

EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD
WORK SESSION
EWEB BOARD ROOM
MARCH 18, 2008
6:30 P.M.

Commissioners present: John Simpson, Ron Farmer, John Brown, and Mel Menegat.

Others present: Randy Berggren, Mark Oberle, Jim Origliosso, Lance Robertson, Dick Helgeson, Dick Varner, Patty Boyle, John Yanov, Sheila Crawford, Debra Smith, and Judy Chase of the EWEB staff; and Kathi Weiderhold, Lane Council of Governments; Minutes were written from a digital recording.

President Simpson convened the work session of the Eugene Water & Electric Board (EWEB) at 6:25 p.m.

HEADQUARTERS MASTER PLAN – CITIZEN COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Property Manager Mark Oberle explained that this work session was intended to allow the Board to discuss the interview and appointment process, as outlined in the backgrounder entitled *Community Advisory Team Selection Process – Riverfront Master Plan* dated *March 18, 2008*. He reported that approximately 12 applications had come in and more were anticipated. He noted that the applications that had been submitted were all from “high quality applicants.”

The Commissioners determined that April 7 would be the optimal date for committee member interviews.

Mr. Oberle directed the commissioners’ attention to the *Sample Questions* listed on the last page of the backgrounder and asked for input.

Vice President Farmer commented that he was not very interested in having questions that indicated whether people “played well with others.” His primary goal was to determine how EWEB could maximize the value of the property in order to help the utility with its next project. He wanted a certain level of expertise but he wanted it coupled with a plan that would be suitable for the community. He suggested that they ask what level of expertise the applicant would bring to the process. He liked the 12th question, which asked what strengths the applicant would bring to the team.

Commissioner Brown noted his previous work on the Downtown Plan and others. He said for him the most important thing was that the participants had done their “homework.” He listed some of his preferred questions:

- Of the four major components in the Downtown Plan and the Riverfront Master Plan, how did the applicant conceive of the educational component?
- Currently 20 percent of the property is encumbered by easements; how much more would be necessary and how would the applicant envision meeting the open space requirement? How would the integrity of private residences within the developments be maintained? Had the applicant thought about sound attenuation and how that would be addressed?

He stressed that the questions sought to reflect community values and the applicants' ability to meld community input and the values and interpretations provided them with their own background and experience. He declared that the results from the process would have to have both validity and transparency.

Commissioner Brown felt the level of cooperation in the committee would be up to whoever became the chair and vice-chair and the facilitator, when selected. He averred that those people would control the power dynamic of the conversation. He preferred more specific questions and agreed with Vice President Farmer that questions that sought to determine a person's willingness to cooperate were not necessary. He stressed that there were a lot of things to think about, such as how 40 units per acre could be achieved if that was required, what mix of commercial and residential there should be, and how the mill race would be day-lighted if that was opted for.

Commissioner Menegat asked if the interviews would be public. He expressed some concern that if all of the applicants were in the room, the first few would be at a disadvantage. He suggested the questions be provided to applicants in advance of the interview. He acknowledged that there would be a variety of responses to the questions as there were not necessarily right answers to most of them. He underscored that EWEB was appointing a citizen advisory team; the citizens should not be expected to have the expertise of a planner. He pointed out that EWEB was hiring a planner. He wanted to seek a balance.

Vice President Farmer wanted someone who knew what they were talking about. He opined that he would not want himself on such a committee. He added that he was uncertain he wanted to have a set of questions. He preferred to have one or two set questions and then to ask applicants questions based on the strengths Commissioners could see in their applications.

Commissioner Brown stated that they needed some level of expertise. He pointed out that everyone would like to have a park, which would leave EWEB with nothing; it was important to have a balance of EWEB's economic needs included in the committee's consideration. He reiterated his desire for some more general questions and some more specific questions. He added that in his opinion it would only be fair to ask everyone the same questions.

President Simpson felt there was a need for a mixture of people, both people with a strong expertise and people that were interested citizens. He did not favor the teamwork “touchy-feely” questions. He cited the 12th question and commented that he would not choose to ask people what their weaknesses were. He opposed having everyone present and suggested having the applicants be interviewed one at a time.

