

STUDY SESSION NOTES
CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO
City Council Chambers 7500 W. 29th Avenue
April 2, 2018

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

Council members present: George Pond, Janeece Hoppe, Monica Duran, Tim Fitzgerald, Zachary Urban, Larry Mathews, Leah Dozeman

Absent: Kristi Davis (excused)

Also present: City Clerk, Janelle Shaver; City Manager, Patrick Goff; Community Development Director, Ken Johnstone; one guest and two interested citizens

CITIZEN COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

Rachel Hultin (WR) spoke on both agenda items. She is glad the City is moving forward to revisit the NRS Policy. Moving forward she feels it is important not to just adopt another wonderful policy document, but to also engage the citizens in a meaningful dialog about what the future of our city means to them. She stressed the importance of reaching disenfranchised residents and having rigorous outreach to help clarify what makes our neighborhoods great – things that should be preserved and things that need to change. She doesn't see much language about that. She challenged Council and the Planning Commission to be stewards of that specialness. She noted that Wheaties graduates are specialists and highly trained experts who would love to help support this process. ~ She is pleased about plans to redevelop The Green, but is discouraged that there is talk of investment in The Green when there hasn't been much progress on 38th Ave in the last couple of years. She would like to see discussion of The Green be concurrent with discussion about what we should be doing on 38th Avenue to improve conditions for pedestrian and a Main Street place.

1. Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy (NRS) Update Scope of Services

Mr. Goff explained that it was decided to use the same firm that completed the last NRS version in 2005 (CZB, LLC) because they already know the community well and selecting a new firm would be less cost effective.

- Recommendations were made in 2005. Some progress has been made.
- Scope of work will again have a rigorous outreach program.
- It is important to continue preserving and protecting things that make our community special.
- Graphs in the back of the packet show what WR was in 2005 and was updated in 2016. That data will be used.

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- Ken Johnstone said the NRS has provided a big to-do list with a pretty progressive and aggressive agenda for how we manage change in the community. . He thinks it's a good time to look at it again and re-engage the community.
- Eric Ameigh, the local rep for CZB, and his team have been working with staff to define a scope of work. Some councilmembers have sent in their priorities.
- A proposal is in the packets.

Eric Ameigh of CZB addressed the Council.

He began with background on their company – headquartered in Alexandria, VA; five scattered employees in Alexandria, Park City, UT, Philadelphia, Buffalo and Denver.

Important points he made:

- The message back in 2005 was tough love.
- Conditions are different now – not so dire. There's been some prosperity; you've done some things and had some luck. Is good to be attached to Denver. Should honor things that are working/going well, and fix things that are going wrong.
- This proposal [in the Council packet] has lots of engagement work; it looks more like doing a Comprehensive Plan. Who are we? What do we want to be?
- Things are going right: demand for residential and commercial real estate. It presents tricky political issues. It will be important to make different decisions to prevent people from being mad when things pop up.

Their company has experience and connections here in the region. He also worked for the City of Boulder for five years and lives in Lafayette. He knows how controversial issues play out.

Mr. Ameigh explained the process will have three phases:

Phase 1 - Analysis: Looking at the numbers and data to tell us about what's going on in the City. Includes quantitative data (things like real estate sales, commercial lease rates, census data) and qualitative data, (focus groups, phone calls, meeting with business people, realtors, and others that staff and project participants connect us with).

Phase 2 – Engagement process:

- Create a Steering Committee of 12- 20 people that represent the community – to learn about the daily activities of family life (activities, commuting, shopping, etc.).
- A 9-month project.
- CZB will train them to facilitate most of the engagement work.
- Steering Committee provides perspective and credibility the consultant doesn't have.
- There will be regular check-ins with the Council, meetings with the Planning Commission, and public open houses.
- Small group process: They plan to have the Steering Committee engage the public in small groups. If it takes 1,000 votes to get elected to Council, they hope to get 500 people to have conversations. That will be rich information.
- By the time you get to the end people will agree with the final report.

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Phase 3 – Creating a **Strategy** from the work done in the analysis and engagement phases.

Council questions followed.

Councilmember Mathews requested that in the future all surveys and questions put to the public include the option “none of the above”. Citizens have consistently complained that option is never available.

- How do you ensure a representative cross section on the Steering Committee? Mr. Ameigh noted that no survey is 100% accurate.
- Re: the cross-sectional nature of the steering committee? The smaller the committee the less likely it is to capture every nuance of the residents. He explained different ways to craft the make-up of the committee. They have found “less rigid” works best – a mix of longtime residents, newcomers, young, old, business owners, a school rep, etc. Areas of focus tend to be economic development, housing, and neighborhood quality of life.

Councilmember Fitzgerald inquired about the median age numbers. Our median age decreased from 43.6 in 2009 to 42.5 in 2014. (Jefferson County went from 40.4 to 41.3.) Mr. Goff and Mr. Johnstone explained.

Councilmember Urban asked how the pending survey will be used in this process. Mr. Goff advised the survey results will be incorporated into the NRS process. Mr. Ameigh noted the City has a lot of data, and it will be used.

Councilmember Pond had no questions but commented on the importance of the NRS document, changes since 2005, his preference for robust engagement of a good cross section of the community, and the changes in retail. Mr. Ameigh explained this kind of work is heavily focused on the residential market. We have fiscal stability. CBZ has some good analysis to drive decision making.

Councilmember Dozeman supports this.

Councilmember Hoppe asked about a timeline for the optional Retail Analysis. Per Mr. Ameigh, that would be “baked into Phase 1” and brought into the engagement phase.

