

STUDY SESSION NOTES
CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO
City Council Chambers 7500 W. 29th Avenue
August 5, 2019

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

Council members present: George Pond, Janeece Hoppe, David Kueter, Amanda Weaver, Kristi Davis, Zachary Urban, Larry Mathews, and Leah Dozeman

Absent: George Pond (excused)

Also present: City Clerk, Janelle Shaver; City Manager, Patrick Goff; City Attorney Jerry Dahl; City Treasurer, Chris Miller; Community Development Director, Ken Johnstone; Administrative Services Director, Allison Scheck; Parks and Recreation Director, Karen O'Donnell; other staff, guests and interested citizens.

Citizen Comment on Agenda Items

Odarka Figlus (WR) yielded her time to Carol Mathews.

Michelle Beyer (WR) Item 2 Ms. Beyer thought this issue was settled when it was decided on Nov 19, 2018 to do no further improvements east of Tabor into Arvada's Haskins Station development – which is next to her property.

- She has paperwork saying she will allow the City to put a foot path in the 90x30 piece of vacated land at the end of the street. However, if no other improvements are being made this would be a footpath that dumps pedestrians out on the middle of the street. .
- The paperwork also says she will be involved in the location of path. She feels the south side is best so it won't involve her drainage or that of the other homes along 52nd. However there are two huge power poles in the way of a potential path.
- She would also like to have a fence – which would create a “tunnel” for pedestrians and there is no sidewalk after the path.
- The City has already taken property from residents at the ends of Simms and Tabor Streets to create foot and bike paths to the station. There's no reason to do this.
- City staff has been out to her property and completely agreed to the fence, but she doesn't think it's a very safe thing to do if there's not going to be any sidewalk.

Connie Burg (WR) made several points on Item 2.

- The staff report statement that there was “a fair amount of interest” by neighbors east of Tabor in having this foot path connection into Arvada is a misrepresentation.
- People said they “could live with it”, or that it would “be OK”, but there was no true interest in creating this connection.
- The City acquired property along Ridge Road and is spending thousands of dollars to create a safe, multimodal access to the rail station via Ridge Road. People in Arvada should use their sidewalks to go south to Ridge Road and then west to the G Line; don't dump them onto a narrow Wheat Ridge street.

- The opening of the G Line has already resulted in increased cut-through traffic to avoid the signal at Tabor & Ridge Road, and the speed limit is greatly exceeded by most. A speeding car already hit a truck parked in front of a house on Simms Place.
- It is irresponsible to create an unsafe connection for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Everyone she has spoken with thinks this is a bad idea.
- It's also irresponsible to create an unsafe connection for Drake Middle schoolers when a safe route already exists.
- She quoted the phrase "Just because we can, doesn't mean we should."
- Please consider the previous request to barricade 52nd Avenue east of Tabor Street be honored.

Jeff Burg (WR) agrees that the foot path should not be built. He'd rather have efforts spent on finding a way for pedestrians and bicyclists to get from this area to Clear Creek Crossing. Imagine how many people would use that.

Carol Mathews (WR) is disappointed the NRS was approved with so little scrutiny.

- The report disparages people over 65 and their older homes by posing that 80% of these houses could become rentals and decrease in value.
- Facts are: There is minimal turnover among residents over 65 and a higher percentage of blighted houses owned by real estate developers and out of area rental companies than by seniors.
- Data left out of the report were:
 - Majority of participants wanted code enforcement and rental regulations.
 - They favored neighborhood participation in zoning and building codes.
- Chief Brennan and Commander Lorentz have presented a fair and brilliant plan to deal with rentals. Council should copy that model for the community.
- The \$200-400K to hire more people to "listen" could be spent on a neighborhood improvement fund.
- The business investment program of the WRBD would be a good model for community investment.
- Council has spent \$125K for 26 people to conduct community meetings and listen to the people. Why waste another \$200-400K to hire city employee to listen? Listen to the voices who want to participate in the inevitable changes in the City.
 - The Bel-Air neighborhood has volunteered to be a pilot program for overlay zones.
 - Let Dorothy Archer and her neighbors present a plan to Council.
 - Give citizens the same privilege you give to developers.
- Since the majority population of seniors is vastly underrepresented on Council, she urged seniors to run for City Council to preserve Wheat Ridge character and values.

Walter LaMendola (WR) addressed the NRS priorities for development/improvement.

