

MINUTES

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

February 24, 2010
5:30 p.m.

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

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

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

Ms. Piercy reported the Asian Celebration was wonderful, was well attended and provided an opportunity to all of the cultural representations in our community. She presented the Soroptimist Ruby Award to Lorraine Kerwood for her work with NextStep Recycling. She met with several mayors in Albany on the electric cable charging station issues. She and Mr. Brown participated in the Mayor's One-on-One at the Kiva. One woman who worked at the Enterprise downtown office liked working and shopping downtown. Another woman spoke about the need for better lighting in the city, particularly in the Norkenzie/Gilham area. Ms. Piercy had attended the Willamette High School jazz concert. She and City Manager Ruiz would be joining local partners on the annual United Front trip to Washington, D.C. to meet with the Congressional delegation regarding local priorities.

Ms. Taylor had an orientation with the Workforce Partnership board and had begun attending meetings. She also had an orientation with the McKenzie Watershed Council director. She had attended the Asian Celebration.

Ms. Ortiz announced Project Homeless Connect was scheduled for March 18, 2010, at the Lane County Fairgrounds. She encouraged councilors to attend the NAACP fund raising dinner at Valley River Center. A health screening would be held in the Bethel community to help children enroll in the Oregon Health Plan. She thought the joint meeting with the City Council and the Eugene Water & Electric Board (EWEB) had been informative and time well spent.

Mr. Pryor concurred with Ms. Ortiz's comments on EWEB. He had attended the Asian Celebration which was a great event. The City had a good representation from the Eugene Police Department (EPD), Eugene Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and other City departments. The LCOG board meeting was scheduled for February 25, 2010, at EWEB.

Mr. Zelenka attended the Laurel Hill Valley Citizens Association meeting and potluck. Fairmount Neighbors would meet on March 10. He said Project Homeless Connect was still looking for volunteers and donations.

Ms. Solomon attended a Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission meeting where a presentation on the completion of capital projects, all of which were under budget, was given. She attended a Human Services Commission (HSC) meeting where a presentation was given on compression, its impact on municipalities, and how it influenced decisions on ballot measures. She noted the Public Works Department had received grant funding for seismic upgrades at Fire Station 8, which would complete seismic upgrades to all of the stations in Eugene. She had attended the Asian Celebration and commented it had grown significantly over the years. The Oregon Logging Conference would take place at the Lane County Fairgrounds this weekend.

Mr. Brown attended the Police Commission Use of Force Committee's meeting where the Taser policy review occurred. The final report was completed at yesterday's committee meeting and would be forwarded to the commission. He attended the One-on-One with the Mayor at the Kiva. Not many people stopped and talked with them, but those who did were interesting and it was worthwhile. He spoke with a woman who had visited Haiti several times who suggested Eugene could have a sister city relationship with a Haitian city.

Mr. Clark said the Public Outreach Committee of the Police Commission had suggested holding commission meetings on the road and the February 11, 2010, commission meeting was held at Sheldon Community Center. There was a robust discussion on the policy review process and protocol. A speaker provided information for the upcoming hate crimes panel that would be held in conjunction with the Human Rights Commission (HRC) in March. Police Chief Pete Kerns reported on EPD activities and suggestions for small, internal changes that would make the system better and help the department be more responsive. The Use of Force Committee provided a report. He and Ms. Taylor met with and supervised the Police Auditor on February 16, 2010. A question that arose from that meeting was how often the auditor should attend City Council meetings and report to the council. Mr. Clark suggested the auditor should make three formal reports during the year, as well as up to three reports on specific issues or incidents, for a total of six reports annually. He thought the EWEB meeting had been very instructive.

Ms. Taylor asserted she had been the biggest booster of sister cities on the council for many years. There were four sister cities, and there had been an effort in the past to establish a relationship with a Mexican city. However, the program had never received adequate funding to support the existing cities and cautioned against adding more cities without additional funding.

