

STUDY SESSION NOTES
CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO
Virtual Meeting
September 21, 2020

Mayor Bud Starker called the Study Session to order at 6:31 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; Community Development Director, Ken Johnstone; Director of Administration Allison Scheck; Assistant to the City Manager, Marianne Schilling; Projects Supervisor, Mark Westberg; Greg Jamieson with our city attorney law firm, guests and interested citizens.

Citizen Comment on Agenda Items –

Diana Lopez, retired teacher and principal, 30 year resident of Wheat Ridge. She came to highlight her support for action on diversity, inclusion and equity in Wheat Ridge. She asked why more people who look like her are not involved in City government. She recalled incidents during which residents called the police because someone was walking past while black. We need to change the system that more often puts minority youth into the criminal justice system. We can, and we will, do the right thing.

Elise St. Peter, 6997 W 36th Ave. Transferred to Wheat Ridge High School. When I enrolled, there were few other minorities attending, the faculty treated me inappropriately, and the other students treated me as an outcast. The same classmates still live here, and may be raising children of their own. Racism is a learned behavior. We must have action that begins with bias and diversity training for our City staff and the WR Police Department.

Jessie Richards, Wheat Ridge resident. In the two years I have lived in Wheat Ridge, I have experienced racism, including accusations that I am a thief while waiting for the school bus. A man who thought I stole something from his grandson accosted me at the school bus stop one morning and verbally abused me. Racism is alive and well in Wheat Ridge, and we need to take action to remedy this culture.

Morgan Richards, I helped form Wheat Ridge for Equity on June 7th, shortly after the death of George Floyd. Council made a great step forward on June 22 when you passed a resolution condemning racism. I have seen my son experience racism here. My new organization has held dozens of protest event. Tonight as we chanted Black Lives Matter in the area near 29th Avenue and Wadsworth and another citizen stood before us responding No They Don't. People call my son a (N-word). Your discussion tonight will determine the future of Wheat Ridge. I want to recognize that this is hard, uncomfortable work. Please, agree to our three action items so together we can address the racism and bigotry in our community.

Ihor Figlus, 9775 W. 36th Ave – Came to comment about communication and input into the process of listening to the citizenry during Council meetings. There is no back and forth in these meetings, no discussion or exchange of ideas, just a 3 minute statement while Council stares and does not listen. You should respond. Where are the District Meetings? There are a number of issues we need to discuss in a real dialogue and social media is not the platform for a dialog. Make District Meetings a real, regular part of our City. Perhaps one Monday a month in lieu of a study session

Jesse Hill, 2995 Hoyt St., Wheat Ridge. Came to discuss the opportunity for the City to look at some of our existing policies, for example auxiliary dwelling units. There has been a lot of discussion about ADU, but all that happens is a lot of referring to committees and discussions that yield no results. Perhaps a lot of this resistance to ADU is based on racism. As a property owner, we should be allowed to invite people than our family members to live in our ADU, which is a proven way to provide affordable housing in Wheat Ridge.

Makhi Delaet 19830 W. 36th Ave. The recent media coverage of George Floyd's death revealed that the problem was not racism but his refusal to obey the orders of the police. More regulations will make no difference. Funding a new commission on race and equity will accomplish nothing. If we do our part to take care of one another then we will do well. I do not need government or the Council to tell me how to build a more inclusive community; we can do that on our own initiative as residents.

Odarka Figlus, 10580 W 38th Ave. Called to speak on the Wadsworth widening and the budget. She noted that the funding redevelops only part of the Wadsworth corridor. It would make more sense to live within our budget and work on as much as we can. When we voted on 2E no one said that property would be taken from businesses by force using condemnation. We should have consulted with the business community before we planned the Wadsworth project, instead of condemning their property.

Regarding the proposed task force, will the new task force be allowed to be inclusive? Will those who have differing opinions be allow to join and participate? Who will right the report and deliver it to Council? Make this new group truly inclusive.

Mayor asked if there was anyone who had not spoken regardless of their last name. No one else came forth.

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).

