

GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP SUMMARY **August 14, 2023**

Meeting Convened: 5:30 p.m. The meeting was held in person at the Hospitality Suite, 1307 North Avenue, and live streamed via GoToWebinar.

City Councilmembers Present: Councilmembers Scott Beilfuss, Cody Kennedy, Jason Nguyen (virtual), Randall Reitz, Dennis Simpson, Mayor Pro Tem Abe Herman, and Mayor Anna Stout.

Staff present: City Manager Greg Caton, City Attorney John Shaver, Assistant to the City Manager Johnny McFarland, Director of Community Development Tamra Allen, Planning Supervisor Niki Galehouse, Director of Parks and Recreation Ken Sherbenou, Recreation Superintendent Emily Krause, Finance Director Jodi Welch, City Clerk Amy Phillips, and Deputy City Clerk Selestina Sandoval.

1. Discussion Topics

a. Zoning and Development Code

Tamra Allen and Elizabeth Garvin discussed the progress of the Zoning and Development project highlighting updates on Code changes, indicating that the Code Committee has been meeting regularly to address various issues.

They explained that:

Resolved issues include recommendations on EV charging, outdoor lighting, residential development limits, utility undergrounding, and more.

Outstanding issues involve discussions about private roads, cottage court standards, drive-thru allowances, significant trees, design requirements, and transitional housing for the homeless. Adjacent issues encompass stormwater management, impact fee credits, review processes, affordable housing costs, and trail construction for subdivisions.

The presentation also covered proposed changes to parking placement and commercial development designs.

The timeline for the project's completion and further discussions was addressed.

The presentation aimed to update the Council on progress and receive input before finalizing the project details.

During discussion, Council explored the possibility of partial approval of the project's components. However, the complex interconnections within the Code make it challenging to separate certain sections for partial adoption.

The timeline of the project was reviewed, highlighting the progress made and the upcoming schedule.

The concept of affordability within the community was discussed, indicating that the term "affordable housing" was related to housing affordable to residents within Grand Junction, not limited to specific income brackets.

Regarding the adjacent issues, there was a discussion about impact fee credits, particularly related to significant trees and active transportation systems. The idea of allowing credit for open space dedication and other related fees was explored, with consideration for how these fees might work in conjunction with other project costs. Overall, the discussion revolved around finding effective ways to encourage development while incorporating sustainable and community-oriented elements.

Discussion ensued, with a focus on the rezoning criteria and the changes made to simplify and clarify the language. Council acknowledged that the new criteria seemed more concise but raised questions about the subjectivity of certain terms. The criteria were aimed at evaluating rezoning applications based on their consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, logical development patterns, and community benefits. However, there were concerns about the potential for different interpretations of terms like "logical" and "benefits." The goal is to ensure that rezoning decisions are well-informed, fair, and aligned with the community's long-term vision for development.

Discussion continued with a focus on zoning regulations related to parking lots and manufactured housing. There was a clarification made regarding manufactured housing, indicating that it is allowed as any other single-family residence in the City's zoning regulations. A concern was raised about naturally occurring forms of affordable housing and whether limiting manufactured housing to specific areas might hinder the availability of affordable housing options. It was emphasized that the Code doesn't discriminate based on the type of housing if it complies with building codes.

Questions regarding regulations for tiny homes and their placement in different density districts was discussed, and why tiny homes were allowed in some districts but not others. Response indicated that the City has been revisiting the regulations for tiny homes and that the conversation about their placement is outside the current draft. There was consideration about whether to allow tiny homes in higher density districts and the potential impact on overall density and lot coverage. It was suggested that while allowing tiny homes in higher density districts might cap density based on the size of the tiny homes, it could also limit the potential for other types of multi-family structures that could provide higher density. This discussion lead into Cottage Courts and how they are allowed in higher density districts, and how they are designed to achieve more density on a lot compared to individual tiny homes.

Council asked for further examination of the regulations between cottage courts and tiny homes in terms of density.

