

STUDY SESSION NOTES

CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO

City Council Chambers 7500 W. 29th Avenue

April 4, 2016

Mayor Joyce Jay called the Study Session to order at 6:30 p.m.

Council members present: Janeece Hoppe, Monica Duran, Kristi Davis, Tim Fitzgerald, George Pond, Zachary Urban, Genevieve Wooden, and Larry Mathews

Also present: City Clerk, Janelle Shaver; City Manager, Patrick Goff; Parks & Recreation Director, Joyce Manwaring; Community Development Director, Ken Johnstone; Public Works Director, Scott Brink; other staff, guests and interested citizens.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

Bob Brazell (WR) commented unfavorably about the recent 38th Avenue design process. He noted the two final proposals both require changing the road width and the voters have already rejected that. If Council is going to go against the public's wishes, he urged them to be cautious.

Deana Swetlik (WR) spoke in support of transforming the 1/2 mile stretch of 38th Ave in the heart of the City. It comprises 5% of the city's commercial corridors. She has invested in WR by buying a home here and she wants the City to invest also. She believes this is necessary to remain competitive on the Front Range and that improving our city is a constant ongoing responsibility.

Ruth Baranowski (WR) is excited about needed improvements for Prospect Park, but has concerns about the amount of new asphalt and concrete proposed. Conservation efforts to improve water quality in the Clear Creek corridor are ongoing and this plan seems to remove essential landscaping. Too much concrete/asphalt leads to algae, and more trees are needed. She hopes this will be considered by Council and the staff.

Elizabeth Smith (WR) owns property next to Prospect Park and shares concerns about the amount of asphalt – specifically the new roadway. She hopes the area south and east of the new driveway will be native plants and trees. It's needed for aesthetics and as a buffer. Being on the Oulette Ditch board, she knows there are areas where bluegrass is not allowed. She's also concerned about runoff into Clear Creek.

Kim Calomino (WR) encouraged Council to support the outcomes of Cre8 Your 38. Many citizens participated; the outcomes deserve to be respected. She encouraged them to look at the statistics, research and reasons why a 3 lane road is supported. Council needs to recognize it's time to invest in our community.

Ann Brinkman (WR) urged Council to continue with the Cre8 Your 38 process. She made two points: 1) Ballot questions are a common practice in democracy; Council should not be deterred by threats. 2) The demographics of the City are changing rapidly

and Council should get on the right side of history and support a fully implemented main street.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

1. Staff Reports(s) none

2. Prospect Park Master Plan Update ~ Joyce Manwaring

Ms. Manwaring began with background information.

- The new Parks and Recreation Masterplan, adopted in April 2015, recommends redevelopment of Prospect Park.
- A firm was hired to create a masterplan for Prospect Park.
- Draft plans were presented at a public meeting in March; some revisions were made.
- The Parks/Recreation Commission reviewed the plan and recommends approval.
- We have adequate park land to serve our population; all new park land has been developed; renovation and upgrading of older parks is next.
- This park has had no major renovations or updates for 35-40 years.

Carol Henry of Design Concepts went through the proposed plan for the park. The final plan recommends the following major improvements for the park and trailhead:

- New entrance into the park on 44th Avenue
- Replace and relocate the large southern pavilion (age, condition, barn swallows)
- Relocate football field to the old Lovejoy property east of current football field; existing football field area to be dedicated permanently to the baseball fields.
- Upgrade existing ball fields with new infield mix and outfield sod; improve drainage; add permanent fencing; address ADA issues; add trails to the new football area
- Replace the restroom/storage/concession building with a larger brick structure
- Remove the tennis courts
- Add six pickle ball courts
- Construct new foot path on the west side, separate from the Clear Creek Trail
- Relocate playground, basketball court, horseshoe pit and trailhead kiosk to align with construction of an additional new road to access the south pavilion area
- Additional new amenities to include
 - new picnic shelters,
 - a fishing boardwalk,
 - a pedestrian bridge (SW corner of lake),
 - improve the northern edge of the lake, including fishing dock and shelter
 - permanent outfield fences for baseball fields,
 - buffering on the south side of the football field,
 - new walkways throughout.

Council discussion.

- Current bleachers will stay, but ADA access will be upgraded
- Left/right sight distance at the entrance on 44th is a concern.
- Youth sports leagues are charged \$10 per player, which goes into the City coffers.
- The playground is not new equipment; it will just be moved a little to the west.
- The number of parking spaces won't increase, just reducing the amount of space covered in asphalt.
- Plans are to keep the Berbert House and renovate later as a separate project. Can become a space to rent out, but it needs renovation. The youth sports storage in the Berbert House will be moved to the new storage building.
- Moving the playground may improve safety, but there aren't really any security or safety issues about the park at this time.
- Money for these renovations will come from Fund 32, our attributable share of Open Space money. There is also Conservation Trust Fund money and grants available from GOCO and Jeffco Open Space.
- It is yet to be decided what the phasing will look like. This project will likely take four to five years.

Councilmember Fitzgerald received consensus to proceed with the plan as proposed.