Wheat Ridge Speaks transcript: Citizens entered the following comments about this item on the Wheat Ridge Speaks website, transcribed here in their entirety.

Dear Mayor Starker and City Council Members,

I am a Wheat Ridge resident at 4 Hillside Drive in Paramount Heights. I am encouraging you to move forward with three items put forth by Wheat Ridge for Equity. I encourage you to conduct ongoing equity and bias training for city staff and elected officials, create an Equity Task Force which reflects the diversity of our city, and for that Task Force to conduct a review of city policies, services and ordinances to root out inequities.

Thanks for representing me in these timely and important issues.

Margaret Robinson
09/19/2020 2:33 pm

Margaret Robinson
4 Hillside Drive
Wheat Ridge, 80215

Dear City Council Members,

Thank you for full consideration of an inclusive equity task force. I know these are complicated times, and Wheat Ridge is a complicated place. I know there aren't very many people of color in Wheat Ridge, so it's tempting to shrug and think that the issues around equity don't need to be addressed here. But, as Benjamin Franklin said, "Justice will not be served until those who are unaffected are as outraged as those who are." While many Wheat Ridge citizens may not be directly affected by inequity, we are better as a community when we hear from a diversity of voices, backgrounds, and experiences. Data shows that companies and communities who have diverse representation on their boards and committees do better economically, create more innovation, and inspire more investment. These are all things that will make Wheat Ridge an even better place to live.

09/20/2020 2:54 pm

Rhiannon Gallagher
25 Hillside Drive
Wheat Ridge, 80215

When you consider the complete lack of diversity on the council, or on staff, I think it is clear that we need a task force to create diversity in the city's leadership. Please consider moving forward with this in order to form a government that actually reflects our cities diversity. We are called White Ridge for a reason and it's not a compliment.

09/20/2020 11:30 am

Jessica Fast
4335 Kendall St

Wheat Ridge, 80033

Dear Mayor Starker and Council Members,

I am a resident of Wheat Ridge District 1. Thank you for the resolution condemning racism and hate. I am encouraging you to take action by conducting ongoing equity and bias training for city staff and elected officials and creating an Equity Task Force, which reflects the diversity of our city, to conduct a review of city policies, services and ordinances to root out inequities.

Thank you for listening.

Eric Wilson

09/20/2020 10:43 am

Eric Wilson

3743 Jay St.

Wheat Ridge, 80033

Dear Mayor and City Council members,

Please proceed with these action items because being a teenager of color, I have experienced racism in

Wheat Ridge. I believe these action items will help make Wheat Ridge safer.

09/20/2020 8:24 pm

Jassir Rankin-Richards

3255 Ames St

Wheat Ridge, 80212

Mayor Starker and Members of the City Council,

As a 20 year resident in District 1, I am asking you to support the 3 action items in front of you today by moving them from a Study Session to the next stage.

We are obligated on the grounds of basic human rights to rid Wheat Ridge of systemic racism. We are obligated on those same grounds to build a city that fosters and supports equity.

Denying that there is any problem in our city is naive. Our family and friends have experienced racism inside city limits. We know this is not unique to us. No action or partial support in this case could end in the same kind of tragedy that took Elijah McClain's life.

Thank you for your time and consideration in these matters.

Regards,

Jeff Richards

09/20/2020 9:47 pm

Jeff Richards

3255 Ames Street

Wheat Ridge, 80212

Mayor Starker and Council Members,

As a longtime resident of Wheat Ridge I would urge you to adopt the three items brought forward by Wheat Ridge for Equity. It is incumbent for all citizens to be aware of inequity in our country and community and to work toward awareness and remediation. I believe the three aspects of ongoing equity and bias training for city staff and elected officials, the creation of an Equity Task Force which reflects the diversity of our city, and for that Task Force to conduct a review of city policies, services and ordinances to identify inequities and put forth suggested remedies.

Thank you for your consideration of these historical and timely issues.

