social skills. He hoped that he could look back and think of the time not as the untimely demise of the school but a difficult time that the school managed to overcome. He asked the council to help the school overcome its current problems.

Richard Aldrich, 2225 Salem Avenue, Albany, a senior at NCS, recalled his past experiences at public school, which were not positive. He had then attended NCS and improved his reading, writing, and math skills and was attending school more. He tried to attend another school after trying out NCS without success. Now he participated in class. He thought the school should remain downtown and hoped to attend again next year.

Brenda Sellers, 100 A Crocker Lane, a student at NCS, spoke of her positive experience at the school and said if it went away she would have to quit dance, which was her life and one of her communities, as was the school. She asked the council to help NCS stay downtown.

Gabrielle Legault, 100 A Crocker Lane, mother of Daniel Sellers, spoke of her involvement as a parent at NCS. She said she appreciated the City's predicament and its desire to dispose of the building. However, she pointed out that in reality, people were not "breaking down the door" to purchase the building from the City. When Ms. Leighton heard the building might be available she had immediately gone to work on partnerships with other nonprofits to fill the building and parents had begun fund raising. However, the school had a short time period and was at risk of not being in place next year if something did not happen soon. She suggested that the school could contribute to a vibrant downtown.

Don Sellers, 100 A Crocker Lane, identified himself as the satisfied parent of two NCS students. He asked the council to do everything it could to help NCS continue to do the wonderful work it did.

Michelle Rose, 425 South 3rd Street, Cottage Grove, said her two children had gone to NCS but one son had gone back to public school and wished he had stayed at NCS. As a downtown business manager, she thought the students added a great deal to downtown. The school's class room was all of Eugene, and it made sense to keep it downtown given the proximity of resources such as Lane Transit District, the library, and parks. Her daughter loved the school and felt comfortable at a school for the first time. She said if the school was no longer available, she would home school her daughter. She suggested if students did not feel comfortable at their school, they would no longer attend.

Tanna Konemann, 1357 West 8th Avenue, an NCS teacher, spoke of the friendly and caring atmosphere at NCS created by relationships between teachers and students. She was disheartened by the idea of no longer caring for the students.

Kimberly Gladen, 361 West Broadway, said she saw the students everyday and they were good kids setting a good example that she wanted to see downtown. They were making downtown a better place and learning to be good citizens. She thought the location at 858 Pearl Street was ideal for many reasons. She said there were many negative things happening with children downtown and did not want the good example set by NCS students to go away. As a member of the downtown safety task force, she understood that the school was to be in place and regretted that did not appear to be the case. She believed it would be devastating to downtown and the community if the school were no longer downtown. She asked the council to facilitate the negotiations.

Eleanor Lang, 775 West 11th Avenue, a teacher at NCS, suggested a livable vibrant downtown included a school such as NCS. She believed keeping NCS downtown gave Eugene a positive presence of youth. It benefited the students from proximity to transportation, the library, and other local businesses who need clients. Downtown also reinforced her classroom lessons about sustainability, civics, and urban planning. She questioned what message the City was sending the students.

Jared Woods, 775 West 11th Avenue, spoke of the lessons he learned as a result of his involvement to NCS. He said the school meant a lot to its students and teachers and they wanted to stay downtown. NCS networked with other community organizations. NCS students received a constant education as a result of the school's location downtown. He suggested that keeping NCS downtown was key to a vibrant downtown. He said students and staff supported many downtown businesses.

Susann Bradley, 84729 McBeth Road, a teacher at Eugene Glass School, a satellite organization of NCS, expressed pride in the school and said she was proud of the NCS students. She said students went to Greenhill for its last community service project and later rallied downtown in support of the school even after all the hard work they had done that day. She asked the council to help keep NCS downtown.

Kevin Prociw, 3777 Kendra Street, distributed information for the council regarding the timeline for the renaming of Beltline. He complained that the public did not have sufficient time to weigh in on the subject and the council took only 30 seconds to act. He called for an explanation and asked that the council rescind its approval in favor of a more public process.

Mark Callahan, 3621 Mahlon Avenue, wanted to know why the council voted in support of the renaming of Beltline. He termed the renaming an unnecessary expense and objected to the expenditure of tax dollars. He

maintained that the council's constituents would rather have potholes filled than have the State rename Beltline. He wanted immediate action by the council to rescind its former approval of the name change.

