MINUTES

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

April 12, 2010
7:30 p.m.

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

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

1. CEREMONIAL MATTERS

Mayor Piercy announced that the first week of May each year was designated as Public Service Recognition Week honoring the men and women who served America as federal, state, county and local government employees. She read a proclamation recognizing the contributions of public service employees and proclaiming May 4 - 10, 2010, as Public Service Recognition Week.

Ms. Piercy read a statement celebrating National Library Week and recognizing the role that libraries played in the community and the lives of its citizens. She welcomed Jim Olney, executive director of the Eugene Public Library Foundation.

Mr. Olney presented a check in the amount of $100,000 on behalf of the Eugene Public Library Foundation. He noted that the foundation had raised almost $7 million over the past 25 years to support the Eugene library system. He commended the partnership between the foundation and the City and stressed the foundation's continuing commitment to the vital role of libraries in Eugene.

Councilor Ortiz expressed her appreciation for public employees and for the Eugene Public Library Foundation's contribution.

2. PUBLIC FORUM

Mayor Piercy reviewed procedures for providing comments.

Bob Richards, Timberline, Eugene, director of Buckley Center, spoke to funding concerns for the center's services. He said two years ago funding for sobering and detoxification services was cut by 40 percent. Those services were critical to public safety and without them the police and other referring agencies would have nowhere to take intoxicated individuals, as the jails would not accept them. He said a funding swap agreement between the City and Lane County restored that funding through June 30, 2010, but if the services were to continue additional revenue to replace that funding would need to be found. He said there were discussions under way regarding inclusion of the services in a serial levy, but that would not be timely because revenue from the levy would not be available until 2011 at the earliest. He was approaching all jurisdictions to alert them to the need for funding after June 30 in order to continue sobering services until more permanent funding could be secured.

Loren Sears, Loma Linda, Eugene, expressed his appreciation to the council for their service. He resided in the Crest Drive neighborhood and presented a petition signed by other residents of the neighborhood

concerning hazards and function inadequacies in the street design that needed correcting before construction continued on neighborhood streets. He said deterioration was occurring from large trucks and School District 4J and Lane Transit District (LTD) had expressed doubts about the safety of the streets for their uses. He said the City was legally liable if it ignored known traffic dangers and those hazards were being called out for the public record. He submitted a list of ten items related to the streets and suggested actions for addressing them.

Paula Goodbar, Grant Street, Eugene, Eugene Storefront Art Project member, stated that she lived and worked in Eugene and was concerned with downtown blight. She explained that the project was a group of 400 local and regional artists that came together to explore the concept of using vacant storefronts for revitalization. Spaces made available would allow a local artist to install temporary art in the windows. She said the group was currently applying for nonprofit status and seeking grants and donations to support its efforts. She listed the benefits of storefront art and its impact on creating a vibrant downtown. She said the group was eager to work with property owners to provide them with a marketing and public relations opportunity. She hoped the council could help the project end the creeping urban blight that was taking over downtown.

David P. Miller, 10th Alley, Eugene, Eugene Storefront Art Project member, said the project was a group of concerned citizens dedicated to creating temporary art projects to enliven the downtown area. He read the group's mission statement and explained its purpose and goals. He said the storefront art project wanted to add color to the downtown atmosphere and hoped that cultural and financial rewards would follow. He said property owners were being approached with a simple, quick and inexpensive plan to use art as a way to improve the quality of life for downtown residents and improve the environment for downtown development. He hoped that community leaders would support the project.

Marc Gunther, Junction City, Eugene Storefront Art Project member, stated that he worked in Eugene and was concerned about the loss of architectural character through urban renewal. He noted that other communities enjoyed the economic benefits of historical architecture. He said the historic Post Office facility at 5th Avenue and Willamette Street was going to be sold and the lack of details about preservation made the future of the structure uncertain. He hoped the public's ability to visit the building would not be restricted by a sale and noted it had been placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1985 because of its unique architecture, lobby and artwork. He said local artist Jerry Ross had formed a citizens' committee seeking to purchase the Post Office for use as a City of Eugene art and historical museum. He urged the council not to let the opportunity for using the building as a hub for downtown revitalization slip away.

Meisha Linwood, Van Buren Street, Eugene, Eugene Storefront Art Project member, provided examples of how storefront art had assisted other communities to beautify downtown areas, make vacant properties more desirable and help local businesses.

