

GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP SUMMARY

August 2, 2021

Meeting Convened: 5:30 p.m. Meeting held in person at the Fire Department Training Room, 625 Ute Avenue, and live streamed via GoToWebinar.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:47 p.m.

City Councilmembers present: Councilmembers Abe Herman, Phil Pe'a, Randall Reitz, Dennis Simpson, Anna Stout, and Mayor Chuck McDaniel.

City Councilmembers absent: Councilmember Rick Taggart.

Staff present: City Manager Greg Caton, City Attorney John Shaver, Community Development Director Tamra Allen, General Services Director Jay Valentine, Principal Planner Kris Ashbeck, City Clerk Wanda Winkelmann, and Deputy City Clerk Selestina Sandoval.

Mayor McDaniel called the meeting to order.

Agenda Topic 1. Discussion Topics

a. Avalon Theatre Foundation Update

Steve Doyle, President of the Avalon Theatre Foundation, provided an update of their recent accomplishments, current and future projects, immediate needs, and donor priorities. A check in the amount of \$50,000 was presented to City Council on behalf of the Foundation.

The Avalon is a success because of the City of Grand Junction, OVG Facilities, LLC (who manages the theatre operations), and the Avalon Theatre Foundation. The Avalon holds fundraisers and applies for grants. Last year the Avalon distributed over \$5,000 in grocery gift cards to employees impacted by COVID-19.

Mr. Doyle noted that the Avalon has two immediate needs: replace the movie projector (the cost of which would be between \$15,000 – \$250,000) and grant writing resources. He also stated that in 2023 the Avalon celebrates its 100-year anniversary, and a stage expansion project is on the horizon for the future.

The Avalon Theatre Foundation is requesting a meeting of the stakeholders listed above to discuss the next steps to meet the existing needs. Mr. Doyle discussed that many community events can't be held at the Avalon because the organizers can't afford the fees nor meet minimum ticket prices (\$45 per ticket).

Mr. Caton noted that, because of cost savings in other projects, the City can work with the Avalon in 2021 to replace the projector. Additionally, the 2022 budget may include options for grant writing services.

b. Housing Strategy

Ms. Allen introduced the topic. Staff began work in late December 2020 with Root Policy Research, a Colorado consultancy with extensive experience in the housing field, on the Grand Valley Housing Needs Assessment. This discussion focused on initial review of potential strategies and policies to address housing needs within the community.

The first phase included extensive data collection, a community-wide survey, a series of focus group meetings with key stakeholders, and individual stakeholders to author the Grand Valley Housing Needs Assessment. Root Policy Research launched a community-wide housing needs survey on February 3 which was open for responses until February 28. The survey received strong community feedback. A series of meetings with stakeholders' groups took place the week of February 15. Information gathered through the survey and meetings with stakeholders and housing partners was used in conjunction with Census (2010), American Community Survey (ACS), DOLA, among other data sources to formulate the assessment report. The regional housing assessment provided information for staff to draft the CDBG required Five-Year Consolidated Plan.

Molly Fitzpatrick with Root Policy Research participated virtually and noted that the Comprehensive Plan supports this work: **Plan Principle 5: Strong Neighborhoods and Housing Choices, Goal 2. Partner in developing housing strategies for the community, Strategy a. Housing Strategy.** *Develop a targeted housing strategy to facilitate and incentivize the creation of affordable housing units for low-income residents and attainable housing for the City's workforce. Update the strategy periodically to address changing needs.*

Since Root Policy Research last met with City Council, the strategies have been refined based on Council's input as well as that of the housing coalition and the Chamber of Commerce.

Ms. Fitzpatrick discussed the definition of affordable housing, which looks at income thresholds and targeted housing. Additional strategies and needs were reviewed.

Discussion ensued about the timeline and costs of the inclusionary housing strategy (policies that require or incentivize the creation of affordable housing when new residential and/or commercial development occurs); the City's available land that could be utilized (not much availability); strategic land acquisition that could be donated; partnering with Fruita and Palisade on these efforts; possibly eliminate education and public relation's strategy; realize the

impact of certain strategies on neighborhoods, property values, and “NIMBY-ism” (not in my back yard); voluntary rental registry program in conjunction with landlord incentives; formalizing existing incentives and consider additional incentives for affordable housing development; urban renewal areas; accessory dwelling units (ADU’s) and the processes and incentives involved; implementing land use code changes that facilitate attainable housing development and housing diversity; adopting local affordable housing goals; and dedicated revenue resources to address housing challenges.

Additional conversation was held regarding the priorities and capital costs to implement the strategies. One funding source could be American Rescue Plan funds. The timeline for certain strategies may seem too long and may need to be adjusted. Any funding source identified as a tax would be a TABOR ballot item.

Next steps include updating the draft based on this evening’s conversation. Additional feedback can be sent to the City Manager for future consideration. A mid-September workshop will be targeted for the next review. It is the goal to have the plan formally adopted with an ordinance.

Agenda Topic 2. City Council Communication

Discussion ensued regarding mask policies for City Council meetings. Agreement was expressed to wait and see what directives are issued from Mesa County. It was noted that certain individuals cannot get vaccinated, such as children and those with suppressed immune systems.

GJEP Executive Director Robin Brown has accepted a position with the CMU Foundation.

Agenda Topic 3. Next Workshop Topics

Mr. Caton noted that the August 16 workshop will be a time for City Council to discuss policies and procedures related to operating rules, citizen participation, locations, and packet materials. The stadium improvements and 2020 audit will also be discussed.

Council asked when the next workshop will be held to discuss marijuana regulation. Mr. Shaver noted there was clear consensus regarding the tax rate, zones, and buffering. The other items regarding a possible cap and operator selection process need to be discussed.

Agenda Topic 4. Other Business

There was none.

Adjournment

The workshop adjourned at 7:47 p.m.