- The development of neighborhood plans is supported by 76% of all residents.
- 8-10 people think there is a current need to engage citizens on planning and development issues that directly affect them.
- We should engage and act now. Changes are happening. We shouldn't have to wait for a 2-year listening tour.

- The Bel-Air Improvement Association has volunteered to be a pilot neighborhood for a model neighborhood process. He elaborated on immediate need/benefit of this.

Sandy Nance (WR) A year ago she told Council what did and didn't fit in her neighborhood. She was told to wait for the NRS. She participated in the NRS. She is finished talking and wants action now to create a neighborhood overlay plan to protect her neighborhood from future cockeyed developers. She asked to cede the balance of her time to Walter LaMendola. Mayor Starker did not allow it.

David (& Karen) Thaler (WR) said he missed the neighborhood meeting about the floodplain. He heard of low attendance, a blurry power point, and no information handed out. He wants to know who to talk to for information. He's heard rumors of forced flood insurance. Mayor Starker suggested he talk to Mr. Westberg.

Rachel Hultin (WR) noted spending the last year with the NRS committee talking to the community. She supports the listening tour.

- The recommendation for the listening tour wasn't for hiring 2 neighborhood specialists to go out and ask the same questions, but rather to drill down on questions the Bel-Air folks talked about tonight, such as what is unique about our community, what do we care about, so when we interface with the City we have a framework for decision-making that makes sense to us as a unique neighborhood.
- We don't have that framework yet. To think we can jump out of the gate and have that happen magically does a disservice to the neighborhoods that are not Bel-Air.
- Unlike most neighborhoods, Bel-Air is very organized already; they know their issues and have vision and infrastructure in place. Most folks don't know what neighborhood they live in or what the unique issues of their neighborhood are.
- The listening tour will be about how we ask the right questions, how do we get the right answers and ensure our citizens are informed. How our city builds the capacity to do that in a way that is proactive – not reactive, requires slowing down.
- It is important that the council that approves the plan for the listening session is the same council that will be part of implementing it.
- While it's important to approve funding for the positions now, as far as what the plan looks like – that should be done by the Council that will oversee it.

1. Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy (NRS) Implementation Work Plan

Ken Johnstone summarized what the NRS plans are for the next ten years. They are:

- Building resident capacity to manage neighborhood change
- Connecting the community by investing in primary corridors
- Facilitating investment through customer outreach, education and service
- Addressing accessory dwelling units

He went through the NRS recommendations and next steps which will be a work plan for the next one to three years.

He referenced a set of tables for various tasks and timelines for each item, noting most of this will be taken on by the next City Council. Two major implementation efforts are:

1. Hiring two professionals next year to facilitate the listening tour.

- Public engagement to begin in the second quarter of 2020.
- 2. The 44th Avenue Corridor Plan
 - Budgeted for 2019. Some scoping done. RFP for contract to go out this year. Public process to begin at the end of 1st quarter 2020.
 - A Market Study and Traffic Study are seen as important.

Discussion followed.

Councilmember Hoppe believes some neighborhoods are ready to go and thinks the timetable is doable. She thinks the new employees should be part of the planning process, but doesn't want to take too much time.

Councilmember Weaver completely agrees with Councilmember Hoppe. People are ready, but we have to have a process. She suggested starting with Bel Air since they seem ready. Use staff members. Maybe spend some time helping neighborhoods identify their identity. Do something in the 6 month range.

Councilmember Davis raised the technicality that the Bel Air neighborhood also includes her neighborhood – which people identify as Melrose Manor. She asked about the properties owned by seniors; she reads it as a projection. Mr. Goff said it was based on data from Jefferson County. She supports hiring coordinators and thinks it would be nice to have a coordinator to help identify neighborhoods.

Councilmember Mathews agrees with Councilmember Weaver. It doesn't make sense to hire staff without a plan. He would like to see job descriptions, salary, etc., plus an exit strategy for dismissal after two years. He thinks we need to refine how we define neighborhoods, and doesn't think staff should do this. He thinks it's Council's responsibility and the impetus need to come from Council – with maybe one staff member to coordinate. Defining neighborhoods is the first most important thing to do.

Councilmember Urban's points included:

- The \$213K for czb to do the NRS would've been better spent on this listening tour.
- Listening won't change anything if we don't change our Code.
- He's concerned the first recommendation of czb is to go out and do what we just paid them to do. The first question they were to answer was "What does WR want to be?"
- There's no point in hiring people for this if our tools and code don't allow us to work with residents. Without code changes we can't help any neighborhoods.
- He'd like to be assured that the traffic study on 44th does not include recommending a road diet.