Diane Sandman

September 21, 2020

09/21/2020 8:09 am

Diane Sandman

4720 Reed St

Wheat Ridge, 80033

Dear Mayor and City council,

I am a long-time resident of Wheat Ridge, and I live in Wheat Ridge. So proud of you for passing the resolution condemning hate and racism. And now let's put some action to those words and begin by creating a diverse equity task force that would review city policies and help make recommendations

for a more inclusive community. We want to live in a city that we can all be proud of, and implementing the 3 action items Wheat Ridge for Equity is asking for is a way to move forward. Thank you.

09/21/2020 8:31 am

Diana Lopez
3260 Field St.
Wheat Ridge, 80033

Dear Mayor and Council,

My name is Michael Ksenyak and I am a resident of Wheat Ridge. The city passed the resolution against racism and hate in our city. That is a great first step! To continue the work of making Wheat Ridge a more inclusive and equitable city, I strongly urge you to create the task force and open it for a city wide application process. This is the best way to ensure greater diversity from the city is represented and had an opportunity to participate. This work is important and intentional and a building process. It must be done well and with urgency, but not rushed, all at the same time. As a city we need this community led task force to partner with the city and council. Thank you

09/21/2020 8:35 am

Mike Ksenyak
4495 Yarrow Street
Wheat Ridge, 80033

Dear Mayor Starker and Council Members,

I am a resident of Wheat Ridge District 2 and I want to thank you for the resolution condemning racism and hate. I am encouraged that most of you want to take action by conducting ongoing equity and bias training for city staff and elected officials and creating an Equity Task Force. The equity and bias training should be continuous for there is no such thing as too much training especially when it comes to something as important as equity and bias for government staff and elected officials. Training bi-annually would be preferred. It is vital that the Equity Task Force is well thought through, starting with the application process. Many of those that we want on this task force won't come forward, but we will need to recognize those communities who aren't represented and reach out to them. The selection process also needs to include groups like Wheat Ridge for Equity to ensure that this task force truly represents all the minorities in our community. Once the group is selected it should be up to the group to replace members in the task force when such a time comes. It should not be up to the Mayor and City Council.

When reflecting on the diversity of our city, we need to recognize our own shortcomings as an inclusive community and strive for better unity. I hope you also recognize the need to give the Equity Task Force teeth to conduct a review of city policies, services and ordinances to root out inequities. If power isn't given to the task force to be able to make real change, then this will be nothing more than a PR stunt by politicians instead of a solution created by Wheat Ridge citizens to make our city the best it can be. This is an incredible chance for you to make a true difference in given more citizens their voice. If you can create a well thought out process for both the equity and bias training and the Equity Task Force, and you show you care about this and recognize this is an issue that needs to be addressed, then you have my vote the next time you are up for re-election no matter the affiliation. Please take this seriously and understand that you are making a difference for every citizen in our city.

09/21/2020 9:01 am

Alexander Goldsmith
7333 W 38th Ave, Unit 359
Wheat Ridge, 80033

Dear Mayor Starker and members of the Council,

Thank you for considering the action items put forth by Wheat Ridge for Equity. As your constituent, I encourage and request that you move forward with creating a Task Force to address racism in our city, in both the systems and practices. As a white woman and third generation property owner in Wheat Ridge, I have benefited from many privileges that are often not afforded to people of color in our city. It may not appear to those of us in positions of privilege or power that there are issues to

address, but it is our responsibility to dig deep and listen to the community. To continuously address inequality in our systems I believe that the steps put forth by Wheat Ridge for Equity are steps in the right direction. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Miranda Cutting

09/21/2020 9:32 am

Miranda Jo Cutting
3588 Quay St.
Wheat Ridge, 80033

Dear Mayor & Council Members,

I am a resident of Wheat Ridge District 2 and want to express my fervent support for the action items presented to you today. These 3 steps are essential in advocating for and protecting all of Wheat Ridge's citizens. Without them, I'm concerned that we will continue to promote patterns and habits that marginalize members of our community. We must also acknowledge that these items are just the beginning of the work required to fight inequity. This work requires ongoing involvement and conversation, and if these items are not adopted and/or taken seriously, we are failing to provide solid footing for equity. We must be intentional in providing training, education, and platforms for addressing inequity, bias, and racism. As this City Council has done previously, please take the stand against inequity seriously.