Mr. Ameigh elaborated on the training of the Steering Committee.

Mr. Goff advised all City departments will be involved.

Councilmember Duran expressed pleasure at all the community outreach and involvement. She asked if information from the last City survey will be used. Mr. Ameigh said yes, that information can be valuable to reveal trends.

Councilmember Urban asked if the lifestyle segmentation scheme that will be used in the Retail Analysis to create a demographic and psychographic profile of Wheat Ridge

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is based on the profile of the businesses or the customers. Mr. Ameigh said it would include both, but mostly the wants and needs of the shoppers. (What do people want that you don't have?) Councilmember Urban stressed the need to analyze the needs of both resident customers and outside customers.

Councilmember Dozeman asked what the process will be for determining the Steering Committee. Mr. Goff indicated that hadn't been decided yet. Staff will want further input from Council and take advice from czb. Mr. Johnstone offered that his department would have suggestions about what makes a good Steering Committee member.

Councilmember Hoppe received consent to have staff bring forward a budget supplemental and contract approval to engage czb LLC in a comprehensive public outreach process to update the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy, including the optional task for the Retail Analysis.

2. Community Plaza on "The Green"

Mr. Goff noted Councilmembers Fitzgerald, Pond and Davis requested this discussion.

- The 38th Avenue Corridor Plan suggests working with the school district to use their parking lot for non-school events, and to work with them to consider using their land for mixed use development and community functions such as community gardens.
- The Corridor Plan also suggests creating public plazas and gathering places along the corridor at activity nodes.
- After the Plan was adopted the City hired an urban designer - whose conceptual designs included a conceptual design for "The Green". Improvements built into the space would improve the functionality for special events.

Councilmember Pond thinks this fits with the concept of civic places and relocating City Hall. Many events already happen there.

Mr. Goff confirmed the City has a written agreement with the school for use of the area. Two years ago the School District was interested in improvements, but not interested in selling the space; they would maintain it. Their current position should be verified.

Councilmember Fitzgerald suggested this could be given to the citizens for our 50th Anniversary. This was in the NRS. It is a rare coincidence of opportunity and having the funds. Mr. Goff said the fund balance would accommodate this expenditure.

Councilmember Hoppe supports improving this area. She was not sure if we have 1st Right of Refusal. She supports this as a gathering place; food trucks could be an option. She believes "The Green" would benefit the school too, and recalls the cost was about \$1M. She thinks a water feature would be nice.

Councilmember Duran pressed about the current written agreement and the 1st Right of Refusal. Mr. Goff doesn't think we have the 1st Right of Refusal right now. The current

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Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is quite specific for which events we can have on The Green. He said if we put money in it, we'll need to protect ourselves with a 1st Right of Refusal. She hopes investing in this space will force us to relook at 38th Ave. She likes the ideas of a special place for community, food trucks and a water feature.

Councilmember Dozeman pointed out the existing playground is not on the drawing. Mr. Goff agreed and noted they are probably old drawings. The playground space would have to come out of this drawing. She also mentioned this may be a good time to address Stevens' desire for an LED sign.

Councilmember Urban thinks it's important to make it a gathering place, but has concerns about food trucks, serving alcohol, and the already open use of marijuana at events. He doesn't think we should bring in outside food vendors to set up shop in front of our restaurants. Locals should get preference.

Councilmember Mathews asked about current unfunded liabilities. Mr. Goff agreed there are many (including storm drainage and roads), and yes, there is a \$10M funding gap for the Wadsworth widening project. If we don't have the \$10M, the project will go away and the funding will go elsewhere. We could value engineer the project to get the cost down.

Mr. Goff advised to engage a designer to fine tune this design or start from scratch. Councilmember Dozeman asked about pedestrian lighting. Mr. Goff noted the new standard lighting was replaced a couple of weeks ago from Harlan to Sheridan. Any new lighting in The Green area would hopefully follow that design.

Clerk Shaver noted that food trucks selling alcohol could be problematic since alcohol sales at special events is restricted to non-profits.

Councilmember Hoppe received consensus to engage a designer to prepare a more specific design for the area and see what the next steps are.

Councilmember Mathews noted that approval to hire a designer would have to be given at a Council meeting. Mr. Goff agreed, saying staff will come back to Council for approval before the process is begun.

3. Staff Report(s) none

4. Elected Officials' Report(s)

Janeece Hoppe clarified her request for discussion about adding a criteria for Special Use Permits. Currently, if the eight criteria are met, and if there are no complaints, the SUP is granted administratively. She would like to add another criteria: If the proposed use is recommended or allowed in any adopted sub area plan or the Comprehensive

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Plan. Her thinking is that people are asking for something special. If it doesn't fit with the area or sub-area plan that would be a criteria that is not met. She asked for discussion.


Tim Fitzgerald suggested adding discussion about whether the Special Use should run with the property or the business. He favors having a scheduled re-evaluation to prove they meet the criteria. Ms. Hoppe noted that SUP's can already be revoked.

Zach Urban thinks adding that criteria is a good idea, but noted that "special uses" are by definition not ordinary, and he hopes some degree of flexibility is retained.

Mayor Starker noted attending the City Easter Egg Hunt. He thanked all the folks for coming out. It was a great time.


Mr. Goff asked if Council was comfortable with the extent of the discussion about a new criteria for SUP's, and if they feel there is enough for staff to put something together and bring it to a study session. All agreed.

ADJOURNMENT: The Study Session adjourned at 7:49 p.m.



Janelle Shaver, City Clerk

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL ON April 23, 2018



Tim Fitzgerald, Mayor pro tem