

STUDY SESSION NOTES
CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO
City Council Chambers 7500 W. 29th Avenue
May 18, 2020

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

This meeting was conducted as a VIRTUAL MEETING.

No members of the Council or City staff were physically present at the Municipal building for this meeting; the public did not attend in person.

Mayor Starker welcomed the Council, other elected officials, staff and interested citizens.

The Mayor also explained the virtual meeting format, how citizens will have the opportunity to be heard, and the procedures and policies to be followed.

Council members present: Amanda Weaver, Judy Hutchinson, Zach Urban, Janeece Hoppe, Rachel Hultin, Korey Stites, Valerie Nosler Beck and Leah Dozeman.

Also present: City Attorney Jerry Dahl; City Clerk Steve Kirkpatrick; City Manager Patrick Goff; Director of Administration Allison Scheck, Director of Parks and Recreation Karen O'Donnell, guests Alexis Woodrow Lead Reduction Program Manager, Jeannine Shaw, Stephen Geisler, and Meg Trubee of Denver Water Government Affairs; Tyler Corbin of Evergreen Partners; other guests and interested citizens.

Citizen Comment on Agenda Items –

No one came forth to speak.

Note about Wheat Ridge Speaks:

Citizens may visit the Wheat Ridge Speaks website and enter written comments of up to 1,000 words on any Council agenda item. *The deadline for citizens to submit comments is 12:00 Noon Mountain Time on the day of a Council session* so that Council members, other elected officials and City Staff have time to review the comments before the meeting on Monday evening.

The City Clerk's Office transcribes those Wheat Ridge Speaks comments into these minutes, placing each comment along with the record for that agenda item, including items that include a public hearing (verbatim, if the comments do not contain lascivious language or unlawful hate speech).

There were no comments entered into WR Speaks for this meeting.

1. Denver Water Lead Reduction Program

Discussion began at 6:31 pm, approximately 2 minutes into the recording of the session

Denver Water is committed to delivering safe water to its customers. The water that they provide to homes and businesses is lead-free, but lead can get into the water as it moves through lead-containing household fixtures, plumbing and water service lines, the pipe that brings water into the home from the main in the street, that are owned by the customer.

City Manager Patrick Goff delivered to Council a short introduction for the representatives from Denver Water being Jeannine Shaw, Alexis Woodrow, and Meghan Trubee who gave detailed presentations about this item, its purpose and the background of the reasons for bringing it to Council.

Six years ago Denver Water found in residential sample testing that too many homes had lead levels that exceeded the EPA limit (15 parts per billion¹) for residential water. Those findings prompted Denver Water to act on lead reduction. (The vast majority of the 54,000 to 64,000 residential lead water service lines in the Denver area are in residences built before 1950.)

- pH adjustment: Increasing the pH level of the water to reduce the risk of lead and other metals getting into drinking water from lead service lines or household plumbing.
- Inventory: Developing and maintaining a publicly accessible inventory of all customer-owned lead service lines in Denver Water's service area. The service line is the pipe that brings water into the home from the main in the street.
- Lead Service Line Replacement: Replacing all of these lead service lines with copper lines at no direct charge to the customer.
- Filter Program: Providing a free water pitcher, filter and replacement filters, certified to remove lead, to all customers suspected of having lead services lines until six months after their line is replaced.
- Ongoing: Communication, outreach and education programs.

Denver Water presented this information to Council because our water does not and has not presented a public health hazard, however public education efforts are ongoing to help the public understand DW's interventions and other assistance to residents.

Councilmembers had questions and comments, a sampling of which follows:

- How does lead contamination enter the human body?
- How does increasing pH reduce the lead levels while remaining safe and effective for drinking, cooking and bathing?
- Have schools been checked for lead in the water? (Yes.)
- Does changing the water pH impact gardening?
- How does DW determine that a water service line is lead or has lead in it? (Water quality testing. No above ground detection method works as of today.)

¹ For purposes of comparison, the infamous water supply in Flint, Michigan had 13,000 parts per billion of lead in the city water.

