

Neighborhood News

The Official Newsletter of Jefferson Westside Neighbors

2010 Neighborhood of the Year

February 2011

OPINION: Envision Eugene Process Short Changes Public Participation

By Paul Conte

The information below is as of January 24, 2011, the article publication deadline. Factual content of this article was reviewed by a Planning Division staff member.

The “Envision Eugene” process will ultimately lead to City Council taking one or both of the following actions to accommodate future anticipated residential, commercial and industrial growth: Adopting new development policies and zoning code that increase residential density inside the current Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), and/or adding additional land to the area encompassed by Eugene’s UGB.

The City Manager has scheduled Council decisions on the “major deal points” for Envision Eugene for February 28. The City Manager recently backed away from his earlier commitments to City Council to include “lines on a map” denoting a proposed Eugene-only UGB as part of the “deal points.” Otherwise, the City Manager has not provided a clear description or examples of exactly what the “major deal points” will comprise.

The City Manager was scheduled to present his draft recommendations on January 31. As of publication deadline, Planning Division staff had not provided the public the critical quantitative assumptions upon which the City Manager is basing his recommendations. Staff also haven’t provided maps or tables that would let a member of the public determine what assumptions have been made about various areas and parcels, for example, which tax lots are “off the table” for further development and which tax lots are targeted for higher density development.

Learn more at the February 8th JWN Town Hall meeting on Envision Eugene. See page 2 for more information.

Staff has also not made the underlying data used in their analysis available in a way that can be effectively used to check the data validity. Serious questions about data validity have been raised by experts, including a local engineering firm.

Staff has also not made available complete and up-to-date descriptions of the methods they used to select and analyze historical data or the methods they’re using

to create projections for the next twenty years. Thus, it has been difficult or impossible to determine the appropriateness of the analysis methods that are being relied upon.

Although the City has scheduled “open houses” on February 3rd and 10th and a “public hearing” on February 22nd, these events and the Council vote are jammed into just over *three weeks*.

KEY DATES for Envision Eugene

- **February 3 - City Open House**
4-7 p.m., North Eugene High School Library
200 Silver Lane, off River Road
- **February 10 - City Open House**
4-7 p.m., Roosevelt Middle School Cafeteria
680 E. 24th, near Hilyard St.
- **February 22 - City Council public hearing**
7:30 p.m., Council Chamber/City Hall, 777 Pearl
- **February 28 - City Council work session**
(decisions on “major deal points”)
5:30 p.m., McNutt Room/City Hall, 777 Pearl

City Web site: www.eugene-or.gov/envisioneugene .

Consider this: If you attend the open house on the 10th, you’ll have just 12 days to go through the public material, request and consider additional information or clarifications from staff, discuss issues with your neighbors and associates and put together comments to submit. You’ll then have three-minutes at the hearing to express your opinion. Further, unlike the standard practice in much less significant planning processes, the Planning Commission will *not* hold a separate hearing prior to the hearing on the 22nd.

There’s another serious problem with the Envision Eugene process. The City Manager and Mayor are for practical purposes relying almost exclusively on a group known as the Community Resource Group (CRG). The Planning Commission and Sustainability Commission have been relegated to minor roles. Neighborhood Associations have been effectively cut out of the critical few weeks prior to the February decision point because there’s no practical way for neighborhood association leaders to get out the information and hold meetings to decide on recommendations or comments to present to Council before the Council decision date.

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JWN Meeting & Events Schedule

General Meetings

7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on the second Tuesday in February, March April (board elections), September, October and November. Meetings are held at the First United Methodist Church at 1376 Olive Street.

Events

- JWN Executive Board elections (April)
- Neighborhood Picnic (June)
- National Neighbors Night Out (August)
- Holiday party (December)

Meeting agendas and event locations are posted on the JWN Web site jwneugene.org.



Jefferson Westside Neighbors

Sign Up! Stay Connected!

