

GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP SUMMARY

September 20, 2021

Meeting Convened: 5:30 p.m. Meeting held in person at City Hall Auditorium, 250 North 5th Street, and live streamed via GoToWebinar.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:18 p.m.

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

Staff present: City Manager Greg Caton, City Attorney John Shaver, Community Development Director Tamra Allen, Deputy Police Chief Mike Nordine, Finance Director Jodi Welch, Senior Assistant to the City Manager Greg LeBlanc, Communications Specialist Bella Vaz, City Clerk Wanda Winkelmann, and Deputy City Clerk Selestina Sandoval.

Mayor McDaniel called the meeting to order.

Agenda Topic 1. Discussion Topics

a. Marijuana Regulations

The Council has discussed marijuana businesses at several public hearings prior to, and since, the municipal election. In those discussions, Council has clarified that first consideration should be given to establishing marijuana sales business regulations with other types of marijuana business to be considered later. Council also directed staff to solicit public input on questions related to the regulation of stores.

Following public comment and Council deliberation, direction was given to establish zoning regulations for marijuana stores that reflect the zoning of general retail sales under the existing Land Use and Development Code; establish regulations to include buffering from: Schools including CMU and WCCC (1000 feet); Parks and Park Land (500 feet); and Rehabilitation Facilities (500 feet); and amend the Municipal Tax Code to set a 6% special marijuana sales and use tax rate.

Ms. Allen introduced the topic and noted tonight's discussion will focus on the numerical cap, if any, for marijuana stores; provide direction on a selection process, if any, for awarding licenses to marijuana stores (if a merit-based approach is favored, provide direction on the approach to merit-based review criteria); and review and discuss the revised timeline for the licensing of marijuana stores.

Selection methods reviewed included a lottery, weighted lottery, merit-based review, and hybrid approach, of which the methods would have different time frames due to the differences in each method's complexity.

A revised timeline was reviewed and included the adoption of regulations, establishing a licensing authority, and identifying a process for evaluating applications in the fourth quarter of 2021. In 2022, the City reviews applications and considers an ordinance for products manufacturing.

Discussion ensued regarding the request from the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to develop additional restrictions for Main Street between 1st Street and 8th Street, including the prohibition of marijuana stores on the ground floor of buildings, the language in the ordinance assessing the tax, and Mesa County's ballot measure regarding cultivation. Further conversation was held about a numerical cap and a recent study that listed the number of marijuana stores per population.

Support was expressed to have ten stores as the numerical cap. No geographical areas will be established to determine store location and zoning and buffering will be used for schools and rehabilitation facilities. The DDA request will be honored on Main Street and there will be no more than two stores in the Horizon Drive Business Improvement District. A periodic check-in or review was also recommended.

Options for selecting marijuana business operators were discussed. Support was expressed for a weighted lottery whereby a sufficient application would place an applicant into a lottery, with weighting added for Council's policy priorities.

A break was called at 7:03 p.m. The workshop resumed at 7:09 p.m.

Ms. Allen provided a recap of the direction given by City Council. Applications eligible for the lottery must meet baseline criteria and policy priorities would serve as a weighting for a lottery. The State of Colorado application would be included in the baseline.

It was stated that if an applicant wanted to have both a Medical Marijuana store and a Retail Marijuana store co-located on one premises, that would count as one license for purposes of the established cap.

Agenda Topic 2. City Council Communication

Councilmembers Herman and Stout will be attending the Colorado Municipal League conference next week.

Agenda Topic 3. Next Workshop Topics

City Manager Caton stated that budget workshops will be held on October 4, 18, and November 1. Additionally, the Agenda Committee has requested a discussion with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and that will be added to the October 4 workshop.

An additional workshop will be needed to discuss marijuana regulations.

Agenda Topic 4. Other Business

There was none.

Adjournment

The workshop adjourned at 7:18 p.m.