Councilmember Dozeman approves hiring one staff member to help proceed. She thinks there's too much "hurry up and wait". If we don't have a process in place a whole lot can happen in two years, and we won't have a way to navigate any change the way citizens want us to. She thinks waiting until the 1st or 2nd quarter of next year is too late. She's also concerned about what constitutes neighborhood boundaries. But she wants to start moving forward because citizens really want to protect their neighborhoods.

Mr. Goff said they probably should have not used the word “listening tour”. It’s a two year engagement tour, listening to citizens and bringing things to Council as we hear them. He said we need to hear from the people who live in these neighborhoods to see what each one is.

Discussion continued.

- This is an outline.
- Mr. Goff said this could be started before the 2020 budget is done.
- Would like to address ADU’s addressed now.
- Could Council do some things with constituents to help move the process along?
- What is the “adopted” streetscape plan for 38th Avenue that is referenced?

Councilmember Urban asked for consensus to remove the Green from the plan. The consensus failed 3-5.

Councilmember Hoppe received a 4-3 consensus to

- Adopt the work plan
- Fund at least 1 part time position, if not full time, for the 4th Quarter 2019
- Address ADU’s in upcoming months if Council chooses

Mr. Goff said we don’t have enough staff to massage the NRS report and reminded Council that increasing an FTE requires Council action.

There was further discussion.

Councilmember Urban received consensus to have staff create a sub area plan for the Wadsworth Town Center sub-area plan related to the 38th Avenue Corridor Plan. Mr. Johnstone noted there already is one from 2006 that can be incorporated into this one.

Mr. Goff noted this will take time and funding – either hiring another planner, hiring a consultant, or postponing the 44th Ave Sub-Area Plan.

There was discussion about the 44th Ave Sub-Area Plan.

- \$150K was budgeted for that this year.
- A Fruitdale Plan exists, but NRS recommends replacing it with a plan for 44th - Wads to Youngfield.
- Staff has drafted a scope of work; hiring will be done yet this year.
- The year-long process is scheduled to begin in March 2020.

2. Wheat Ridge Ward TOD – 52nd Avenue Pedestrian Connection

Mark Westberg gave the staff presentation.

Should a pedestrian connection along 52nd Avenue extend east of Tabor Street to connect to Arvada?

- At a neighborhood meeting some residents east of Tabor expressed some desire for a foot path to the east.

- This would allow access between the existing WR neighborhood and the new neighborhood, Haskins Station, which is proposed in Arvada.
- The north/south traffic calming can be extended to 52nd Avenue.
- The design cost may fit in the existing contract.

Discussion followed.

Councilmember Urban asked for consensus to indefinitely postpone any action on this connection. That failed 3-4.

Councilmember Hoppe received consensus to have the consultant prepare a 30% design if it is in the scope of the current contract. Approval was 4-3.

Mayor Starker declared a break at 8:15pm. The study session resumed at 8:26pm.

3. Sloan's Lake Floodplain Adoption ~ Mark Westberg

- The Sloan's Lake Basin is the watershed extending upstream and downstream from Sloan's Lake.
- Original flood plain map was done in 1974.
- Parts of SE Wheat Ridge have properties that are in the flood plain.
- Hydrology, hydraulics and mapping have been updated. Additional improvements have been identified, but none are in Wheat Ridge.
- Purpose is to protect people and property – to help owners get flood insurance.
- Two area in WR have houses that are insurable. They have structures in the floodplain. Shown on map.

Should the City adopt the flood hazard areas identified on the Sloan's Lake FHAD as Local Flood Hazard Areas (LFHA)?

Mr. Westberg compared the 3 options for Flood Hazard Area Designation (FHAD).

- Last November we adopted as local flood plain hazard area.
- He explained the regulations for this option.

Discussion followed.

Councilmember Hoppe received unanimous consent to move forward with the adoption of an ordinance designating the FHAD as a Local Flood Hazard Area (LFHA).

4. City Treasurer Duties and Compensation ~ Chris Miller

City Treasurer, Chris Miller, began by highlighting the City's investment portfolio.

