

GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL READINESS SUMMARY

September 16, 2013 – Noticed Agenda Attached

Meeting Convened: 5:04 p.m. in the City Auditorium

Meeting Adjourned: 7:18 p.m.

Council Members present: All except Councilmember Norris. Staff present: Englehart, Shaver, Portner, Thornton, Franklin, and Tuin.

Agenda Topic 1. Orchard Mesa Neighborhood Plan Update

City Manager Englehart introduced the topic and briefed the Council on the schedule for the process of review including a more detailed review in a workshop prior to it coming before them at a formal meeting.

Planning and Development Supervisor Dave Thornton reviewed the Comprehensive Plan process adopted in 2010. The old Orchard Mesa Neighborhood Plan was sunset with the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan and the neighborhood was concerned there was no plan for their area. City Staff agreed to take it back up after the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Thornton reviewed what has taken place in the development of the new proposed plan including the public input meetings. He noted that Mesa County has been involved in the process as much of Orchard Mesa is in unincorporated Mesa County.

The study area includes from the west at the Gunnison River to 34 Road on the east and north to south from the Colorado River to Whitewater Hill. There are about 16,000 people that live in the study area. Mr. Thornton listed the topic areas and the draft goals of the Plan.

City Council raised a number of issues including infrastructure, trails, transportation, areas for industrial/commercial development (the Fairgrounds, around the Department of Energy compound, and in Whitewater), new schools, floodplain/drainage issues, and parks.

That concluded the update.

Agenda Topic 2. Community Solar Garden Subscription and Lease Agreement

City Manager Englehart introduced the topic and advised that this item will need Council action so it will be on a future agenda.

Planner Kathy Portner reviewed the history of the project. The company Ecoplexus contacted the City a year ago about the idea of a community solar garden. Subscribers can buy into the system for off-premise consumption within the same County. The School District is a partner and the actual panels will be placed on School District property. The company needs access to the property through a City property. The City will be a subscriber and a lessor for the access. There is no planned use for the City property for the twenty year horizon of the project. The

company has made a deal with the adjacent property owner for an easement to tie into XCEL Energy's main lines.

The company received a Conditional Use Permit from the Planning Commission for the project. Prior to the Planning Commission meeting, a neighborhood meeting was held and no one from the neighborhood attended. No one from the neighborhood attended the Planning Commission meeting either.

Utility Manager Terry Franklin advised the City will receive a net community solar credit of approximately eight cents per kWh from XCEL for each kWh purchased by Ecoplexus. Any change to the XCEL credit requires PUC approval. City Attorney Shaver advised that if the City were to enter into an agreement with Ecoplexus, then that amount would be locked in. Annually the City can analyze which City facilities to put toward the subscription in order to get the best return. The company cannot raise their rate by more than 1.5% per year.

Councilmember Chazen asked what happens if XCEL gets a change approved through the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to lower the credits, how will Ecoplexus guarantee the continue return? City Attorney Shaver said typically changes made by the PUC only affect future subscribers, not existing.

Councilmember Traylor Smith clarified that the City has no investment in this. Ms. Portner concurred adding there is no money up front required. The investors get tax credits and accelerated depreciation in exchange for their investment.

Councilmember McArthur suggested that the lease payment for the right-of-way go back to the Transportation Capacity Payment (TCP) fund.

Eric Anderson from the School District advised that the School District has researched this company, reviewing financials, and checking with other clients, and is confident in doing business with them. Mr. Anderson also checked with XCEL on their research on the company during the Request for Proposal process where they ultimately selected Ecoplexus.

Many of the details of the terms were discussed such as ownership of the panels at the end of the contract, contract extension provisions, site cleanup, environmental concerns, maintenance, screening and security fencing, and multi-year obligation provisions of TABOR.

Council President Susuras polled the Council on directing Staff to go forward and all six were in favor. The item will be placed on the agenda for consideration.

Agenda Topic 3. Other Business

City Manager Englehart advised that members of the Fire Department had been deployed to the eastern slope to assist with the flood event.

City Manager Englehart updated the Council on his plan to fill the Public Works Director position with Greg Trainor's retirement in January 2014. He decided to move the Planning Division back under Deputy City Manager Tim Moore's purview and then move forward on filling the Public Works Director position internally. It is possible that the City may retain the services of Greg Trainor with the 521 Drainage Authority.

City Manager Englehart reported there was a little bit of flooding in Paradise Hills.

There was a discussion on Council assignments and putting a resolution on the agenda to assign new Councilmember Barbara Traylor Smith to a board. The Council suggested appointing Councilmember Traylor Smith to the Housing Authority and as the alternate to the Parks Improvement Advisory Board (PIAB). Staff was directed to place the resolution on the Consent Calendar on Wednesday, September 18, 2013 for formal consideration.

With no other business, the meeting adjourned.

**GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL
READINESS SESSION**

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2013, 5:00 P.M.
CITY AUDITORIUM
250 N. 5TH STREET**

To become the most livable community west of the Rockies by 2025

- 1. Orchard Mesa Neighborhood Plan Update:** This is an informal update by Staff to bring to City Council the current planning effort the City has completed with Mesa County for the Orchard Mesa area. The Plan area encompasses Orchard Mesa from the Gunnison River east to 34 ½ Road and from the Colorado River south to Whitewater Hill. Information will be provided about the planning process, major findings identified through public participation, and what next steps are currently proposed in this joint planning effort with the County.
- 2. Community Solar Garden Subscription and Lease Agreement:** Staff will present an overview of the proposed Pear Park Community Solar Garden and request City Council direction on moving forward with an agreement with Ecoplexus, Inc. as a subscriber to the solar garden and a lease agreement for the use of a portion of City-owned property.
- 3. Other Business**