3. Presentation of "Our Energy Future" by Xcel Energy – Preston Gibson

Mr. Gibson gave a power point presentation about Xcel's position in the energy community.

"Our Energy Future", launched by Xcel in 2016, is a comprehensive energy strategy focused on empowering customers, powering the economy and powering technology. Customers will have more options and control in their energy usage.

They are in the process of replacing coal with gas and adding some wind and some solar. Folks will notice three of the four smoke stacks at 64th & York are gone now.

Elements of the strategy include:

- Xcel has filed to joint venture with companies that drill for natural gas. Purchasing gas reserves now while the cost is low passes the savings on to the customers and helps keep prices low.
- Two ICT (INNOVATIVE CLEAN TECHNOLOGY) projects. This is solar-to-battery storage. One project with Panasonic and the City of Denver out by DIA is to determine the commercial viability of large scale storage of renewable energy. Another project is by Stapleton.
- Modernization of the distribution grid to facilitate 2-way power flow.
- Replacing high pressure sodium street lights with energy-efficient LED technology. No upfront conversion cost to the City and will save 5-7% in costs.
- Phase 2 Electric Rate Case – addresses rate design and important tariff revisions; adds more transparency (customers will have a breakdown of the various costs they're billed for)

- Solar Connect – customers can choose and pay for 100% solar power.

He went through a handout with data about

- Breakdown of Wheat Ridge customers – electric/gas, business/residential
- \$2.6M paid to the City in franchise fees and taxes
- Support of WR businesses (\$3.4M in 2014); Xcel's workforce (3,750 employees)
- Support of charities, energy efficiency programs, and clean energy

Due to mounting outages in Wheat Ridge

- In 2014 Xcel rebuilt some equipment west of Wadsworth between 38th - 44th.
- The area east of Wadsworth between 44th – 38th received smart technology so when outages occur they will be limited to a smaller number of customers.
- Elsewhere they are replacing wiring, poles, transformers and other equipment.

Council had no questions and there was no discussion.

4. 38th Avenue Update ~ Mark Westberg

Mark Westberg highlighted the Cre8 Your 38 process to date.

- 300 people attended Meeting 1; 700 participated online
- Priorities were safety and economic success
- 33 designs were created, only 3-lane designs received greater than 50% support. The preference of the participants was for 3 lanes.
- 66% preferred 8 ft sidewalks and 4 ft wide amenity zones.
- 64% preferred no bike lanes.
- 68% preferred parking to be included where possible.
- 71% preferred staying in the existing ROW
- 50+ attended Meeting 3 where two refined designs were presented.
 - Reconstruct package: 8 ft sidewalks; 4 ft amenity zones; \$7.5 - 9.75M
 - Retrofit package; 5 ft sidewalks; 4+ft amenity zones; \$4.5 - 6.75M
 - 70% prefer the Reconstruct package.

Future dates -

- April 27 – Open House. No presentation; stations and tables with images of the preferred design. Sticky notes for public comments; also an anonymous comment box. Online comment format available after the meeting for those who can't attend.
- May 16th -- Return to Council with options for implementation and request direction

Council questions/comments:

Monica Duran received confirmation that the \$9.75M covers Wadsworth to Harlan.

Tim Fitzgerald received confirmation that duplicate participation in the initial meeting survey process was prevented as much as possible.

Zach Urban asked what steps were taken to engage business owners. The City wasn't involved with that; the consultant met with different groups and businesses. Everyone received postcards; they tried to involve everyone.

Larry Mathews shared some opinions he's received from folks in emails. 1) "If 40% of the people vote for something only 40% of the Council has to support it." He doesn't agree with that; he believes the majority rules and Council should follow the will of the majority. 2) "The 2B vote doesn't count now because it was 1 1/2 years ago." He doesn't think 2B has an expiration date. ~ He won't support anything on this issue that doesn't go to a vote of the people because 58% of the people already voted against this. He believes it's his job to bring the will of the people into this room.

Monica Duran supports putting it to a vote of the people -- adding that the ballot issue should include cost, source for funding, street width and design.

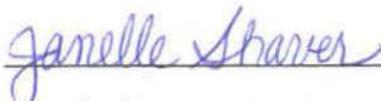
Zach Urban suggested if this is put on the ballot it should be segregated to this specific issue - not linked to any other sales tax or ballot issue package. It should stand alone.

5. Elected Officials' Report(s)

Monica Duran reported the Grange is having an educational gardening event April 21st from 6-8pm. Co-sponsor is Al's Pine Garden Nursery. The event is family friendly, with a presentation for adults and a craft for kids. RSVP to dom.e.breton@gmail.com or at Al's Pine Garden. ~ She also announced the Wheat Ridge Fire Department is having a town hall meeting Wednesday, May 25 at the Grange to answer questions and concerns about the merger with West Metro.

ADJOURNMENT

The Study Session adjourned at 8:47p.m.



Janelle Shaver, City Clerk

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL ON April 11, 2016



George Pond, Mayor Pro Tem