- The City invests idle cash on Local Government Investment Pools (LGIP).
- CSAFE
 - General Fund: \$14.5M

- 2E Bond Fund: \$25.6M
- Minimal amounts are kept in the bank
- Benefits include:
 - Safety and preservation of our principle (AAA/investment grade)
 - Highly liquid to meet day to day cash needs
 - Higher yields than we could obtain ourselves due to variety of securities
 - Regulatory compliance

He explained the following:

- Permitted Investments and Maturity Limits allowed in the State of CO (See chart)
- The Local Government Investment Pools (LGIP).
 - He's met with representatives of each of the major LPIG's in the state, compared investments products and reached a decision:
 - Continue relationship with CSAFE, but move to Colorado CORE. It allows 3 redemptions per month and next-day settlement of redemptions.
 - The 10-12 basis point .10% to .12%
 - Increased earnings by \$12,000 in the last 90 days
 - \$48,000 in the current year depending on interest rate variability
 - Interest rates have dropped over 30 basis points this year alone in this type of investment product
- He gave some updates on Yield Curves and Key Economic Metrics
- He explained the CSIP term-based portfolio strategy, and the Term-Based Portfolio Investment Strategy the City employs.

Concerning the Treasurer's position in the Wheat Ridge Charter he noted the following:

- The Treasurer's position originally had more duties.
- The Treasurer has not supervised employees since 2003 at which time the City Manager transferred day to day financial management to his staff.
- Currently the Treasurer's primary responsibility is the investment of City money, but fiscal oversight is also a responsibility.
- The Treasurer is the administrative hearing officer and acts as a tax payer advocate and ombudsman.
- The Treasurer is referenced over 100 times in the Charter and Code.
- The Treasurer is on the Police Pension Board.

Regarding time commitment:

- He spends 1-2 days a week at his work.
- He sees it as .20 to .33 FTE.
- He reviewed the salary History of the position. The salary is currently set at \$29,000.

Council questions and discussion followed.

Councilmember Davis received consensus to ask Mr. Dahl if Council can authorize that the Treasurer will make what the mayor makes unless additional certification can be shown. The vote was 5-3.

Discussion on this point continued.

Councilmember Mathews noted the qualifications for the Treasurer are in the Charter.

Councilmember Urban has a concern about one elected body deciding to change the qualification of another elected official. He personally would like to have councilmembers earn money based on the meetings they actually attend.

There was discussion unrelated to the Treasurer's position.

5. Staff Report(s)

Mr. Goff reported he had sent Council a 2Q report for 2019. Things are looking good.

- Revenue is 105% projected. Expenditures are also more than projected.
- Use taxes have been good.
- The Unrestricted Fund Balance is currently large due to the Rocky Mountain Bottle use tax at the end of 2018.
- The Fund balance is 44% right now, but projected to be about 26% by year's end.
- The proposed 2020 budget is scheduled to be delivered to Council on Sept 1.

6. Elected Officials' Report

Leah Dozeman reminded everyone of the Carnation Festival this weekend. She listed some of the main activities and events

Janeece Hoppe commented on scheduling for meetings. She is looking at some things that should be discussed before the budget; there will be some special study sessions ahead. ~ She also reported the WR Business District has used all their funds for this year. She provided a handout and went through a list of projects that were funded. She asked if Council would consider a supplemental amount for the remainder of the year. Following discussion she received consensus to proceed with a supplemental \$25K allocation to the WRBD for 2019.

Clerk Shaver recalled participating in a similar conversation about 20 years ago – worry that an incompetent person would be elected Treasurer. She reminded Council that in 50 years we have never had a bad treasurer. ~ She announced that tomorrow is the first day candidates can pick up their nomination petitions.

Larry Mathews announced the good news that the flaggers are starting to come off the G Line. He also announced that the City met with Rocky Mt Bottle on the noise issue.


Mr. Goff reported meeting with the General Manager earlier in the day. The City had requested they send a letter of explanation to neighbors, but that hadn't happened. The City strongly encouraged that and will provide them with addresses. They are working on getting approval from Miller Coors for funding to fix the problem. He also noted our City Code is quite subjective on noise. He suggests adopting state standards

Mayor Starker reported the ground breaking for the hook ramps at Clear Creek Crossing will be at 10:00 tomorrow morning.


ADJOURNMENT

The Study Session adjourned at 9:39 pm.

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL ON October 28, 2019



Janelle Shaver, City Clerk



Janece Hoppe, Mayor Pro Tem