Council will hear the next Zoning and Development Update on November 13, 2023.

b. Orchard Mesa Recreation Facility Study

Director of Parks and Recreation Ken Sherbenou and Consultants from OLC and PROS gave a brief background on the project and presented the different options and considerations for the future of the facility, including factors like current utilization, location, partnerships, service areas, and projected costs. They reviewed the community engagement efforts thus far, and the input received from stakeholders and users of the facility, which seem to vary based on preferences and needs. The presentation also explained the potential impact of the new Community Rec Center (CRC) on Orchard Mesa's usage and service area.

Options discussed included:

Option 1: Maintaining the Status Quo

Keeping the Orchard Mesa Pool open and operating "as is" until at least October 2026. Estimated costs for maintenance and repairs are between \$800,000 and \$935,000 over the three-year period, with an estimated operational subsidy of about \$400,000 to cover the difference between expenditures and revenues.

Option 2: Simple Pool Renovation

Renovate the pool area.
Demolish existing gymnasium, locker rooms, and other unused spaces.
Add amenities like a party room and modern basketball equipment.
Estimated capital cost: \$5.7 to \$6.2 million.
Estimated operational subsidy: \$400,000 to \$500,000.
Expected annual visitation: Around 14,000 users.
Note: No significant change in operational revenue is expected.

Option 3: Full Facility Renovation

Renovate the entire facility, including gymnasium, locker rooms, pool, and administrative areas. Add fitness studios, modernize the pool, and upgrade mechanical systems.
Estimated capital cost: \$12.5 to \$13.5 million.
Estimated operational subsidy: Slightly reduced from Option 2.
Expected annual visitation: Around 52,000 users.
Note: This option includes more comprehensive renovations and introduces fitness components.

Option 4: Indoor Soccer and Turf Field

Demolish existing gymnasium and locker rooms.
Replace with a full-sized regulation indoor soccer field.
Convert the existing pool area into a turf field suitable for youth soccer.
Estimated capital cost: \$27 to \$29 million.
Estimated operational subsidy: Further reduced due to the different operational model.
Expected annual visitation: Increased due to expanded service area and versatile programming.
Note: This option focuses on indoor sports programming and has potential for hosting tournaments.

Option 5: Two Indoor Turf Fields

Demolish the entire facility and build two full-sized indoor turf fields.

Include amenities like team locker rooms, administrative offices, and multipurpose classrooms.

Estimated capital cost: \$30 to \$33 million.

Estimated operational subsidy: Further reduced due to the different operational model.

Expected annual visitation: Around 100,000 users.

Note: This option offers versatile programming opportunities and can draw from a larger service area.

Discussion regarding the options ensued, touching on considerations such as geographic distribution, partnerships, the potential impact of duplication of services, the advantages of different site locations, the need to accommodate various user groups, and the importance of considering the operational subsidy for each option, which indicates the amount of taxpayer dollars required for each visitor to the facility.

The presentation showed the concept of "total cost of ownership," which considers both the initial capital costs and the ongoing operational costs over time. It's noted that while debt service remains relatively fixed, operational costs tend to escalate over the years. This can result in the operational subsidy gap becoming greater over time.

Option 6: Do Nothing or Participate in Demolition:

Option 6, not explicitly listed in the previous options, was discussed. This option involves not proceeding with any of the proposed renovations or replacements and potentially participating in the demolition of the existing facility alongside the School District and the County.

Comparison of Demolition Costs Over Time:

The cost of demolition was highlighted as an important consideration. It was noted that the cost of demolition has escalated over time. In 2018, the estimated cost was \$547,000, but has now increased to nearly a million dollars.

Accessibility and Connectivity:

Discussion addressed the importance of accessibility and connectivity for community members, especially those who do not have personal vehicles. It was suggested that allocating a portion of the renovation budget to improving public transportation options or increasing connectivity to the recreational facility could be considered. Public transport improvements, subsidized bus passes and dedicated bus routes were mentioned as potential solutions to enhance accessibility.

Considerations for Moving Forward:

The focus is on making informed decisions that consider the long-term implications and benefits for the community.

Balancing Passion and Objectivity:

Council discussed the importance of balancing passionate community input with objective analysis, especially when making decisions that involve significant financial investments.

