

GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP SUMMARY

November 1, 2021

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

Meeting Adjourned: 8:24 p.m.

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

Staff present: City Manager Greg Caton, City Attorney John Shaver, Community Development Director Tamra Allen, Finance Director Jodi Welch, Deputy Finance Director Scott Rust, General Services Director Jay Valentine, Parks and Recreation Director Ken Sherbenou, Deputy Police Chief Mike Nordine, Senior Assistant to the City Manager Greg LeBlanc, City Clerk Wanda Winkelmann, and Deputy City Clerk Janet Harrell.

Mayor McDaniel called the meeting to order.

Agenda Topic 1. Discussion Topics

a. Cannabis Regulations

Referred measures 2A and 2B were passed on April 6, 2021 in the municipal election, providing Council an opportunity to consider establishing tax rates and regulations for cannabis businesses. The focus of tonight's discussion is intended to provide possible criteria for entry into (sufficiency criteria), and weighting within (merit-based/policy priorities), the lottery.

Community Development Director Allen reviewed the direction that had been given in the past regarding zoning, buffering, the recommendations from the Downtown Development Authority and the Horizon Drive Business Improvement District, the sales tax rate, and the cap of ten stores.

Ms. Allen noted the staff report contains suggested criteria for selecting applications that fall into the categories of "sufficient" (tax compliance, violations and enforcement actions, and complaint resolution) and "policy priorities" (living wage, community benefit, sustainable business practices).

The following individuals provided comments virtually:

Cindy Sovine noted that the criteria is coming together and believes in a full merit based system.

Lauren Maytin supports local ownership and a full merit based approach to selecting applicants.

Renee Grossman likes the sufficiency criteria and recommends the allowance of only one application per ownership group.

Rob Holmes owns six stores and proposed the selection of operators through an auction.

Samantha Walsh advocated for a non-profit ownership model.

The following individuals provided in-person comments:

Mike Foster recommends turning to the licensing process in other communities as models to follow in Grand Junction and supports an auction for licenses.

Jeremy Bonin owns several stores and noted that an owner's involvement in the community is very important.

Daniel Sullivan is the owner of several stores and noted that the majority of criteria listed are relevant.

Michael Cardile supports a merit based system and asks for consideration of local ownership.

Cole Caldwell noted his concern with merit based systems used in other parts of the state.

Stan Zislis stated that the process should be merit based and other cities have done it successfully.

Shannon Fender is the Director of Public Affairs for Native Roots and recommended expanding the concept of a living wage to include best employment practices of providing paid time off, retirement plans, and healthcare.

Kate Ramsay recommended local ownership and supports a merit based approach.

Dan Ramsay has worked with hemp operators and suggested a criteria of one application per operator with emphasis placed on local operators.

Nic Easley supports giving veterans an opportunity to be business owners and would like to see a third party review process.

Oliver Spees likes a merit based approach and prohibiting sales or transfers of licensing for at least two years.

Allana Spees supports merit based lottery, minority ownership, and promoting women.

Truman Bradley is the Executive Director of the marijuana industry group and submitted proposed guidelines.

Discussion ensued about State tax payments, code compliance, sufficiency criteria, general business experience, business plans, enforcement, audits, and contract employees.

A break was called at 7:35 p.m. The meeting resumed at 7:48 p.m.

Council supported the following items to be included in the “sufficiency” criteria: tax compliance in Mesa County and other jurisdictions, violations and enforcement actions, complaint resolution, business plan, and general business experience.

The “policy priorities” criteria will be discussed at a future workshop. It was requested that staff provide models from other communities for Council’s consideration.

b. Discussion of a Resolution Authorizing a Memorandum of Understanding Between the Colorado Attorney General and the City of Grand Junction for Distribution of Opioid Settlement Funds and Associated Forms to Initiate Settlements

The Colorado Attorney General’s Office has been leading settlement discussions with defendants who engaged in the manufacture, marketing, promotion, distribution, and/or dispensing of opioids, resulting in an opioid epidemic. To finalize the settlement terms, the Attorney General’s Office must determine the parties who will be included in the settlement. This will include the State of Colorado and participating local governments. In order for the City of Grand Junction to be included in the settlement process, the City must sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) stating the City’s intention to be a party to the settlement.

City Attorney Shaver provided a brief overview about whether the City of Grand Junction should participate in the settlement process. Should the Council decide to participate in the process, a resolution will be brought forward to a future Council meeting. If approved, the City will be an active participant in the settlement process and will be able to fully utilize local and regional resources made available as a result of the settlements to address the associated harmful impacts of the opioid epidemic.

Discussion ensued regarding the services that will be provided to treat the opioid use disorder. The draft resolution in the packet materials authorizes the signing of the MOU and designates a person to participate in the Mesa County process.

Support was expressed to have City Manager Caton serve as a voting member. It was noted that Chief Shoemaker is on board. It was requested that staff provide a summary memo after the initial meeting.

Agenda Topic 2. City Council Communication

Councilmember Taggart asked about email communications and replying to all. It was requested that Council just reply to the sender of the email (typically the City Manager or City Attorney).

Agenda Topic 3. Next Workshop Topics

City Manager Caton stated the topics for the November 15 workshop include:

- ITC Presentation on Broadband
- Community Center Survey
- 4th and 5th Street Discussion
- Redistricting

Agenda Topic 4. Other Business

Mayor McDaniel stated that Karis didn't use the CDBG/CV-3 funds awarded to them for quarantining and housing individuals who are homeless and had asked to use the funds to purchase a house. Mayor McDaniel recommended reallocating the funds to Catholic Outreach. Support was expressed to have staff move forward with the paperwork to make this change.

Councilmember Stout invited everyone to participate in the Sister City Event on Saturday.

Adjournment

The workshop adjourned at 8:24 p.m.