09/21/2020 9:49 am

Sarah Gould
7333 W. 38th Ave, Apt 359
Wheat Ridge, 80033

Please move forward with the diversity task force, as it is much needed in Wheat Ridge. As our town grows and expands, understanding of BIOPC communities is critical ensuring that we thrive.

09/21/2020 10:01 am

Sara Nepomuceno
4321 Dover Street
Wheat Ridge, 80033

Dear Mayor and City Council Members,

I applaud you for passing the resolution condemning racism and hate. It is one thing for city council to pass such a resolution, but it is another that there be some actual work done. We must create an environment where everyone has a voice. I fully support the formation of a Task Force to address racism issues and policies in Wheat Ridge. Its members should be from diverse ethnic and economic backgrounds representing marginalized citizens of Wheat Ridge. The important work starts with consistent equity training and the creation of this task force. Now is time to act on making Wheat Ridge a safer and more inclusive community for ALL of our citizens.

Thank you for your consideration and willingness to move forward.

09/21/2020 10:28 am

Milly Nadler
4710 Reed St
Wheat Ridge, 80033

Good day, Mayor Starker and Wheat Ridge City Council,

My name is Jenny Snell, and my wife and I reside at 7020 W 35th avenue in Wheat Ridge.

I am reaching out in support of the three items put forth by Wheat Ridge for Equity: Equity Training for City staff and elected officials, creating an Equity Task Force, and then utilizing that Task Force to review all city policies and ordinances to ensure fair treatment of ALL Wheat Ridge citizens.

Our city has an opportunity here to set the bar and demonstrate what true equity and inclusion looks like within a community. Wheat Ridge as a whole can benefit from this, from our most marginalized community members to our most privileged. We must be known as a community that embraces and supports all of its residents. Moving ahead with these 3 items is a great start towards that.

As a member of the LGBTQ community, it is important to me that I and my family feel accepted, safe, and supported in our community. It is also of utmost importance that all of our BIPOC members feel safe and supported in our community that is overwhelmingly white. We have much to love about Wheat Ridge, and we also have much to change to be the loving, supportive, action-oriented community that I know we can be. Thank you for doing the right thing for all of your community members.

-Jenny Snell
09/21/2020 11:13 am

Jenny Snell
7020 W 35th Ave
Wheat Ridge, 80033-6369

Dear Mayor and Council Members,

I support the three action items proposed by the Wheat Ridge Race and Equity Force. Let's be leaders among Colorado cities in moving forward to end racial inequality for all minorities but especially towards African Americans in our city. Four hundred years of oppression and injustice is way too many.

Thank you,
Mariann Storck
09/21/2020 11:35 am

Mariann Storck
4120 BALSAM ST
WHEAT RIDGE, 80033

Dear Mayor Starker and City Council,

I applaud your efforts to condemn racism and hate in Wheat Ridge, and I see the work you've already started in providing equity training for police and council members. It gives me hope that these issues are of true concern, and you are hearing the emphatic requests of residents who are urging you to continue forward in this work. Initiating the creation of an equity task force is the next logical step toward examining the systematic inequities that must be identified and changed in community systems and departments. Of great importance is that this task force represent our community and recruitment will likely be a grassroots effort. It will involve building trust with marginalized communities, and requesting they step forward to build a more inclusive and safe community for us all. Thank you for engaging this critical work. I'm proud to be a resident of Wheat Ridge.

-Shannon Kishel
09/21/2020 11:33 am

Shannon Kishel
3400 Quay St
Wheat Ridge, 80033

As a long-term Wheat Ridge resident of District 1, I strongly recommend that you support and move forward with the three action items put forth by the members of Wheat Ridge for Equity. Listen, change, grow...for everyone's sake.

