

GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP SUMMARY
January 10, 2022

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

Meeting Adjourned: 8:15 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, Senior Assistant to the City Manager Greg LeBlanc, Community Engagement Coordinator Sandra Núñez Currier, Communications Specialist Isabella Vaz, Deputy Police Chief Mike Nordine, Deputy Police Chief Matt Smith, Police Officer Travis Wright, 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

At the September 20, 2021 City Council Workshop, the City Council addressed various aspects of retail cannabis regulations. The Council confirmed direction on zoning, buffering, and taxation. Consensus was developed to cap cannabis stores at ten city-wide. As more than ten applications for licenses are likely to be made, a process for selecting licenses is required.

To implement that process, consideration and direction must be given about the general sufficiency of an application and the additional merit which will afford an applicant improved odds for an application entered into the lottery (i.e., weighting).

At the November 1, 2021 workshop, the Council provided input and direction regarding the sufficiency criteria. The purpose of tonight's discussion is for City Council to review the criteria and consider either affirming or modifying those presented in the staff report in anticipation of incorporating those in an ordinance.

The Mayor opened the floor for citizen comments.

David Thurow introduced the plan submitted by Invest in GJ whereby they are requesting the award of three – four licenses to ensure the profits (which would be used to address social determinants of health) stay in the community.

Verne Smith supports the Invest in GJ model and discussed the benefits of involving private partners.

Justin Whiteford believes the Invest in GJ proposal would help students and recommends out-of-the-box thinking.

Dick Thompson provided statistics on the reasons for emergency room admissions.

Michael Pramenko reviewed the Invest in GJ concept and advocates for health creation over wealth creation.

Ryan Jackman outlined the risks and benefits of cannabis use.

Liz Kozowski supports a full merit system and suggested the expansion of the scope of each criteria.

Oliver Speeth supports the use of tax revenue for a community center and opposed the Invest in GJ approach.

Cindy Sovine recommends a solid selection process and does not support exclusive licensure.

Dan Sullivan discussed the additional requirements placed on applicants.

Lauren Maytin questioned why a weighted lottery is still being discussed and how previous owners would be considered in the application process.

Nic Easley supports a third-party review system for the applications.

Renee Grossman advocated for a fair and objective scoring system.

Kate Ramsay supports a merit based selection process and preference for local owners.

Sandra Beddor requested the consideration of a merit based system.

Scott Beilfuss does not support the model proposed by Invest in GJ.

Laura Springer recommends a merit based system and noted her concern about the possibility of licenses being sold.

Community Development Director Tamra Allen presented selection methods and criteria. Discussion ensued about each approach; the model used in Broomfield and Aurora; additional consideration given to local ownership; litigation over selection criteria; and non-refundable application fees being used to pay for application evaluators (such as a private consultant).

A break was called at 7:09 p.m. The meeting resumed at 7:24 p.m.

Support was expressed for the use of a merit based system to evaluate applications. It was requested that staff draft an ordinance for City Council's consideration and schedule the next workshop on cannabis regulations for February 14.

Agenda Topic 2. City Council Communication

There was none.

Agenda Topic 3. Next Workshop Topics

This topic was not addressed.

Agenda Topic 4. Other Business

This topic was not addressed.

Adjournment

The workshop adjourned at 8:15 p.m.