- How does DW replace a service line? Does it replace the line with a new pipe of the same size? Is the water meter and adjacent fittings all replaced? What method of line replacement does DW use; open cut or boring?
- What should our citizens expect to see when this program rolls out later this year? Kits for water quality self-testing, drinking water pitchers that filter impurities from the water (for those with suspected lead plumbing).
- How many different water service providers do we have in Wheat Ridge? Will different water services be communicating the same messages or their own messages?
- What will this program add to water bills?

Our guests from Denver Water asked that we direct questions from residents to Denver Water Customer Care, lead@denverwater.org.

2. City Manager's Matters

Discussion began at 7:28 pm, approximately 58 minutes into the recording of the session.

Mr. Goff reported on several matters.

- He updated Council on the hook ramp project at Clear Creek Crossing, how it will be financed, and how the cash flow will work. Council had questions about any risks the City is taking and how various scenarios might develop, especially in light of the CoVid-19 pandemic. No Council action is required or recommended at this time.
- The City staff is monitoring revenues on a month by month basis to project revenue shortfalls and cash flows. At this point in time too many variables remain unknowns to make projections with any confidence.
- Ms. O'Donnell updated Council on plans for safely opening and beginning summer programs. She was responding to a question from Council last week, about using public parks for classes like yoga or martial arts, during the closure of our recreation centers.
- Ms. O'Donnell reported on actions taken to mitigate the risk of pedestrians (especially those walking dogs either on or off leash) and cyclists sharing our greenbelts.
- Mr. Goff also reported on guidance received from the county and state health departments concerning use of patios and parking areas at small businesses and restaurants to ease reopening. City Attorney Dahl discussed the authority to make these steps happen as part of the resolution passed by Council declaring an emergency. Community Development is leading an effort to inform and educate local businesses about using these spaces as they reopen.

- Mr. Goff recommended delaying the Council Retreat into early 2021, because at present there are too many unanswered questions to make strategic planning rational. Council asked that in the meantime the City provide a review of the latest strategic planning priorities, to refresh the memories of all Councilmembers, especially those elected in 2019.
- He asked for guidance from Council about when to lift the mask order. Council had various questions and suggestions for Mr. Goff to consider.

Ms. Hultin asked for a **consensus** to hold a Special Council Meeting on June 1, following the regular Study Session on that date, to consider whether to continue the mask order as promulgated in Resolution 26, after it expires on May 30th. Consensus reached.

3. Elected Officials' Report(s)

Councilmember Stites asked if there are any developments in the area of petition circulation and collecting signatures for both initiatives and referenda, given the current public health concerns. Mr. Dahl explained that the situation is still evolving, but that the Governor cannot relieve requirements in either City Code/Charter or Colorado laws. Mr. Dahl is drafting a memo to the Mayor and Council about options to change those requirements under our Home Rule Charter.

He cautioned that the City would have to anticipate both intended and unintended impacts of any contemplated action, because an action on one election matter may affect other provisions of election law.

Councilmember Dozeman reported that the Carnation Festival has been officially cancelled because of the pandemic. She explained how difficult the decision was, and why the action needed to be taken now.

Councilmember Hoppe thanked Councilmember Dozeman and Mr. Joe DeMott for their hard work preparing for the Carnation Festival and the hard decisions they had to make.

Councilmember Urban reported on progress with the Business Stabilization Program and decisions made by the committee to accept and review applications for Round 2. The committee will begin accepting applications next week, and the application period will end June 5th. Councilmember Weaver thanked Mr. Urban and the others on the Committee for their hard work.

Councilmember Hultin asked the public to take extra care as school ends next week and more children and adolescents will be bicycling and playing on our streets, greenbelts and bike pathways.

Mayor Starker again acknowledged the Wheat Ridge High School class of 2020. He thanked all of the essential workers, especially first responders, for their continued hard work under difficult conditions.

ADJOURNMENT

The Study Session adjourned at 9:06 pm.

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL ON June 8, 2020.



Steve Kirkpatrick, City Clerk



Janeece Hoppe, Mayor Pro-Tem