Ms. Ortiz would also like to see a city in Mexico added to the sister city program, but understood funding was a challenge. She reported that Eugene Fire and EMS Chief Randy Groves and City of Springfield Fire and Life Safety Chief Dennis Murphy were recently recognized by the Lane Council of Governments (LCOG).

Mr. Ruiz encouraged councilors to attend the rail summit scheduled for March 9, 2010. He attended the Asian Celebration and thanked staff who participated in the event. He planned to attend the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) event. He said the City was in full budget mode.

**B. WORK SESSION:
Homeless Camping**

Ms. Ortiz had been contacted by a community member who was concerned about how the Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) regarding people sleeping in their cars was written. She said this was an ongoing situation that needed to be revisited annually. She said it was the council's responsibility to tweak the system to help a few people who did not have a place to live have a better quality of life.

Richie Weinman, Community Development Division (CDD), and Lt. Pete Desphande, EPD, provided an overview of homelessness in Eugene.

Mr. Weinman reported 3,971 homeless people were counted in Lane County and 2,541 people were unsheltered during the one night homeless count on January 27, 2010. Eugene had been confronted with illegal camping issues for decades, and had worked to find a balance between the needs of the community's most vulnerable residents and the health and safety concerns of property owners and tenants. The current program included a contract with St. Vincent de Paul (SVDP) to manage the City's legal spaces for which the City paid \$89,000 for a staff person to manage the spaces, the cost of portable restrooms and garbage pick-up at legal camping locations.

Mr. Desphande said the issue with EPD was one of balancing compassion and enforcement. He reviewed the current protocols for enforcement action, which was complaint-driven. When EPD received a complaint, staff contacted SVDP staff, who effectively dealt with the situations that arose. If SVDP staff could not resolve issues, EPD was contacted. EPD then made contact with the people and generally resolved the issue. Citations were rarely issued. While the system was not perfect, the program was successful. He had been contacted by agencies in other states who were interested in the partnership between the City and SVDP.

Mr. Clark appreciated Mr. Weinman's characterization that enforcement in the past had been adversarial and unsatisfactory. Mr. Clark recently had a complaint from a constituent regarding a situation that lasted a considerable length of time before the campers could be helped. He appreciated the newer model and the compassionate look, and hoped the City would be as responsive as possible. He was interested in finding answers by being creative and perhaps being more accommodating with restrictions on private property for people who wanted to be a part of the solution.

Mr. Weinman explained that in the past, the police were more aggressive with enforcement of the camping laws which resulted in police spending time on this issue at the expense of other enforcement needs, greater anger and stress on the streets among homeless people, and no greater success at reducing homelessness. When the ordinance was adopted in 1998, it contained provisions for on-street camping and camping in other locations, with the intent of allowing neighbors to help each other. The existing ordinance permitted a business, public agency or church to have up to three campers on their property if sanitation was provided. One camper per property owner was permitted. If the council wanted to allow more than one camper per property owner, an ordinance change was required.

Mr. Clark asked for information on how the ordinance could be tweaked to make it more helpful and provide the community with more tools to enable them to help their neighbors.

Ms. Ortiz asked how the council could encourage more organizations to sign up for the spaces that were monitored by SVDP. She cautioned about relaxing the ordinance and creating enforcement challenges for EPD. She suggested the Police Commission could be asked to review the ordinance.

Mr. Weinman said the challenge was getting more spaces. Willing organizations could contact him at 541-682-5533 or SVDP at 541-687-5820.

Ms. Piercy stated the council's goals had been to get people into permanent housing through affordable housing projects and other strategies, as well as preventing people from becoming homeless. She asked if there was a role for the HRC to reach out to identify additional camping sites. She noted Looking Glass was interested in acquiring a housing site on West Seventh Avenue which needed upgrades to receive the necessary City permits. She asked if the City could work collaboratively with local partners to assist Looking Glass.

