

**SPECIAL STUDY SESSION NOTES
CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO
City Council Chambers 7500 W. 29th Avenue**

February 10, 2020

Upon adjournment of the Regular City Council Meeting

Mayor Bud Starker called the Special Study Session to order at 8:35 p.m.

Council members present: Amanda Weaver, Judy Hutchinson, Janeece Hoppe, Rachel Hultin, Korey Stites, Zachary Urban, and Leah Dozeman. (Councilmember Nosler Beck excused herself as she was not feeling well.)

Also present: City Attorney Jerry Dahl; City Clerk, Steve Kirkpatrick; City Manager Patrick Goff, Community Development Director, Ken Johnstone; Assistant to the City Manager Marianne Schilling; Division Chief Jim Lorenz; other staff, guests and interested citizens.

CITIZEN COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

No one from the public came forward to speak.

1. Enforcement of snow removal policy

Discussion began at 8:35 pm, approximately 95:00 minutes into the recording of the session

Staff Report(s)

Mr. Goff noted that Commander Jim Lorenz of WRPD is here to address snow removal enforcement.

Division Chief Lorenz briefed Council on the background of snow removal efforts in Wheat Ridge and the current efforts at enforcement of the snow removal ordinance. Currently, citizens and businesses that do not remove snow in a timely manner are given a warning, and if they still do not comply, a citation.

Currently the time period between warning and citation is 10 days, which makes little sense with respect to snow removal. The new proposed code would require compliance within 24 hours.

Mayor Starker and Councilmembers had questions and comments:

- The majority of property owners do comply, and remove snow within 24 hours. However, a handful of residences and businesses consistently fail to comply.
- How do we make sure that our principal corridors are safe for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians?

- What is the plan in terms of invoicing businesses for snow removal, or fines for non-compliance?
- Thanks to the staff for its thorough work on this matter. Councilmembers spoke in favor of fines for non-compliance. There was also a suggestion that the City identify repeat commercial facilities that fail to comply and proactively address those locations.
- There were specific questions about how and in what priority order the City handles snow removal along major corridors and sidewalks along city owned properties. Staff explained the policies, procedures and practices in detail.
- Staff also explained the limitations of the current equipment and staffing plan. They also explained the difficulties inherent in snow and ice removal from sidewalks along the major corridors with different dimensions of sidewalks, curbs, landscaping, and build-outs.
- How do we handle snow removal from properties where residents are unable to remove snow, because they are elderly, disabled or lack resources?
- What is the typical timeline for removing snow from major corridors and then moving to side streets in residential areas?
- Several councilmembers discussed the need for public education about the ordinance, when to time the removal of snow from sidewalks in relation to City plows, and similar factors.
- Several councilmembers thanked the staff for the excellent job the City does with snow removal, especially along major corridors (that should be CDOT's responsibility).
- One councilmember reported that she drove today along both 44th Ave and 38th Ave from Youngfield to Sheridan. The problem locations, where snow had not been removed from sidewalks, were almost all businesses. She also observed that there are too many miles of major corridors with no sidewalks.
- The City needs to be clear about when a storm ends, and therefore when the 24 hour clock starts, what happens when a new storm begins, and how residents can determine when the 24-hour clock starts and then starts again if there is more snowfall. For instance, we recently had a storm that ended in the early hours this morning, and a second storm arrived around sunset today.
- Several councilmembers stated that enforcement of the snow removal ordinance along commercial corridors should be the top priority. The City should be proactive with commercial corridors and reactive in residential areas.
- Several members expressed support for citations like parking tickets, vs. the City removing snow and invoicing residents or businesses for the cost.

Staff commented that each storm is different, depending on a number of variables involved in the situation: blizzard conditions, high winds, sudden freezes, glaze with snow on top, etc.

Councilmember Hoppe obtained a consensus among the Councilmembers to bring forth a recommended action that would continue to work on the education as laid out in memo prepared for tonight's Council packet, pause work on assistance, continue to work on a traffic-ticket-like system for violations of the snow removal Code, find abandoned areas, focused on proactive enforcement in commercial areas and reactive enforcement in residential areas.

2. 44th Avenue historic barn update

Discussion began at 9:01 pm, approximately 121:00 minutes into the recording of the session

Issue:

At the June 10, 2019 City Council meeting, the historic barn property owner at 11480 W. 44th Avenue was denied removal of the requested historic designation of the barn. City Council asked staff to work together with the owner of the historic barn property and return with reasonable considerations for the property moving forward.

Staff Report(s)

Marianne Schilling, Assistant to the City Manager, gave a presentation on the 44th Avenue Barn. She described the structure itself and the surrounding terrain.

Mayor Starker and Councilmembers had questions and comments:

- We need a lot more detailed information on the particulars, pros and cons for each option staff presented before Council can make an informed decision.
- At this point, we should pursue a Historic Structures Assessment (HSA) grant to evaluate the structural integrity of the barn and research the total costs of retaining the structure via one means or another.
- Bonnie Botham, Secretary of the WR Historical Society, noted that the barn is in an inaccessible location. The Historical Society has space at another location, to which the barn could be moved. The Society's Five-Year Plan focuses on creating a location where people can see and appreciate what life was like in Wheat Ridge in the period between the Civil War and Statehood, through the end of the Nineteenth Century.
- City staff commented that moving the barn would prove problematic, mostly because the first floor and walls are concrete poured about 150 years ago.

- A councilmember commented that the City needs to have a plan for what we would do with the structure when and if we pursue any of the various options available.
- Mr. Johnstone commented that acquiring the barn and adjacent property to the south and west would provide a reasonable addition to the existing Prospect Park.
- The property where the barn is located has limited value because of the historic designation; a new owner of the property would be constrained by the current historic designation of the barn.

Councilmember Urban obtained a consensus among the Councilmembers to bring forth a recommendation to pursuit of a grant of not to exceed \$15,000 to conduct a Historic Structures Assessment.

2. Staff Report(s)

There were no new reports, as the staff had presented their reports to the Mayor and Council within the hour during the Regular Council Meeting.

3. Elected Officials' Report(s)

No reports for the same reason as the paragraph immediately above.

ADJOURNMENT

The Special Study Session adjourned at 9:54 pm.

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL ON February 24, 2020.



Steve Kirkpatrick, City Clerk



Janeece Hoppe, Mayor Pro Tem