Sherry Franzen, Eugene, Eugene Storefront Art Project member, said she lived and worked in Eugene and was concerned about the many empty storefronts downtown. She said the project had made over a dozen proposals to property owners over the past two months and had successfully placed art in two storefronts and was negotiating for space in two other properties. She said other owners had declined or ignored the group's efforts. She said property owners could select art from local submissions and described the agreements that accompanied installations. She suggested a "carrot and stick" approach that would reward owners that filled empty storefronts and fine those that left properties vacant.

Duncan Rhodes, Lewis Avenue, Eugene, Ward 7, said he was a member of Connecting Eugene, a local advocacy group. He had heard that the former Coca-Cola property was to be sold to Oregon Research Institute and asked what the public process for that acquisition would be.

Drix, High Street, Eugene, commented on the discarded furniture that appeared in his neighborhood in the spring. He recently met a man who had moved to Eugene from Kentucky and also noted that Conan O'Brien had chosen Eugene to launch his tour. He spoke to the benefits of volunteering in the community and presented a handmade award to the council for its service.

Daniel Lewis Frommherz, Concord Street, Eugene, Ward 6, asked the council to support repeal of the federal "Don't Ask-Don't Tell" law. He had written each councilor a personal letter explaining the issue. He served as a non-commissioned officer in the U.S. Army for 26 years and found soldiers – both male and female – who were gay to be some of the most competent and forthcoming people with whom he had served. He submitted proposed language for a resolution calling for repeal of the law. He had presented the resolution to the Lane County Board of Commissioners and was encouraged to present it to city councils in the area to gain support.

Garr Cutler, Horizon Road, Eugene, spoke to the design problems associated with the reconstruction of Crest Drive. He said the road was very constricted in some areas and had tight corners and was designed as though it was a private drive, even though it was intended to be a collector street serving 26 other streets in South Eugene, some of which had no other access to the rest of the City. He hoped that further road construction in the neighborhood would ameliorate some of the radical designs on a street that in the future would serve many more people than it currently did.

Mary Salinas, Eugene, spoke on behalf of homeless people in the community. She said she had been homeless in the past and that had spurred her to speak up on behalf of the homeless population. She wanted the same services in Eugene that other communities provided to the homeless, particularly a safe shelter for women, children and young boys. She said that chronic homelessness should be considered a disability.

Tom Kamis, Lincoln Street, Eugene, served on the Downtown Task Force on Public Safety. He expressed disappointment with the recommendations, which he felt reflected small steps when major steps were needed. He commended the Eugene Storefront Art Project as a great approach to downtown beautification and questioned why property owners would not want to participate. He said owners of vacant property should be held accountable. He was pleased with the progress the City had made downtown, but felt less studying and more action was needed.

Mayor Piercy closed the public forum and called for comments from the council.

Councilor Ortiz thanked those who spoke. She hoped that the Human Services Commission could find a way to fund the continuation of Buckley Center services. She liked the Eugene Storefront Art Project concept. She commented that the Crest Drive design was based on a long collaborative process with neighbors and represented an innovative approach to street improvements. She was not certain that the City had a role in the sale of property to Oregon Research Institute and asked the City Manager to provide more information.

Councilor Clark thanked those who spoke. He agreed that it was important to find funding for critical Buckley Center services and hoped that another arrangement with the County could be reached. He asked for a memorandum from the city attorney regarding the City's liability for traffic hazards associated with

the Crest Drive design. He agreed that the downtown public safety recommendations were a good first step and was eager to discuss other suggestions for downtown revitalization.

Councilor Taylor supported the Eugene Storefront Art Project and felt that temporary art in empty spaces would address a number of problems. She suggested that the group work with the Downtown Neighborhood Association. She hoped that the City would explore ways to preserve the Post Office, such as using it for an art museum. She suggested that the council hold a work session on Crest Drive to determine if the design should be modified. She said that a homeless shelter was essential and the State should provide funding.

Councilor Solomon thanked those who spoke. She observed that the only people pleased with the Crest Drive design were part of the small, exclusive group who developed the proposal approved by the council. She hoped that staff could evaluate any deterioration of the completed portions of the project and urged the council to hold a work session to determine if any changes were made before the second phase of construction. She said the City owned storefronts downtown and urged the City Manager to involve the City in the Eugene Storefront Art Project. She would poll the council for a work session on vacant property issues downtown.

City Manager Jon Ruiz indicated that part of the Downtown Task Force on Public Safety's recommendations was a proposed ordinance on including vacant buildings in the Downtown Eugene, Inc. assessment process. He said the ordinance would come before the council for consideration.