Mr. Pryor appreciated the efforts to be evenhanded in addressing homeless camping issues. It was helpful to recognize both a condition and a behavior were being addressed, and that recognition would impact what action was taken. Most of the complaints he received were not about the condition of homelessness but rather people's behavior. When the condition was confused with the behavior, the brush became broad and painted many people unintentionally. While it was important to be compassionate about a condition many people had no control over, it was also important to be thoughtful and deliberate about unacceptable behaviors. Many of the behaviors were being committed by people who did have homes. He agreed that finding homes or shelter for people could be life-changing and was a goal for which the council should strive.

Mr. Zelenka stated the model the City was currently using worked better than it used to. SVDP did great work. He commented that having 4,000 community members homeless was too high.

Mr. Weinman, responding to a question, explained the national best practice model was to move people from homelessness into permanent housing with supportive services, noting the shelter system was the most expensive service with the worst outcomes for the amount of money spent. He added the cost of subsidizing housing was beyond the capability of local and state governments, and needed to come from the federal government.

Pearl Wolfe, Lane County HSC, responded to questions related to the one night homeless count. She said of the 3,971 people counted, 1,411 were in some kind of a shelter and receiving some type of services in the community. There were more people getting some kind of rental assistance for emergency shelter, and mortgage assistance for the prevention of homelessness than in the past. Twenty-three sites were added to the count this year. A total of 92 organizations and over 100 volunteers and staff conducted the count. She was deeply troubled by the number of chronically homeless people in the community. Through the Egan Warming Center and Project Homeless Connect, the depth of the problem had become more apparent.

During the past year, 11,513 households were homeless sometime during the year, some for one day.

Ms. Piercy thanked everyone for their work on this issue.

Mr. Brown emphasized the need for affordable housing, and asked about the current efforts.

Mr. Weinman stated an SVDP housing project was under construction on West Eleventh Avenue and Hayes Street, and a project would soon be underway at the former Willakenzie School site. He asserted the City Council should be proud of itself for its long term support of subsidized housing. Council and staff did the best they could with the resources available. In response to a question from Councilor Taylor, Mr. Weinman said he understood that EWEB was the most proactive utility company in the area in terms of providing energy assistance for low income households.

Mr. Zelenka commended Ms. Wolfe and Mr. Weinman for their work, noting they are among the best in the country at what they do, and are recognized as such.

**C. WORK SESSION:
Eugene Comprehensive Lands Assessment**

Lisa Gardner and Jason Dedrick, of the Planning Division, provided an update on the Eugene Comprehensive Lands Assessment (ECLA), specifically progress toward the final land need determination in April, 2010, as well as an overview of the approach to early community conversations on the next phase of the project, determining a Eugene-only urban growth boundary (UGB). Ms. Gardner offered a PowerPoint presentation entitled *Envision Eugene: Finding the Path to our Future* and distributed a document entitled *Envision Eugene Conceptual Time Line*.

Ms. Gardner explained staff was working with Bob Chadwick who was helping to form a foundation for the ECLA work which would be an integral part of how staff and the public communicated with each other. During the next several months, one-on-ones and community listening sessions and ongoing conversations would take place.

Ms. Piercy emphasized the importance of engaging with the Lane County Planning Commission early in the process.

Ms. Gardner acknowledged the technical analysis included a lengthy period of coordinating with partner agencies including EWEB, state agencies, school districts, and Lane County. Staff could provide updates to the council via memorandum or with another meeting. She reviewed the timeline for interviews of community members. As directed by the City Council in December 2009, the council would take action to accept the land needed for Eugene for a 20-year period in April 2010. She reviewed the six guiding principles that would be used to frame the conversations with community members.

Mr. Pryor opined building flexibility into the process and providing changing variables was critical to its success. Part of the contentiousness around the process was related to the assumptions people made about the intent of the process. It was important to be as accurate as possible with things that required precision. Both the process used and peoples' reaction to the product were equally important.

Ms. Piercy stressed that the council was dealing with an opportunity to do things differently, to look into the future and do the best job it could.

The meeting adjourned at 1:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon Ruiz", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Jon Ruiz
City Manager

(Recorded by Linda Henry)