09/21/2020 11:37 am

Shannon Sturtevant
3560 Otis St
Wheat Ridge, 80033

Dear Mayor Starker and Council Members,

I am a resident of Wheat Ridge District 1. Thank you for the resolution condemning racism and hate. I am encouraging you to take action by conducting ongoing equity and bias training for city staff and elected officials and creating an Equity Task Force, which reflects the diversity of our city, to conduct a review of city policies, services and ordinances to root out inequities.

I believe this is vital to the well-being of our society and our city.

Joyce Gallo
09/20/2020 10:43 am

09/21/2020 11:50 am

Joyce Gallo
6685 W 30th Ave
Wheat Ridge, 80214

Dear City Council Members,

I am writing this letter to urge you to move forward with the action items proposed by Wheat Ridge for Equity at the City Council meeting on June 22, 2020. This is the next logical step in the Council's promise to make Wheat Ridge a community where all its residents can feel safe.

Sincerely,

Nikki Larsen

09/21/2020 11:56 am

Nikki Larsen
3725 Harlan St
Wheat Ridge, 80033

As a 20 year resident of Wheat Ridge and involved with this City in petitions, running for office and attending all city meetings that I can, I am a bit puzzled by the call for action as presented by the others who have commented on WR Speaks. I have not heard of one issue/complaint throughout the public domain towards the city or staff or council members.

I am informed from reading some of the postings that issues do exist and maybe have not been brought to the public's attention. With all the comments now on WR Speaks it seems those citizens would be the ones volunteering for the task force they are asking to be established.

I would rather see time and effort spent by those in authority teaching those who are growing up and learning of the world ways that parents and schools teach subjects such as respect for all, acceptance of all, kindness to all and general civility to and from all.

In the early 80s I remember when children were able to accuse teachers and parents of disciplinary 'abuses' and lives were changed as those accused were arrested and had charges filed. It seemed then that the bending to the will of the child, correct in their accusations or not, was the beginning of downward path in our society that showed a lack of respect and compliance with authority that was and is needed for all of us to survive life in general. Without respect for all, we find ourselves in situations that lack the good graces of a good society. I would say that teachers and parents and others who have the ability to teach and show the young population how to respect others, tolerate others, accept others and do unto others as you would have done unto you is the way forward our society needs. No more labeling and name calling and bullying and hatred. Let us become aware of how to accomplish that through cotillions. I quote from a webpage of Jon D. Williams Cotillions® EST. 1949: "In a world where kindness, courtesy and respect are often overlooked, there is a way recognized as educating young people in the art of social skills. In today's competitive society, it is a fact that those with well-developed social skills have tangible advantages in every aspect of their lives. In truth, students without this knowledge may lack the confidence to succeed when it comes to the real world" Onward and Upward. Respectfully,

Vivian Vos

09/21/2020 11:58 am

VIVIAN VOS
6920 W 47 place
Wheat Ridge, 80033

Below is from the Wheat Ridge for Equity group.

Wheat Ridge for Equity

September 21, 2020

MEMO: Wheat Ridge for Equity action items moving forward

At the June 22 meeting of Wheat Ridge City Council, Wheat Ridge for Equity members asked for the following three action items:

1. Frequent and ongoing equity and bias training for city staff and elected officials in order to understand and recognize patterns of thinking that perpetuate discrimination and mitigate personal biases.

2. Creation of an Equity Task Force by the City Council to include people marginalized by oppression, such as people who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, LGBTQ, immigrants, differently abled, people of marginalized faiths, young people, and elders in our community, as well as a few lesser marginalized residents. Membership of this Task Force must represent diverse and multiple perspectives so as not to deny or minimize our neighbors' lived experiences.

3. The Equity Task Force will carry out a thorough review of City policies, services, and ordinances, as well as inequities in community systems and departments and report recommendations, including ways in which success will be measured toward becoming a more inclusive and responsive community.

