

SPECIAL STUDY SESSION NOTES
CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO
City Council Chambers 7500 W. 29th Avenue
October 26, 2020

Upon adjournment of the Regular City Council Meeting.

Mayor Bud Starker called the Special Study Session to order at: 9:10 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 Gerald Dahl; City Clerk, Steve Kirkpatrick; City Treasurer Chris Miller, City Manager Patrick Goff; Director of Administration Allison Scheck; Assistant to the City Manager, Marianne Schilling, guests and interested citizens.

Citizen Comment on Agenda Items –

No one came forward 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 citizen comments entered into Wheat Ridge Speaks related to this session.

1. Race and equity committee application process

Marianne Schilling, Assistant to the City Manager gave a brief overview on the committee application, as well as the process. She asked City Council for feedback on the draft application as well as consensus on the development and review process of the Race and Equity Task Force.

She concluded by asking City Council for feedback on the draft application as well as consensus on the development and review process of the Race and Equity Task Force.

Councilmembers had questions and comments:

Councilmember Hoppe thanked Ms. Schilling for her work on this project. She is fine with having a selection committee review the applications and recommend to Council the membership of the Race and Equity Task Force. She wants the application process to remain open as long as feasible. She does not want a checklist of items as presented in the packet, but will leave that decision to the selection committee.

Councilmember Hultin also believes that the draft application aligns with the Council's discussion and intent. She commented that we are fortunate to have a community organization like Wheat Ridge Equity working in the community. She is hesitant to have a selection committee choose the Task Force, and she wants to continue with the consensus Council reached last time. She asked for a clarification of the meaning of the term "At Large," because she believes the Task Force members should be residents of the City.

Councilmember Hoppe commented that making residency a requirement might eliminate people who have a strong connection to Wheat Ridge but do not live here.

Councilmember Urban believes that a selection committee is unnecessary; Council can perform the selection task. He also does not believe Task Force members should have to be residents of Wheat Ridge only. He also asked about the criteria for selecting members because he fears that some people would be overlooked on the basis of a demographic, such as their education level or their ethnicity. He is concerned that we may violate Title 6 or Title 7.

Councilmember Nosler Beck expressed concerns that the application as presented may or may not be legal, and that it may defeat our purpose of having a diverse, inclusive task force. Mr. Dahl commented that rather than asking demographic questions, other cities ask all applicants what they would bring to the Task Force and why they want to serve. Councilmember Nosler Beck had further detailed questions about the application form and how questions are worded; should we offer an option that says "prefer not to disclose?"

Councilmember Urban supports a process that ensure we are inclusive and diverse, however we do it.

Councilmember Hoppe is neutral on the issue of asking demographic questions about gender, race, ethnicity....

Councilmember Hultin wants to make sure that we do not exclude people who may read the application self-select out. She is opposed to asking questions that send a message that people need to bring with them certain attributes, memberships or experiences.

Councilmember Urban proposed a consensus to move forward with a study and costs to removing the voluntary disclosure section. He also asked for a consensus that we not ask for address or email address on the form itself. **Consensus achieved.**

Councilmember Hultin asked to remove the first two sentences in question 5. **Consensus attained.**

Councilmember Nosler Beck asked for a consensus to allow at large members to be closely connected to Wheat Ridge although not necessarily a resident. She also wants Council to select members, not a committee. **Consensus attained.**

Councilmember Urban asked for a consensus to remove the check box items related to faith because they may cross a legal line. Mr. Dahl opined that asking whether one is a member of an organization or a person of faith does not rise to the level of a gatekeeper question smacking of an illegal religious test to participate in government affairs.

Councilmember Weaver agreed with Councilmember Urban and Mr. Dahl, that asking about faith is problematic at best and provides little information of value.

Councilmember Nosler Beck asked for a consensus to remove all non-essay questions. **Consensus achieved**, also in support of Councilmember Urban's similar suggestion.

Ms. Schilling reported that previous application processes limited the information requested to contact information and open-ended, essay questions.

Councilmember Hoppe asked for a consensus that the Task Force range in size from 12-20. The minimum of 12 would be one resident and one at large for each District and four appointed by the mayor.

Councilmember Hutchinson commented that she would prefer all members be residents of Wheat Ridge because the term "strong connection," to Wheat Ridge is unclear.

Councilmember Hultin supports allowing non-residents to serve. She also proposed that we begin with the 12 members as Councilmember Hoppe suggested and then add additional members, up to no more than 20, based on Council's judgment to ensure an inclusive and effective group.

Councilmember Hoppe proposed a consensus that the Council selects the members of the Task Force: one resident from each Council District, one at large selected by the Councilmembers in each district and four appointed by the Mayor. If there are

additional qualified applicants Council might add up to 8 more members for a total of no more than 20. Consensus achieved.

Councilmember Urban asked for a consensus that a majority of the members be residents of the City. **Consensus attained.**

Councilmember Hultin asked that the Task Force have at least a year to do its work. (The packet mentions February 2022.) Councilmember Urban agreed that a one-year commitment is clearly enough. Councilmember Hoppe asked that the one-year timeframe begin when the task force is formed. At the end of one year, the Task Force will bring its recommendations to Council; **consensus proposed and attained.**

Councilmember Hultin asked for confirmation that applications submitted in languages other than English would be translated.

Councilmember Hoppe proposed a consensus that staff move forward with revising the application form and proceed with the initial steps in the application and selection process. **Consensus achieved.**

2. Staff Report(s)

Nothing further at this time.

3. Elected Officials' Report(s)

Discussion of this item began at approximately 10:05 PM.

Councilmember Nosler Beck thanked Ms. Schilling for her excellent work on this effort, acknowledging how difficult and time consuming this kind of work really is.

Mayor Starker reminded all to wear a mask, maintain social distance and wash their hands regularly.

Nothing further.

ADJOURNMENT

The Special Study Session adjourned at 10:14 pm.

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL ON November 9, 2020.



Steve Kirkpatrick, City Clerk



Janece Hoppe, Mayor Pro Tem