President Simpson liked Commissioner Brown’s questions as they drilled down the specifics in qualifications. He asked staff to come up with a short list of questions that would bring out their qualifications related to the planning of the site.

In response to a question from General Manager Randy Berggren, President Simpson clarified that he meant a list of questions extrapolated from Commissioner Brown’s and Mr. Oberle’s suggested questions.

Commissioner Brown stated that his intent was not to get a specific answer to a question, but rather to see how people think. He observed that there would be 22 trains running by the eventual development there and he would want to determine what an applicant’s thinking process would be around this adverse environmental issue. He added that it would be important to determine that the participants did not have a present or potential conflict of interest.

Vice President Farmer suggested that the commissioners each take their top five applicants and score them one through five and then review the applicants’ scores. Mr. Berggren responded that the list of applicants could include anyone with three or more votes.

President Simpson surmised that Mr. Oberle would provide the applications to the Board. He requested a spreadsheet to help the Board track the applicants.

Commissioner Brown asked if there was any level of association with the applicants that would require a board member to recuse himself from participating in the selection process. Mr. Oberle remarked that the Commissioners probably did know some of the applicants. Mr. Berggren added that he did not know of anything that would legally cause a Commissioner to recuse himself. He said this was a citizens group that would be making a recommendation and not a decision-making body.

Vice President Farmer observed that there would be no conflict in being acquainted with someone; a true conflict would only be related to potential financial gain.

The Commissioners discussed the number of questions to ask and determined they would ask two specific questions and then each Commissioner would have the opportunity to ask an individual question.

Mr. Oberle requested more specificity on the questions. He related that staff had avoided questions that would ask people to tell what their vision was for the site. He said staff sought to determine what their expertise was that they would bring to the team. He explained that they thought if someone came in with an exact vision of what they wanted it would preclude having an open minded process.

Mr. Berggren asked for a little more clarity. President Simpson responded that a question that asked what strengths the applicant would bring to the process was straight forward and appropriate.

Vice President Farmer wanted to know what their strengths were in relation to a master plan. He wanted to know what he would be gaining from appointing a particular applicant.

Commissioner Brown said he would ask why the applicant wanted to serve on this committee and make a commitment to two meetings per month for 18 months. President Simpson commented that the answer to that question would be helpful to him. Vice President Farmer thought everyone would respond with a variation of loving his or her city. Mr. Oberle noted that there was a similar question on the application and Vice President Farmer was correct in surmising that the applicants would declare their love for Eugene.

Mr. Berggren asked the Commissioners how they felt about the fourth question on Commissioner Brown's list:

- How will you balance the economic impacts of your recommendations against meeting what you believe are community goals both in urban space, parks, etc.; i.e. how much open space is enough to meet community expectations and still maximize the property value?

Vice President Farmer remarked that this was where he would make his decision. He did not want committee participants to only focus on maximizing the value, but he also did not want them to disregard it.

Mr. Oberle asked if there was any staff input needed between the interview date of April 7 and the decision point on April 15.

Commissioner Brown wanted to ensure that the applicants' interest was appreciated and that there was a clear and respectful message provided to those who were not appointed that conveyed that appreciation.

Commissioner Brown also recommended that the Board select an alternate, in the event that someone decided they could not complete their commitment. He stressed the importance of not losing the balance of EWEB representation and city representation.

Mr. Oberle was not certain how an alternate would participate: would the person attend all of the meetings but not be able to vote or would the alternate stay home and then pitch in if someone quit?

President Simpson thought it would not be difficult to bring an alternate up to speed. He did not think the alternate would necessarily have to attend meetings. He pointed out that technically the Board could choose to replace someone at any time.

Vice President Farmer suggested that they just use the scoring so that the next highest scoring person after the five were appointed would automatically become the alternate.

Mr. Oberle stated that he would compile questions for the Board to review prior to the interviews.

President Simpson thanked Mr. Oberle for his work on the process.

President Simpson adjourned the meeting at 7:12 p.m.

Assistant Secretary

President