

**STUDY SESSION NOTES  
CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO  
Hybrid - Virtual Meeting**

**July 19, 2021**

Mayor Bud Starker called the Study Session to order at 6:31 p.m.

This meeting was conducted both as a virtual meeting and hybrid, where some members of the Council or City staff were physically present at the Municipal building, and some members of the public attended in person as well. All eight members of Council were present in Council Chambers for this session.

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

The Mayor also explained the new virtual/hybrid 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, Korey Stites, Leah Dozeman, Valerie Nosler Beck, and Rachel Hultin. Councilmembers Zach Urban and Janeece Hoppe excused themselves.

Also present: City Manager, Patrick Goff; City Clerk, Steve Kirkpatrick; Assistant to the City Marianne Schilling, Kayla Betzold, Sustainability Coordinator; Jacob Smith, Executive Director, Colorado Communities for Climate Action; interested citizens and guests.

**Public's Right to Speak**

Rob Robinson, 4 Hillside Drive – Came to discuss a bill introduced by 77 Members of Congress, on carbon emissions. He urged Council to issue a proclamation in support of a similar bill last year. That bill was revised and reintroduced as HR 2307, a marketplace action to deal with greenhouse gasses. We in Wheat Ridge are vulnerable to global warming; Jefferson County has been assessed as one of the most vulnerable communities in nation. About 70% of Wheat Ridge residents said in the last public survey that environmental issues are among the top facing the City, county, state and nation. Mr. Robinson urged Council to pass a resolution in support of HR 2307.

**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).

The following comments appeared in Wheat Ridge Speaks for this meeting.

Hi, my name is Amanda Opp, 46 Hillside Dr in Wheat Ridge. I want to encourage the city of Wheat Ridge to support HR 2307. Any steps - no matter how small - that we can make in reducing carbon output add up. Carbon dividends have been adopted bipartisanly as a way to stimulate the economy while encouraging carbon reduction. For the future of my generation, please make this small but extremely important step. Thank you.

July 16, 2021, 1:16 PM

**Amanda Opp**  
46 Hillside Dr Wheat Ridge, 80215

### **1. Outside Agency Committee recommendations**

Discussion began at 6:36 pm, approximately :05 minutes into the session.

City Council created the Outside Agency Program Review Committee in June 2016 to review outside agency applications and present recommendations to City Council on the funding amounts each organization should receive. The purpose of creating this committee was to provide an additional opportunity for residents to participate in the budget process, and to give the committee members the opportunity to weigh community needs against available resources and provide recommendations to City Council.

#### **Staff reports**

Assistant to the City Manager Marianne Schilling introduced Jerry DiTullio and Lisa Rucker, who spoke about the recommendations that came forward when the committee reviewed applications and listened to presentations from 25 different community organizations, totaling \$157,150 in requests. This is an overall reduction in funding requests of \$13,850 compared to what the committee recommended last year (in 2020 for consideration in the current, 2021 budget).

The total number of applicants is the same as last year; however, three new applications were received for the 2022 Outside Agency Program and three agencies from last year did not apply for funding. The three new applicants are Robbie's Hope Foundation, Wheat Ridge Kiwanis and Friends of Stevens.

#### **Councilmembers had questions and comments:**

Councilmembers thanked the Committee for its hard work.

Councilmembers asked detailed questions about the Committee's recommendations, about how the City publicizes its support for local non-profits, how new groups get added to the list of those the City supports and similar matters.

The Council and Committee members discussed the level of funding for these programs in both the 2022 and 2023 budgets.

Councilmember Stites proposed a consensus for staff to review and bring to Council a funding level of \$160,000 for the 2023 budget cycle.

**Consensus attained.**

## **2. Colorado Communities for Climate Action membership**

Discussion began at 6:51 pm, approximately :20 minutes into the session.

### **Issue**

Colorado Communities for Climate Action (CC4CA) is a coalition of counties and municipalities advocating for strong state and federal climate policy. Jacob Smith, CC4CA executive director, will be presenting the membership benefits and current policy priorities to City Council. There are 38 local government members in the coalition including Edgewater, Golden and Westminster.

### **Staff reports**

Sustainability Coordinator Kayla Betzold presented the prior actions of council to describe the proposed strategies from Sustainable Wheat Ridge to City Council. Proposed strategy 4 was "Support environmental sustainability policy on a regional, state and federal level". CC4CA was outlined as a policy advocacy group that could facilitate the adoption of the proposed strategy.

Ms. Betzold introduced Jacob Smith, Executive Director of CC4CA, who gave a detailed presentation about his organization and why Wheat Ridge participation will be important to the organization and our residents.