Tonight, we hope that our city council members move forward and agree to our action items, most importantly the formation of an Equity Task Force. This is a step forward in ensuring equity in our community. As part of our action items, please understand:

- While we want to see every thoughtful effort that the task force membership is representative of each marginalized population in Wheat Ridge, we will not view this effort as a failure if the task force starts with many and not all representatives of our community's marginalized representatives.
- We recognize that encouraging potential members to apply will take time and relies on continued relationship building.
- The process of application and selection need to work well to ensure our marginalized community members are trusting of this initiative and will step forward to apply.
- Until a task force has started and the work begun, it is hard to say what the lifespan of the task force ought to be. The discovery of the task force's work and other research is required to make an informed decision.
- Wheat Ridge for Equity's core leadership and greater member wants to support our city council and city staff in this effort. This is uncomfortable, challenging work. We are invested in us succeeding together.

We also have amongst us those who have the lived experience of racism and bigotry, as well as others who have years of equity training and learning to augment the marginalization we have witnessed.

Please view us as a resource.

Sincerely,
Morgan Richards
Alexander Goldsmith
Elise St. Peter
Shannon Kishel
Jeff Richards
Diana Lopez
09/21/2020 11:59 am

Morgan Richards
3255 Ames St
Wheat Ridge, 80212

End of comments entered in Wheat Ridge Speaks for this meeting.

1. Race and Equity in Wheat Ridge

Discussion began at 6:34 pm, approximately 0:34 minutes into the recording of the session.

On June 22, 2020, City Council passed Resolution No. 35 as an important first step towards condemning racism and hate in all its forms. The Resolution further resolved that for true systematic change, it is incumbent on city leaders and community members to listen with open hearts and minds and to take informed, meaningful actions and that

the Mayor and City Council stand steadfast with all citizens of Wheat Ridge against racism and reaffirm its commitment to fighting for racial justice and human and civil rights for all.

Staff report

Mr. Goff introduced Councilmembers Nosler Beck and Dozeman, who brought this item forward. We have given you an extensive report on these issues, based on our own experience and that of many other municipalities dealing with racism, inclusion and diversity. Marianne Schilling, Assistant to the City Manager created the report.

Some of those items include but were not limited to:

Administrative Services

- The City will conduct a robust and engaging three-part antiracism and inclusion training for supervisory staff beginning September 22.
- The City's website can now be instantly translated on demand into over 100 languages.
- The City has added closed captioning for videos on YouTube. Recent outreach meetings have included ASL and Spanish interpretation.
- The City plans to update its communication style guide and train staff on its use to eliminate gender identifications, references to "citizens", language around ability and other areas of our written and verbal communication.

Community Development

- Leadership has encouraged open discussions regarding race and equity, and has encouraged participation in the forums hosted by the City Manager's Office.

Municipal Court

- Last year, court staff created a mission statement which mandates the fair and impartial resolution of ordinance violations in order to preserve the rule of law and to protect the rights and liberties guaranteed by the State and U.S. Constitutions. Staff, at the same time, developed department values that require respectfulness, efficiency, procedural fairness, and safety to all who come before the court.

Parks and Recreation

- Staff is working on a policy draft for inclusion and equity, which is a National Recreation & Parks Association initiative and racial equity is a component.

Police

- The Police Community Advisory Group was formed in 2018 to provide a forum for open dialogue about the delivery of law enforcement services.

- In June, the Police Chief and City Manager presented at a virtual community meeting, hosted by the Police Community Advisory Group, on policing procedures and policies in Wheat Ridge.

Public Works

- Public Works is committed to non-discriminatory management of a diverse work force in which managers value the differences in their employees.

Councilmembers Dozeman and Nosler Beck discussed the motives for this discussion and propose action, with many thanks to people who worked on this effort with the Councilmembers.

Councilmembers had questions and comments:

Councilmembers commented on their experiences with training and facilitation on diversity. How will we know that we have hired the right consultant or facilitator for this work, in order to avoid “false equity?”

Mr. Goff discussed how we have selected the consultant we will hire, and the vetting process used. Chief Murtha recalled that when Mr. Omar Montgomery came, we had a lot of recommendations and endorsements of his knowledgeability. We had a great session and the Chief asked how we might move forward, vs. one and done. Our officers received his balanced approach very well. We are going to debrief the meeting we had with the Dr. Montgomery and the NAACP and we are looking forward to future meetings addressing these issues.

