

**STUDY SESSION NOTES  
CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO**

**February 14, 2011**

Mayor DiTullio called the Study Session to order at 7: p.m. Council Members present: Joseph DeMott, Joyce Jay, Davis Reinhart, Karen Adams, Karen Berry, Wanda Sang, Tracy Langworthy and Mike Stites. Also present: City Clerk, Michael Snow; City Treasurer, Larry Schulz; City Manager, Patrick Goff; Administrative Services Director, Heather Geyer; City Attorney, Jerry Dahl; Director of Community Development, Kenneth Johnstone; Economic Development Manager, Steve Art; Planner, Sarah Showalter; Staff and interested citizens.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

- 1. Staff Report**
  - a) Integration of Property Inspector Duties to the Police Department's Community Services Team

Chief Brennan briefed the Council on the department's proposal to relocate the current Property Inspector Position from Community Development to the Police Department Community Service Team. Council unanimously supported the Chief's proposal.

- b) EPA Smart Growth Conference

Ms. Showalter and Council Member Jay both recently attended an EPA Smart Growth Conference in North Carolina. They shared a memo summarizing their numerous ideas presented at the conference, particularly ideas they felt were timely and relevant to issues currently being confronted in Wheat Ridge.

- c) Security for Elected Official at Public Events

Chief Brennan spoke on the demands to provide security for Elected Officials during public events throughout the City in light of the recent escalation of violence towards officials nationwide. The Chief does not feel that providing policing of events that are attended by federal, state or local officials will cause an undue burden or expense for the department currently. The Chief asked Wheat Ridge officials to communicate with the Police Department if community members give them concern with respect to their safety.

## 2. Legislative Rezoning of Wadsworth Corridor

Mr. Johnstone presented staff's proposal to initiate a rezoning of the Wadsworth Corridor to Mixed-Use. Early surveys during community meetings of business owners in the area revealed as much as two-thirds support the rezoning, while a number of property owners responding to a more recent mailed survey were in opposition. Mr. Johnstone asked Council whether they supported staff pursuing the rezoning and indicated the rezoning would require a Resolution to initiate the rezoning process and an Ordinance for approval. Council discussed concerns whether the entire area should be rezoned considering certain property owners' objections. Council expressed support to move forward with the entire area as outlined but with the understanding that businesses that are extremely opposed can be removed as needed during the process.

## 3. Connections Newsletter Cost-Cutting Options

Ms. Geyer recommended Option C detailed in her memo for reducing the cost of the City newsletter, which utilizes a newsprint option with color print and carrier route method of mailing. This option, currently being used in the Commerce City newsletter (hard copy example amended to this packet) would save the City approximately \$43,000 yearly compared to the current newsletter design. In order to avoid delays in the production of the next publication of the Connections Newsletter, Ms. Geyer recommended renewing the current contract and design plan for 2011, then plan to open the new design to an open bids in the fall. The majority of Council expressed support for Ms. Geyer's recommended Option C.

## 4. Homeowner electrical permits and building inspector cell phone numbers.

Mr. Stites opened discussion on concerns for numerous practices in the City's Building Department, including the issuance of electrical work permits and fees to homeowners, the releasing of cell phone numbers of building inspectors to the public, policies on city staff responses to citizens and building contractors.

The majority of Council supported a direction for Staff to discontinue the policy of blocking cell phone numbers of City building inspectors in an effort to enhance customer service and communications with customers.

Council was unanimous in directing staff to remove requirements of homeowners to be licensed electricians to be issued permits for doing electrical work on their own homes.

The majority of Council supported directing Staff to discontinue any policy allowing staff members to contact employers of residents unless there is an official legal need to do so. If the employee feels the need to make phone calls

or write letters to customers they need to go through their chain of command to their Department Director or City Manager.

Ms. Adams requested staff to provide periodic results to Council from the customer service surveys that are returned to the Building Department in order to get feedback whether there is a prevalent problem with Building Department practices or not.

Mr. Goff reported other changes in building permit and inspection practices in order to improve customer service in several ways including when interpreting the building code the Chief Building Official will use the least conservative approach. Staff is trying to be more proactive in finding areas where the City can be less restrictive. Building Department staff will attend training in communication, customer service skills, and dealing with disgruntled customers. Staff plans on bringing to future Study Sessions possible recommendations for changes to building codes on existing buildings again exploring the less restrictive environment. Staff is also exploring how to change the process of how they inform all customers of what the appeal process is and their rights associated with this.

Meeting adjourned at 9:01p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Snow", written over a horizontal line.

Michael Snow  
City Clerk