Joining the CC4CA would have a financial impact of \$5,000 in annual fees. CC4CA focuses on legislative, regulatory, and administrative action on a state and federal level through the support of their coalition of Colorado municipalities. The benefits of the coalition include collaboration, cost-effectiveness, and local support.

Through CC4CA, local governments can influence state and federal actions more than individual municipalities can alone. CC4CA provides the framework for strong collaboration between state and local governments, which results in maximum return on local efforts. Through the coalition, members can pool resources to secure professional representation to ensure impactful presence at the state and federal level. The coalition also offers networking opportunities for members and produces analyses and materials in support of coalition and member priorities and actions.

### **Councilmembers had questions and comments:**

Councilmembers thanked Mr. Smith for his time and presentation.

Councilmembers asked about how much focus the CC4CA puts on local policy. Mr. Smith replied in detail; the organization focuses more on statewide issues. It avoids

taking a position on issues when two or more counties or municipalities have differing views or policies on an issue.

Councilmembers asked how CC4CA reaches policy statements; Mr. Smith responded that all members must reach a consensus to make new policy or to change an existing policy.

Council also discussed the CC4CA's 2021 policy statements and asked how we can review those. They also asked how the policy statement gets written and reviewed. Mr. Smith gave a detailed answer to both questions.

Councilmember Hultin proposed a consensus for staff to review and bring to Council an action that will approve Wheat Ridge joining CC4CA.

**Consensus attained.**

### **3. H.R.763 – Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act of 2019**

Discussion began at 7:36 pm, approximately 1:05 hours into the session.

#### **Issue**

H.R. 2307, the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act of 2021, is a bill intended to encourage market-driven innovation of clean energy technologies through a carbon fee on producers and importers. The bill would also distribute the net proceeds to eligible U.S. residents on a per-capita basis as a monthly carbon dividend, resulting in a revenue neutral system and is projected to create 2.1 million new jobs.

#### **Staff reports**

Assistant to the City Manager Marianne Schilling and Sustainability Coordinator Kayla Betzold gave background presentations and spoke that during the August 10, 2020 City Council meeting a group of five Wheat Ridge residents, led by a Sustainable Wheat Ridge committee member, spoke during public comment regarding H.R. 2307 (then H.R. 763) and asked City Council to consider passing a resolution in support of the bill. City Council provided direction for staff to return to a future study session with a draft resolution.

To present the most recent version of the bill, it was determined that staff would return to City Council with a draft resolution after the bill was reintroduced into the new congress in 2021.

#### **Councilmembers had questions and comments:**

Councilmembers thanked Ms. Betzold for an excellent presentation.

Councilmembers asked about whether we would be wise to ask the Race and Equity Task Force to look at HR 2307 so that we understand the impact it will have on *all* families. Will it disadvantage certain groups or households vs. others?

They also asked for an analysis of how this bill would impact Wheat Ridge families in specific. For instance, we are already paying outrageous gas prices. Ms. Betzold gave a detailed answer.

Councilmember Stites proposed a consensus that staff ask the Race and Equity Task Force to review this proposed action by Congress and provide their analysis of how it would impact Wheat Ridge families, and asked staff to bring their outputs to a future Study Session.

**Consensus attained.**

**4. Staff Report(s)**

Mr. Goff announced that the City now has its first fully electric vehicle in service.

He toured the new Porchlight Family Justice Center in Wheat Ridge and was favorably impressed. The organization will be asking the County and municipalities to continue supporting the center. Our contribution would be about \$18,000.

**5. Elected Officials' Report**

Councilmember Nosler Beck asked whether we could offer incentives, such as a parks and recreation pass, to those who serve on our boards and commissions. She believes an incentive would help with recruitment and retention. Mr. Goff responded that discussions with Karen O'Donnell, Director of Parks and Recreation are already underway. He believes that the City can offer an incentive like a rec pass well within the current budget.

Councilmember Nosler Beck also wished her daughter, CoCo happy fifth birthday.

Councilmember Hultin commented that the numbers of dogs roaming off leash is becoming a more serious problem and encouraged staff to address it. She also commented that too many vehicles are parking in the bicycle lanes near Clear Creek Crossing.

Councilmember Hutchinson seconded the concern about too many dogs off leash. She also expressed concern about enforcement of fireworks laws and regulations.

The Mayor thanked the staff and our guest presenters tonight.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The Study Session adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL ON July 26, 2021



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Steve Kirkpatrick, City Clerk



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Janeece Hoppe, Mayor Pro Tem