They acknowledge the passionate input from various user groups and community members who have been advocating for specific facilities and how certain user groups have been patiently

waiting for their facilities to be addressed. The example of various user groups (e.g., pickleball, tennis, skateboarding) is given, suggesting that the allocation of resources and attention is being approached systematically.

Engagement with the Community:

The consultants noted the ongoing public engagement efforts, including stakeholder meetings and public forums, to gather feedback and ensure that various perspectives are considered before making any final decisions.

Next Steps:

The upcoming steps in the decision-making process are outlined, including additional and public forums. Feedback from these engagements will be incorporated into a final report, which will then be presented to the Council for further consideration on December 4, 2023.

c. **Counseling Education Center (CEC)**

Hali Nurnberg, LPC, Executive Director for the CEC presented an update on their expansion project and how it relates to ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds.

Background and Mission of the Counseling and Education Center:

The CEC is a nonprofit mental health facility with a mission to provide professional counseling services to all individuals, regardless of income or insurance. Their goal is to reduce barriers to mental health services, ensuring accessibility and equity in treatment. They offer evidence-based treatment, including holistic and culturally competent care.

Increased Demand for Mental Health Services:

Ms. Nurnberg noted the significant increase in the demand for mental health services, particularly since the pandemic. County data shows that suicide rates are higher than state and national averages, emphasizing the need for accessible and effective mental health resources.

Challenges in Accessing Treatment:

Wait times, finding the right provider, and other barriers make accessing mental health treatment difficult for many individuals in the community.

Expansion Plans and Location:

The CEC is seeking to expand its services to address the growing demand. They have identified an area in Orchard Mesa as a prime location due to the lack of mental health services in that region. The chosen building would provide space for therapy rooms, administrative offices, and room for future growth.

Project Details and Timeline:

The CEC has secured a grant of \$973,000 from the Behavioral Health Administration and is under contract to purchase the building. They have received bids from local contractors for remodeling and renovation work. The timeline includes purchasing the building by September, a year of remodeling, and opening approximately a year from now. By September 2025, they plan to be operating at full capacity with an extended internship program.

Expected Impact of Expansion:

The expansion project is expected to result in an additional 3,000 counseling hours per year, accommodating more clients. It will create job opportunities for four full-time staff and two part-time staff, as well as accommodate eight master's-level students annually. The expansion is anticipated to have positive ripple effects, improving the overall mental health and well-being of clients and their families.

Funding and Financial Breakdown:

The CEC are requesting \$996,000 from the City. The requested amount aligns with the funding from their other grant and covers various aspects, including 80% of the property purchase, renovation costs, and operational expenses. The operational cost is intended to help the CEC become financially sustainable over time and reduce the need for loans or major capital campaigns.

Long-Term Sustainability and Revenue Generation:

The CEC is focused on generating revenue through various sources, including client services, grants, donations, and partnerships. Changes in mental health policies, such as Medicare expansion, are expected to lead to higher reimbursement rates from insurance companies, providing additional revenue. The CEC is also exploring partnerships, potential grant opportunities and capacity building to enhance revenue streams.

Expansion Plans and Growth:

The CEC expansion plan includes hiring a clinical director to focus on fundraising and development efforts. They have been successful in achieving growth and meeting financial goals over the past five years, and they are confident in their ability to continue this trend.

Positive Financial Position and Governance:

Their financial position is strong, with a surplus of \$75,000 at the end of the previous year. The board of directors is actively engaged in the decision-making process and provides strong governance and support.

Council expressed gratitude for the support and services provided by the CEC, and its proximity to schools and their services to children. (15 to 20% of their clients are under 18 years old).

Council noted the importance of addressing the gap in mental health care in the community and sees the CEC's project as a positive step in that direction.

2. City Council Communication

None

3. Next Workshop Topics

City Manager Caton reported the items for the August 28, 2023 Workshop will be:

- Riverside Education Center (REC)
- 4th and 5th Street Improvements Update
- TEDS Update
- Redlands 360 Planned Development

4. **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the Workshop adjourned at 8:04 p.m.