



Eugene Sustainability Commission

MINUTES

Eugene Sustainability Commission
Atrium, Saul Room
Eugene, Oregon

March 18, 2015
5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Shawn Boles, Howard Bonnett, Joanne Gross, Dawn Lesley, Sasha Luftig, Steve Newcomb, Kevin O'Brien, Howard Saxion, Carolyn Stein, David Tam, Sue Wolling and Alan Zelenka, commissioners. Babe O'Sullivan and Matt McRae, City Manager's Office; Stephanie Jennings, Planning and Development Department; and Chris Henry, Public Works Department. Andrew Thomson, Human Rights Commission.

ABSENT: Justin Overdevest, commissioner.

Mr. Newcomb called the March 18, 2015 meeting of the Sustainability Commission to order.

1. Opening – agenda review, approval of minutes

Item 4 relating to the Key Corridor Study was moved to item 3. Mr. Newcomb stated that minutes for the February 2015 meeting were still under development.

2. Public comment

Mark Robinowitz provided public comment about deforestation and "fracking."

3. Sounding Board for the Key Corridor Study

Ms. Luftig and Chris Henry provided background on the "MovingAhead" project which is focused on planning key corridors to make movement easier across the city. The project is a joint effort of the City of Eugene and Lane Transit District to prioritize completion of the remaining segments of the bus rapid transit system and associated bicycle and pedestrian improvements citywide. The project directly links the community vision in Envision Eugene to transportation planning and design of infrastructure improvements along the corridors.

Staff is currently recruiting members to serve on a Sounding Board group, and specifically requests two Sustainability Commission members be appointed. The Sounding Board will serve as an advisory body to consider ideas, review public input and recommendations from staff and provide advice on how to proceed. The two commissioners would be liaisons back to the Sustainability Commission and bring transportation related advice back to the Sounding Board. Neighborhood meetings are planned for May as part of an 18-month process to prioritize up to 4 corridors for investments. Commissioners Wolling and Stein volunteered with Commissioner O'Brien as a substitute.

4. Consolidated Plan

Stephanie Jennings, city staff with Community Development, provided a presentation on housing and the current update of the Eugene-Springfield Consolidated Plan. The topic links to the commission's work on Urban Growth Boundary expansion and implementation of the Climate Recovery Ordinance, as well as the issues of micro-housing, achieving home ownership and the work conducted as part of the Lane Livability Consortium.

The discussion with the Commission raised several questions and comments:

- What is the number of affordable housing units needed? This goes up and down depending on economic conditions and incomes. The number is probably higher post-recession as incomes have not recovered. Housing is considered unaffordable if more than 30% of income goes to housing costs.
- Does the Consolidated Plan address how to make affordable housing available in corridors (where it's not likely to pencil out)? The goal is to create choices for wide variety of people and lifestyles and avoid concentrations of poverty – especially in corridors where this already exists. Some other considerations:
 - The community has low commute times and some may not need access to transit (e.g. bike commuters).
 - Jobs are often not located in transit-served locations, or during times that transit is running.
 - Another trade-off: fewer units can be cost-effectively built along corridors.
- There are a number of tools in the Consolidated Plan that can be helpful along the Hwy 99 corridor.
- Access for rehab funds: apply for loan, coordinated with EWEB and HACSA
- There should be an emphasis on preserving City investments in improved housing. Some has been lost with previous incentive programs. Most providers now commit to 50 years of affordable housing.
- Will student housing demand fall? If so will city be nimble and invest in properties converted back to Single Family? The City offers funding for acquisitions in market but it is difficult to find these units available.
- Can the Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption (MUPTE) be a useful tool? There are possibilities: ideas for including affordable housing as condition of awarding exemption. It depends on the population; workforce housing is easy to integrate but below-poverty needs are not often met by private developers.
- Connection to Envision Eugene? The two planning efforts can support each other. There is a Pillar that addresses housing affordability. Staff is reviewing the housing element to integrate concepts from the Consolidated Plan.
- Rapid re-housing? This is typically in the form of rent assistance, deposits, utility payment or other to get people into housing units. Most come from the county, Human Services Commission and Section 8, or veteran's housing voucher.
- Micro housing? This is not well defined and falls within a spectrum of housing types such as single room occupancy units or tiny houses. If they are not complete units (with bath and kitchen) they don't meet HUD's habitability requirements.
- How will federal funds be distributed in region? Eugene and Springfield receive separate allocations of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds which are then allocated to programs, not on a geographic basis. For housing development, the City issues an annual Request for Proposals. There is a separate joint/regional process for HOME funds.