David Maloney, 30612 Butterfly Lane, a staff member at NCS, agreed with previous speakers about NCS and spoke of the caring attitude of teachers toward NCS students, which students responded to positively. He said they became something greater than they were before and did many community service projects that benefited the homeless and hungry.

Andrea Gillespie, 3877 North Clary Street, manager of the Cascade Adult Center at the Trude Kaufman Center, was present to answer questions about the lease that would be part of the Consent Calendar. She asked the council to consider renewing the lease for three years to give the center a chance to find another location.

Joe Canady, 84825 Territorial Road, thanked the council for its assistance in keeping the Trude Kaufman Center open. He supported the lease renewal request and hoped the council would contract with Cascade Adult Center directly for the building.

Mark Robinowitz, no address provided, discussed the City's Climate and Energy Action Plan. He noted the plan's call for a decrease in energy consumption and maintained that people would be forced by nature to reduce their energy consumption and would have to make due with much less. He noted that the City planned to double the fee for a community garden plot and questioned how that implemented the community's goals for increased production of local food. He maintained that when the oil was gone, Eugeneans were going to have to grow all their own food. He also questioned widening Beltline because of his beliefs in peak oil. He also objected to EWEB's proposal to provide water to Veneta.

Michael Peterson, no address provided, spoke in support of NCS. He said he had been home schooled for seven years without much success and because of a learning disability had not learned to read until his early teens. He did not know if he would have succeeded at all without NCS. Before he attended the school he had not had friends or community connections. The school helped him build those connections. He did not want to think about what would have happened to him without the school. He had faced homelessness and was offered resources and options by teachers and students that resulted in him securing a low-income apartment.

LeRoy Parks, 28295 K. R. Neilson Road, opposed the renaming of Beltline Road as wasteful and arrogant and said it benefited no one but the Papé Corporation. It was divisive. He thought the council had more important things to think about, such as the NCS students.

Cai Ky, 618 E Street, Springfield, attended NCS and said without the school he did not know what he would do. He had attended a public school and learned nothing because the teaching styles made no sense and teachers were unable to answer his questions because there were so many other students. He had followed two friends to NCS because of their positive reviews and had passed all his classes and learned a lot. He loved attending NCS and now had lots of friends and considered the teachers and staff to be his friends as well.

Elliot Glaser-Flynn, 1690 Wilson Street, a freshman at NCS, said he had a very positive experience at his last school and could not imagine being happy at another. However, he had moved to Eugene and attended NCS and within two months felt accepted, comfortable, and made a lot of friends.

Steve Wilson, 4549 Souza Street, questioned why the council did not give the cost of the name change of Beltline more consideration. He criticized the council for its support of the Beltline renaming, saying it was a rubber stamp effort. He suggested more consideration should be given to the Governor's decision because he was a lame duck

trying to repay his buddies. He asked the council to support the ballot measure his group was trying to get on the ballot. He found councilors Poling and Solomon's support of the name change offensive.

Jerry Towers, 874401 Territorial Road, Veneta, maintained that the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) voted against the constitution when they supported the renaming of Beltline Road. Most of the people attending a meeting in Veneta had been against the name changing.

Charles Ritalin objected to the renaming of Beltline Road. He also objected to the closure of bathrooms at Monroe Park. He had been happy to see the re-election of the mayor, however.

Majeska Seese-Green, 5th Avenue and Van Buren Street, wanted to see a collaboration between the City and NCS in the Downtown Plan. She said that NCS represented the youth downtown, which was a stakeholders' group that had not been included at all. There was no plans for a collaboration outside public safety and there was more needed to the mix, such as arts and culture and Saturday Market. Ms. Seese-Green then voiced her objections to the Beltline renaming process, including the council's involvement, and hoped it rescinded its decision and had a process in place in the future to prevent such a thing from happening again. She asked the council to support the retention of NCS downtown.

Mayor Piercy closed the Public Forum. She thanked the public for its attendance, in particular those who spoke in support of NCS. She said they did a tremendous job articulating the importance of the school.

Mayor Piercy said that the council would discuss its policy related to such renaming issues on May 19 and would apply it to the I-5 crossing over the Willamette River.