JWN "Subscription-Based" Announcements and News

To provide more timely information, better service and save money and paper, JWN now offers meeting announcements and regular news subscription. JWN will continue to mail all JWN residents and businesses several printed newsletters each year. Meeting and event announcements, and news which won't fit into the printed newsletter, will be provided in either electronic or printed form only by subscription.

Subscribing is simple: For e-mail delivery, sign up for the JWN e-NEWS at jwneugene.org. Your e-mail address is secure and never shared, and you can cancel at any time.

If you don't have access to e-mail, you can request that printed information be mailed to you at no cost. Just call 541.344.2552 and leave your name, address and phone number. This service is available only to JWN members.

JWN Town Hall on Envision Eugene

Make your voice count!

The program for our February 8 meeting will be a "Town Hall" on Envision Eugene. Several individuals, including our JWN Chair, who've been actively engaged in Envision Eugene, will share information and perspectives. The majority of time, however, will be available to JWN members to share their opinions and experiences about future growth and development. The Executive Board will do its best to ensure JWN members' viewpoints are effectively represented as City Council makes decisions at the end of February.

Election for JWN Board Position

In December, Tom Happy notified the board he was resigning because of other commitments. The board wants to express their appreciation to Tom for his service.

An election to fill the vacancy will be held at the February 8 General Meeting. The term for this election runs until annual elections are held on April 12, 2011. Board members are expected to attend monthly board meetings, as well as approximately six to eight General Meetings per year.

A candidate must either be present at the February 8 General Meeting and indicate his or her willingness to serve in the position; or have attended and signed in at one of the previous six JWN General Meetings, and have submitted a written statement of his or her willingness to serve in the position to the Executive Board prior to the election.

If you're interested in being nominated for this position, please contact the JWN Chair prior to the meeting.



At last fall's Tree Party, JWN Neighbor Annie Dochnal talks trees with Rick Olkowski, City of Eugene NeighborWoods coordinator.

JWN Volunteer Opportunities

Our neighborhood is well-known for its great events, fun parties, and well-run and informative neighborhood meetings. *Now is a great time to share the work and the joy! Give a little bit of your time and get a lot back!*

Here are some specific ways you can help your neighborhood. And, don't worry – you won't be on your own. For all of the positions, an experienced board member will provide technical or organizational help when needed.

Event coordinators and helpers. Coordinators work as a two-person team to organize a picnic, party or other event. Helpers assist. You can work on one or more projects in either role.

Meeting setup coordinators and helpers. Coordinators supervise and help setup (6:30 to 7:00 p.m.) and breakdown (9:00 to 9:30 p.m.) for monthly JWN general meetings. Helpers assist.

Contact list helpers. Coordinator updates the JWN contact list, using basic spreadsheet tools (e.g., Excel). Helpers enter data from meeting signup cards, etc.

Outreach coordinators and helpers. Coordinators organize outreach to groups of JWN members to determine members' interests, inform members of JWN benefits and encourage participation. Helpers assist. Coordinators can choose to focus on a particular segment of the JWN membership, including cultural groups, business principals, renters, etc.

Web site manager. Use the Yahoo! Web page design tool to add and revise content on the JWN Web site at jwneugene.org. You don't need to be an HTML expert, but should be comfortable with Web page design elements, such as text boxes and images. An experienced neighbor will provide technical help when needed.

E-mail editor. Use the iContact e-mail design tool to add content to the JWN e-NEWS e-mails that are sent to subscribers. You should be comfortable with Web page or document layout.

Newsletter editor. Use a document layout tool to edit and create four-page, quarterly newsletters from content supplied by other people. You should have a good grasp of grammar and punctuation. An experienced neighbor will provide technical help when needed.

JWN Special Interest Group (SIG) coordinators. Coordinators organize meetings, communication and activities centered on specific interests related to the JWN, e.g., gardening, bicycling, Monroe Park, traffic calming, etc. The JWN board provides limited assistance (e.g., publication & Web space, e-mail distribution, help with neighborhood matching grant applications, etc.) to recognized SIGs. Some SIGs may become formal JWN committees.

