

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

December 3, 2012

Mayor DiTullio called the Study Session to order at 6:30 p.m. Council Members present: Joyce Jay, Kristi Davis, Mike Stites, George Pond, Joseph DeMott, and Tracy Langworthy.

Absent: Davis Reinhart and Bud Starker

Also present: City Clerk, Janelle Shaver; Treasurer, Larry Schulz; City Manager, Patrick Goff; Police Chief, Daniel Brennan; Economic Development Coordinator, Steve Art; other staff, guests and interested citizens

Public Comment: none

1. Cultural Commission year-end report – Diane Robb

Performances in the Park The total cost of this year's program was \$7,350. Individual and corporate sponsors and an SCFD grant paid for all but \$2,150 – which was the City's share. Attendance was very good for both the children's morning performances and the evening family performances.

Wheat Ridge Reads Our effort to form a book club in 2011 was a learning experience and 2012 went much better. This year's book was 3MPH: The Adventure of One Woman's Walk around the World by local author Polly Letofsky. Discussions were held on a Thursday evening at the Richards-Hart Estate and a Saturday morning at the Rec Center. Total participation was about 50 individuals. As a spin-off to the program Wheat Ridge High School was able to enlist Ms. Letofsky to work with an English class on writing. The Commission considers this program a success and will try it again next year.

Meet the Artist Local artists are the featured guests at these monthly events which are an effort to connect residents, businesses and the arts community. Events are held October through April at sponsoring businesses. The sponsor hosts the event, provides light refreshments and the artist gives a 20 minute talk about their work. Their work is then on display at the business for 30 days.

Cultural Commission Business Award Each year the Commission recognizes businesses that promote and encourage culture and the arts. This year's winner was Vinyl Works – for their generous donations of volunteer time and artistic talents. They were instrumental in the images on the planters along 38th as well as creating and producing brochures and banners for numerous activities that have helped lift the professional image of Wheat Ridge.

Donation Acceptance As reported before, the Arts Council of Wheat Ridge is donating a bronze fox sculpture to the City. Preparations are underway and it will be installed in front of City Hall very soon.

Public Art Management Program The Commission is in the process of reviewing the Public Art Management Plan that provides guidelines and policies for the funding, acquisition, placement and maintenance of public art in the city.

The Commission also works to keep up on projects that are or will be happening in the City so they can see if art can be a part of the project.

2. Staff Report(s)

a) Communication Center Regionalization

Joining with neighboring jurisdictions for area communications centers (i.e. 911) is something the Police Department has been looking into as an efficiency measure to keep costs down, guard against liability, and preserve knowledge of the program. Staffing is often inadequate and equipment is expensive. Joining with other jurisdictions makes sense for everyone. Smart 911 is already being used in some jurisdictions and Wheat Ridge will be implementing that in the near future.

Chief Brennan approached the Jefferson County Emergency Communications Authority (often referred to as the 911 Authority) to fund a study of call centers. After several meetings and presentations the Authority authorized \$100,000 to fund a study that would look into consolidation/regionalization of law enforcement communications centers. At this time Golden PD and Wheat Ridge PD have been given direction to explore this consolidation /regionalization of their communication centers. Lakewood, Arvada and the Sheriff's Department have agreed to participate as well. Wheat Ridge agreed to serve as the purchasing agent for the RFP process. A committee representing the various agencies has reviewed the proposals and selected three vendors to conduct the survey. The survey should be completed by the end of March, 2013, will be reviewed by the committee, and recommendations will be made. Chief Brennan expects the Police Department to be bringing recommendations to City Council mid-year 2013.

3. Elected Officials Matters

Kristi Davis reported that she and Joyce met with the Mayor to discuss the mayoral appointment process. Mayor DiTullio explained that the problems that arose over the recent Housing Authority appointment were due to some unintentional miscommunication at the staff level. Historically, and into the future, Council can rest assured that all applications will be received and presented to Council. ~ Ms. Davis also said she will be asking Davis Reinhart to add to a future study session the issue of televising study sessions.