Councilor Pryor appreciated the comments offered during the public forum. He agreed that it was critical to find funding for Buckley Center services as they bridged both public safety and human services needs. He felt Crest Drive was reasonable and inclusive, but perhaps the outcome should be re-examined. He was in favor of the Eugene Storefront Art Project and would support the request for a work session on vacant downtown properties.

Councilor Poling echoed earlier requests for additional information on the Oregon Research Institute property acquisition. He agreed with Councilor Pryor's remarks about the Crest Drive design process and said it was a good idea to revisit the outcome. He was reluctant to modify the design without involving the citizens who originally participated in the process.

Councilor Zelenka supported efforts to find funding for Buckley Center services. He commended the Eugene Storefront Art Project and looked forward to hearing about the next steps. He suggested providing the council with copies of relevant ordinances from other communities. He was willing to revisit the Crest Drive issue. He noted that the former Coca Cola property was owned by the University of Oregon and within the Riverfront Research Park. As a public agency the University would need to follow requirements for a public process if the property was sold. He was supportive of a resolution regarding repeal of the "Don't Ask-Don't Tell" law. He agreed that the Post Office was an architectural jewel and hoped it would be preserved as part of the community's heritage.

Mayor Piercy related that the City had expressed concern about preserving the Post Office structure when it learned of the proposed sale.

3. CONSENT CALENDAR

A. Approval of City Council Minutes of December 16, 2009, Work Session; January 27, 2010, Work Session; February 8, 2010, Regular Meeting; February 10, 2010, Work Session; February 17, 2010, Work Session; February 24, 2010, Work Session; February 26, 2010, Joint Elected Officials Meeting

B. Approval of Tentative Working Agenda
C. Approval of FY10 Neighborhood Matching Grant Proposals
D. Appointments to Lane Workforce Partnership Board

Councilor Clark, seconded by Councilor Taylor, moved to approve the items on the Consent Calendar.

Mayor Piercy asked that items B, C and D be pulled for discussion.

Item A on the Consent Calendar was unanimously approved, 8:0.

Councilor Ortiz noted that she would be absent April 23 through 29 and there were several items on the tentative working agenda that she might ask to have postponed.

Item B on the Consent Calendar was unanimously approved, 8:0.

Councilor Ortiz was pleased that the neighborhood matching grants were well distributed geographically, reflected innovative ideas and were evaluated using the triple-bottom-line tool.

Councilor Zelenka agreed with Councilor Ortiz's comments and strongly supported the grant awards.

Item C on the Consent Calendar was unanimously approved, 8:0.

Councilor Ortiz asked if the Lane Workforce Partnership Board appointments had taken into account geographic and demographic representation.

Mayor Piercy described the process by which the board submitted a list of appointments to the council for confirmation. Councilor Poling added that the board membership required representation from specific disciplines, unlike the City's board and commission that generally selected candidates from a pool of citizens.

Item D on the Consent Calendar was unanimously approved, 8:0.

4. ACTION:
Adoption of Resolution 5003 in Support of United States House of Representatives Bill 4812, the Local Jobs for America Act

Councilor Clark, seconded by Councilor Taylor, moved to adopt Resolution 5003 in support of United States House of Representatives Bill 4812, the Local Jobs for America Act.

Councilor Zelenka stated he would support the resolution. He cited provisions of the bill that would be beneficial to the local economy.

Councilor Solomon stated she was fundamentally opposed to the legislation as it represented another attempt to spend the country's ways out of a recession.

Councilor Clark agreed with the goals set forth in the bill, but concurred with Councilor Solomon about the legislation and could not support the resolution.

Councilor Taylor said she would enthusiastically support the resolution. She said the legislation was timely and was pleased that cities could use up to 50 percent of their funding to retain employees that would otherwise lose their jobs.

Councilor Brown asked what level of funding Oregon anticipated receiving if the legislation passed. Intergovernmental Relations Manager Brenda Wilson explained that funds would be allocated using a formula similar to that used for Community Development Block Grant funds, but factoring in unemployment rates. She estimated that the City of Eugene would receive between $1-1.5 million.

Councilor Brown felt that little could be done with that amount of money. Ms. Wilson said that was the formula allocation and there were other pots of funding within the bill for which the City could qualify. She said members of Oregon's congressional delegation were co-sponsors of the legislation.

The motion passed, 6:2; Councilor Solomon and Councilor Clark voting no.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jon Ruiz
City Manager

(Recorded by Lynn Taylor)