Ms. Scheck reported on three upcoming sessions about our unconscious biases and how to recognize and address them. This is not about checking a box; we are laying a foundation for future directions over the short- and longer-term.

Councilmembers discussed the kinds of resources and educational opportunities that have proven effective in other Colorado municipalities. All parts of our community should participate, and it is incumbent upon us to recruit the people who may believe their voices do not matter. Remember this is a work in progress. We will not succeed immediately or even quickly, but as long as we continue the work and the dialogue we will make progress. If a task force is formed, we should not expect them to come with a long list of actions to take, unless that is what the task force decides. Even if we work on only one, two or a few issues we can make progress.

Councilmembers thanked all of those who have worked on these issues up to now, and will in the future.

When and if we form a task force, we as Councilmembers need to step back and let the task force do its work, with inclusion, diversity and open-mindedness.

Perhaps the task force's ideal size is 15-18 members. We need both district representatives and at large participants, including representatives from our schools. We need to have young people growing up in the City involved in the task force's work.

Perhaps we need to have input from the task force on choosing facilitators and resources for any training or facilitation of discussions.

When we set the size of the task force, let's not leave out people who have a strong interest, and let us seek participation in this task force from those who already sit on City boards and commissions. Perhaps we should consider applications for the task force with the names of the applicants redacted, so we considering their qualifications without assumptions based on their name, or reputation. Others cautioned that we must ensure that the process results in a truly diverse and inclusive task force membership.

Mr. Dahl reported that other municipalities are not asking demographic or similar questions, but ask what the applicants can bring to the task force, why they want to serve and what they would hope to accomplish as a member. This avoids any issue about compliance with Title 6 (Civil Rights Act). We should worry about any kind of quota related to ethnicity or any other trait. While the incentive do to that may be properly based, there is a potentially slippery slope.

Councilmembers discussed the application form, how to create it, and what it should include.

Councilmembers asked what the financial impact will be. Mr. Goff reported that when we know what action to take based on Council action, staff will report the proposed expenditures.

Councilmembers also expressed a caution that the application form for City employment does not ask whether the applicant has a criminal history. Ms. Scheck explained how the City does background checks for all applicants. While the City eliminates those who do not meet our standards, we cannot under state law exclude them solely on the basis of a criminal history. Mr. Dahl described the provisions in the newly enacted state law, and how it must be implemented. The nature of the position can be taken into account under the statute and the City does include the kind of position during the hiring process.

Mr. Dahl, stated that the task force members need not be legal residents of Wheat Ridge (Charter does require residency to serve on boards and commissions). Ms. Schilling said that on other applications we have asked, "What are your connections to Wheat Ridge?"

Councilmembers expressed their support for the three proposed initiatives.

Councilmember Nosler-Beck received a consensus for council to take part in equity training at a future study session; staff will bring options of facilitators for council to

select among. Further, Council reached a consensus to create a Race and Equity Task Force with a charter to function for one year (with the possibility of a time extension) with up to 20 members, two from each District, the rest at large including four at large appointed by the Mayor and two at large appointed by each District's Councilmembers from the four districts. The Task Force will review and recommend updates related to (but not be limited to) the City Charter, the municipal code, and City operating policies and procedures, including internal recruiting and hiring policies, and issue findings and recommendations in a report to the City Council not later than September 30, 2021.

Consensus attained.

2. Wadsworth Improvement Project update

Discussion began at 8:10 pm, approximately 1:40 hours into the recording of the session.

a) Budget update

Preliminary budget estimates for the Wadsworth Improvement project have been provided to Council during various Council meetings that have occurred over the past 6 years. Those figures have always been conceptual in nature as progress was made through the various phases of design and right-of-way (ROW) acquisition. The purpose of this is to update Council on final estimated project costs now that we are nearing final design documents and are in the midst of acquiring necessary additional ROW for the project. Working with our consulting team during these latter phases of design and ROW acquisition, it has become apparent that existing available project funding will necessitate a phased approach to construction.