Mayor DiTullio gave some information on the applicants for the Urban Renewal authority positions that will be coming up. He also asked if Council is interested in reducing the terms for the Housing Authority and the Urban Renewal Authority from five years down to three years. Five years is a large commitment of time for volunteers and has resulted in some resignations. It was generally agreed that this discussion could happen at a January study session. George Pond also wants to talk about term limits for the boards and commission members. Since the current Housing Authority appointment is only to fill a vacancy for one year, it was agreed to go ahead with the Housing Authority appointment on Dec 10, but postpone the Urban Renewal appointment until after the five year terms are discussed in January.

The Mayor initiated a discussion about out-of-control emails. More and more he is getting nasty emails that attack the police department, the city, the mayor – and they are unsigned. He has changed his email address and removed it from the City website. He welcomes anyone who wants to have a civil discussion about an issue to call him on the phone. Discussion followed.

He reported that he has been working with Joyce Manwaring to put up a plaque at Founders Park which lists the names of the founders of Wheat Ridge.

He also expressed his concerns about individual councilmembers applying directly to the City Council for taxpayer money for their personal projects. His opinion is that you are either an elected official or a developer, but not both. He will not be staying for the Perrin's Row presentation. He thinks it's a great project, but he thinks the TIF request puts everyone in a bad position. While it is legal, he has trouble with the ethics of it. There was considerable discussion by the Council about the conflict of interest these projects present, the issue of proper disclosure, the possible appearance of unfair advantage, and the ethics involved.

Clerk Shaver had an informational handout for Council listing the various Board and Commission vacancies that will be coming up next year. They can begin soliciting applications in their districts where applicable.

The Mayor left at 7:50 pm.

4. Perrin's Row TIF Request

The company Crosswire is contemplating the construction of 28 residential units at the southwest corner of 38th & Depew. They would sell in the low to mid \$200,000 range and the first units would be available for occupancy in the second quarter of 2013. Crosswire is requesting a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) package to make the project more financially attractive. Based on some unsubstantiated assumptions, Crosswire estimates the project would generate an unacceptable individual rate of return (IRR) of 1.1%. Current projects today rely on an IRR of around 10% to be considered feasible. 12-14% is very common.

Crossfire has requested a TIF agreement with Renewal Wheat Ridge (Urban Renewal) that would rebate all or a portion of the property tax increment generated by the construction of the proposed 28 townhomes for a period of 20 years.

A lengthy discussion followed on the pros and cons of a TIF for this property – including the mechanics of how the TIF would work.

Staff stated that this project would spark other economic development in the area and is in line with the goals of the 38th Avenue Corridor Plan. The revenue from property tax would go away now, but when it returns in 20 years it will provide more revenue than if the parcel had been left vacant for 20 years.

It was pointed out that this project would be strictly residential and will never generate any sales tax. All our other TIF's have been for commercial sites only. It was also mentioned that school and fire districts will have to provide services for the site, but receive no tax revenue from it for 20 years.

There was a suggestion that our density limit of 28 units per acre, and design and construction standards are a financial burden for developers, but it was pointed out that those standards are there for a reason – to ensure quality development. The owner has also stated that the site suffers from being adjacent to aging residential and retail.

In response to a question from Council, staff verified that the recently opened Town Center Apartments (44th & Wads.) received no incentive (TIF) to build. Additionally, the definition of "public improvements" includes such things as water, sewer, underground wiring, sidewalks, tree lawns, and even façade upgrades – anything that could be perceived as being for public benefit.

The presentation tonight is just informational. Staff is not asking for any direction from Council at this time, other than to move forward with an evaluation of the TIF request by a third party. A third party evaluation is standard procedure. Mr. Goff indicated he will negotiate with Crosswire to have them pay for the third party evaluation. There was adequate support from Council to have staff proceed with the third party evaluation.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.



Janelle Shaver, City Clerk