Interested? Contact JWN Chair, Paul Conte, 541.344.2552, chair@jwneugene.org .

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I was a member of the CRG through months of lengthy meetings in which nothing concrete was produced. I won't detail my criticisms here, but in December, I withdrew from the CRG because it continued to be run in a non-representative, non-democratic and non-productive manner by the City's hired consultant. Many other CRG members have also quit participating even though there are four critical CRG meetings being held between January 13 and February 1.

And yet this limited group is deliberating on recommendations of enormous importance, including the projected rate of job growth, the future mix of housing types, density and so on. Many of these critical discussions are occurring in even smaller groups with virtually no involvement of the public.

The reality of this process is that by the time the general public can get a grip on what's happening and the implications, staff will have already made their decisions, relying on the CRG as representing the "community opinion" – which it assuredly does not.

Depressing? Yes. In my many years of slogging through City planning processes and working hard for broader and more meaningful public participation, this may be the worst disenfranchisement of the public I've experienced.

Hopeless? I hope not. There is only one critical decision that Council should make on February 28 and that is to put off decisions on "major deal points" until the public, including JWN, and other neighborhood associations have a reasonable opportunity to learn the facts, have a real community discussion about the concrete decisions that will affect our community for decades, and can let Council know their opinions.

Most of us in the JWN are fortunate that our City Councilor has been pressing for a more legitimate public process. You can help by writing to the Mayor and City Council and urging them to respect your desire to have a reasonable opportunity to provide well-informed comments on these key decisions. You can e-mail your comments to: MayorAndCC@ci.eugene.or.us .

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns about Envision Eugene or other City land use processes.

Would you like a beautiful, FREE TREE for the parking strip in front of your home?

The JWN has teamed up with Eugene Tree Foundation (ETF) and The City's Neighborwoods program to offer free trees and planting tools, advice and assistance, so you and your neighbors can enjoy the many benefits trees provide. For more information contact Trees@jwneugene.org or Paul Conte.



Jefferson Westside Neighbors Executive Board

Chair:

Paul Conte 541-344-2552, chair@jwneugene.org

Vice-chair: Sue Cummings

Treasurer: Garrick Mishaga Jr.

Secretary: rotating

At-large Board Members: Josh Bolton, Sue Cummings,
Rene Kane, Garrick Mishaga Jr., Tony Rosta

Newsletter Editor: Paul Conte

JWN meeting minutes, financial information, bylaws, and additional information are available on the JWN Web site at jwneugene.org or by contacting the chair.

JWN newsletter policy

This is the official newsletter of the Jefferson Westside Neighbors. The newsletter Editor, in conjunction with the JWN Board, is responsible for all content, subject to City approval in City-funded issues. (This issue was printed with City of Eugene funds.) Articles with bylines reflect the opinion of the authors and not necessarily that of the JWN Board, the neighborhood association, or City staff or public officials. We welcome submissions of all types, including articles and letters. All submissions are subject to editing or shortening for publication. All submissions must be accompanied by the author's name, home address, and phone number or e-mail address. (We do not publish authors' addresses, phone numbers, or e-mail addresses unless requested by the author.) To submit an article or letter, or for more information, please contact Paul Conte, JWN newsletter editor at chair@jwneugene.org, or 541.344.2552.



Seth San Filippo from Urban Lumber Company uses a portable sawmill to cut redwood slabs at JWN's fall Tree Party.

Eugene Neighborhood Services Policy Statement: This is the official newsletter of the Jefferson Westside Neighbors. Newsletters are published courtesy of the City of Eugene. Newsletters are produced by neighborhood volunteers and are free to the residents and businesses of the neighborhood. Space is available for letters to the editor with editorial comment from the neighbors. Signed letters will be printed as space permits. Editorials express the author's view and not that of the neighborhood association, the City's elected officials or city staff.



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www.eugene-or.gov?neighborhoods



Jefferson Westside Neighbors
c/o: Neighborhood Services
99 West 10th Avenue
Eugene OR 97401

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