Staff report

Ken Johnstone, Mark Westberg, Projects Supervisor and Greg Jamieson (attorney; specialist in right-of-way acquisition) gave a detailed presentation about this item, including:

- The history for original funding and budget sources
- Environmental review and approvals
- Formal Value Engineering processing
- Updated construction and ROW cost

Councilmembers had questions and comments:

Councilmembers asked detailed questions about specific aspects of the project plan, timeline, and the budget and funding. Questions arose about the extent to which the plans comply with the ballot question 2E funding, as passed by the voters. Staff and Mr. Dahl answered these questions with detailed information and explanations.

Councilmembers asked detailed questions about where sidewalks will be constructed, so pedestrians do not walk in the roadways on snowy days. Staff answered this and similarly detailed questions.

b) Right-of-way acquisition update

On January 14, 2019, Council authorized staff to acquire right-of-way (ROW) for the Wadsworth Boulevard Improvement project (Project). Staff had requested the ability to use the City's power of eminent domain, if necessary, to accomplish the necessary ROW acquisitions. At that early stage in the ROW acquisition process, Council chose not to authorize the use of eminent domain, without staff first coming back to Council with a ROW acquisition status update and a discussion of outstanding ROW acquisition needs.

Staff report

Mark Westberg, Projects Supervisor delivered to Council a detailed presentation about how ROW acquisitions for the Project have been ongoing for several months.

The negotiations on several properties have become difficult, meaning one of two things: 1) certain impacted parties are simply not choosing to respond to the City or the City's ROW consultant team; and/or 2) substantial differences in perceived property value still exist, or have reached an impasse, meaning that an agreement on value does not seem possible.

Therefore, staff is requesting that Council authorize the use of eminent domain for any properties that have reached an impasse. Currently, the total difference in value for these nine properties totals \$1.2 million.

Councilmembers had questions and comments:

Council asked questions about the details of the staff report, which staff and Mr. Dahl answered. For instance, Council asked how the eminent domain process might affect the project schedule.

3. Staff Report(s)

Discussion began at 9:36 pm, approximately 3:06 hours into the recording of the session

Nothing more from staff.

4. Elected Officials' Report(s)

City Clerk Kirkpatrick announced that today the Office of the Clerk issued a Certificate of Sufficiency to the petitioners who circulated a referendum petition for Ordinance 1691, series of 2020, a zoning change for property at Johnson St. and 38th Avenue. Council also received notice in writing of the Certificate of Sufficiency. Protests may be filed until October 6th. He anticipates sending the issue to Council at a Regular Meeting scheduled for October 12, 2020. In all likelihood, for legal and logistical considerations the special election will occur after January 1, 2021. (The deadline to include an item on the General Election ballot November 3, 2020, passed weeks ago.)

City Clerk Kirkpatrick gave an election update for the Nov. 3 Presidential election. Topics included:

- National Voter Registration Day tomorrow
- Friday Oct. 9: The Jeffco Elections division will mail ballots to all active registered voters and open our 24-hour ballot drop boxes.
- Monday Oct. 19: If you haven't yet received a ballot, contact the JeffCo Elections team at 303-271-8111, which can issue you a replacement ballot by mail, until Oct. 26. You can also go to any in-person vote center
- Monday Oct. 26: Last day to return your ballot by mail to ensure it arrives in time. But drop boxes (their recommended voting method) and in-person vote centers are still open through Election Day.
- Tuesday, Nov. 3: Election Day! You can use any drop box up until 7 p.m., or if you need additional services (registering to vote, getting a replacement ballot, etc.), you can use any vote center up until 7 p.m. as well.

Councilmembers Hoppe and Nosler Beck thanked all those who participated in this evening's discussion of race and equity in Wheat Ridge, as well as the many citizens and organizations who have contributed to this effort over the past weeks and months.

ADJOURNMENT TO SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING

The Study Session adjourned at 9:41 pm.

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL ON October 12, 2020.



Steve Kirkpatrick, City Clerk



Janeece Hoppe, Mayor Pro Tem