Mayor Piercy thanked those who spoke in regard to the Trude Kaufman lease.

Mr. Pryor also thanked those who spoke and recalled he had been on the school board when it approved NCS. He acknowledged the work the manager had done in regard to the subject and asked the manager to provide the council with a memorandum outlining the options that existed. He wanted to know if there was a way to look at the issue from a different angle. He acknowledged the tough financial conditions that existed but said if there was a way to move forward, he would like to do so.

Mr. Pryor appreciated those who spoke about Beltline and reminded them it was not a City decision. The City Council was asked if it thought it was a good idea, and he personally believed it was. However, he did not support the expenditure of money on signage and agreed that the process could be improved. He said as a result of the issue, the council would closely at its policies to ensure it was more thoughtful and mindful of the public in the future.

Mr. Zelenka was impressed by the testimony in support of NCS. He supported Mr. Pryor's request and asked the manager to look at the issue more creatively. He agreed about the City's budget situation nand said any transaction must make economic sense for the City.

Mr. Zelenka said that neither Eugene nor the State was spending money on new signs. Old signs would be replaced as they wore out. He agreed the State could have used a better process.

Mr. Zelenka indicated support for the Trude Kaufman lease.

Mr. Poling congratulated the students on their efforts, achievements, and successes, and thanked the NCS staff and teachers for guiding them and showing them what could be accomplished. He supported the continuance of the school and said how it was accomplished was the question. He asked if staff had developed a new funding strategy. City Manager Ruiz was aware of none.

Mr. Poling suggested the City could work with the County to secure additional funding for the school given the fact that students came from all over the County. He joined in the request made by Mr. Pryor and Mr. Zelenka.

Mr. Poling said he first became aware of the OTC action on March 4 through a one-line e-mail notifying him of OTC's action. He had proposed the letter supporting the renaming. He thought that was the right thing because of the work Mr. Papé had done in promoting the transportation system. Beltline Highway had signs stating it was both Beltline Highway and Beltline Road in reflection of its previous road status. He believed that no matter the name, it would still be referred to as the Beltline. He said it was just a name to honor a man who he believed was worthy of the honor. He agreed the State process could be improved on.

Mayor Piercy understood that people were not necessarily satisfied with the council response to the Beltline renaming controversy. She had encouraged the idea that signs be replaced gradually, and that Beltline be retained as part of the name so that people could use the name they pleased.

Mayor Piercy expressed admiration for the students who were speaking in public with little experience for the first time and commended the students graduating from NCS this year. She said the students were very important to the City.

Mr. Zelenka said he had made a personal plea to OTC Chair Gail Atcherman regarding the phase-in of signs, which was the direction the State chose. He said the council was not aware of the cost at the time it took the vote.

II. CONSENT CALENDAR

A. Approval of City Council Minutes

- March 8, 2010, Work Session
- March 8, 2010, Council Meeting
- April 12, 2010, Work Session
- April 12, 2010, Council Meeting
- April 19, 2010, Public Hearing

B. Approval of Tentative Working Agenda

C. Approval of Trude Kaufman Center Lease

Councilor Clark, seconded by Councilor Taylor, moved to approve the Consent Calendar as presented. Roll call vote; the motion passed unanimously, 7:0.

III. ACTION:

Ratification of the Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission (MWMC) FY11 Regional Wastewater Program Budget and Capital Improvements Program

City Manager Ruiz reported that the MWMC held a public hearing on the budget on April 9 and later approved the budget. The budget must be ratified by the partners in the MWMC.

Councilor Clark, seconded by Councilor Taylor, moved to ratify the Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission (MWMC) FY11 Regional Wastewater Program Budget and Capital Improvements Program.

Councilor Poling spoke of the process that led to the creation of the master plan for facilities at the MWMC and said the budget was one of many steps in the process of upgrading the system to respond to changing federal water quality requirements. He was happy to support the motion and pleased to see the progress the facility was making.

Mr. Zelenka was also supportive of the budget. He recognized the upcoming departure of Peter Ruffier, long-time manager of Wastewater Services.

Roll call vote; the motion passed unanimously, 7:0.

Mayor Piercy adjourned the regular meeting of the Eugene City Council at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra J. Stubbs
Deputy City Recorder

Jon Ruiz,
City Manager

(Recorded by Kimberly Young)