- What else will be needed to reach goals? Additional funding through local investment (bond funding), state-level funding.
- Status of down payment assistance program (under HOME)? There is a difficult tradeoff with housing the homeless and providing this other form of assistance within current funding allocations. This is definitely one option for the future.

Human Rights Commission Co-Chair Andrew Thomson pointed to the potential for the two commissions to collaborate on the issue of housing and his interest in looking for options of common interest (e.g. sustainable and affordable new housing). He felt that joint work by the two commissions provides a stronger voice to council. Sustainability Co-Chair Newcomb highlighted energy retrofits to existing low-income housing as another potential area of joint interest.

5. BREAK

6. Sub-committee reports

Envision Eugene

The sub-committee did not meet.

Adaptation

The sub-committee provided a revised draft of their memo and welcomes comments. A vote of the full commission is needed to approve it for submittal to Council. A vote will be taken at the next commission meeting in April.

Carbon Fee

The sub-committee didn't meet. There was an informal meeting with Tom Bowerman who is pushing a cap and trade bill in the legislature. There is some sentiment in the legislature that the recent Clean Fuel bill was the climate change bill for the session.

Commissioner Boles shared that a group of concerned citizens are asking elected leaders to sign on to a commitment to address climate change and a price on carbon.

Transportation

The sub-committee reported that members had met with City transportation planner Kurt Yeiter. The sub-committee is advocating for one aspect of the proposed complete street policy: accountability and reporting on why some streets may not have been built as such. Mr. Yeiter is looking at reporting and monitoring requirements in light of the Transportation System Plan (TSP) and Envision Eugene but no commitment has yet been made to incorporate this reporting requirement. In response to questions about the Beltline Hwy project, Mr. Yeiter reported that a placeholder is needed in the TSP to guarantee funding for the development of an Environmental Impact Statement, even if the project is later scaled down or changed (e.g. lower build options). Councilor Zelenka suggested that the project could also be broken down into phases (safety, local traffic issues, etc.). Staff is taking the TSP to the Planning Commission in May. The sub-committee requests time on the April commission agenda for Mr. Yeiter to discuss the Plan.

Sustainable Economic Development (SED)

The sub-committee reported that it has completed interviews related to the food industry and compiled its data. The sub-committee expects to pick the top 3-5 topics and bring these back to the commission

to determine next steps. The sub-committee will also pick the top 5 economic development opportunities coming from its analysis of the Climate and Energy Action Plan and bring these forward for discussion with the commission.

7. Items from commissioners and staff

Commissioner Gross shared that March 30 is the first committee meeting on a potential zoning code ordinance and overlay zones (for water quality and airport operations) for the Clear Lake Road area. Commissioners Saxion and Gross have been invited to participate. The discussion may relate to the findings on the food industry from the SED sub-committee (see above). Staff will forward information about the meeting to the commission.

Commissioner Stein shared that the old Grizzlies granola plant in Glenwood was recently on the market. There is a current variance for food production which will be lost May 1, 2015 if the building is not occupied by a food producer. As a result of networking by BRING Recycling staff, Marché is buying the building and moving its operations to the site.

Commissioner Bonnett shared that the Alder Street bike counts indicated a small increase (number of bicyclists up 7% over 3 year period) even with street upgrades and new bike facilities.

Commissioner Wolling shared that she spoke at a recent City Council public forum about Envision Eugene.

8. Closing

Mr. Newcomb adjourned the meeting at 7:50 PM.

Recorded by Babe O'Sullivan