

GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP SUMMARY
June 16, 2014 – Noticed Agenda Attached

Meeting Convened: 5:00 p.m. in the City Auditorium

Meeting Adjourned: 7:22 p.m.

Council Members present: All. Staff present: Englehart, Shaver, Moore, Romero, Schoeber, Lanning, Camper, Kovalik, Portner, Janda, and Kemp.

Downtown Development Authority / Downtown Grand Junction Business Improvement District (DDA/DGJBID): Harry Weiss

Riverfront Commission Board Members: Co-Chair Brad Taylor, Stacy Beough, and Frank Watt

Urban Trails Committee Members: Co-Chair Elizabeth (Biz) Collins and Daniel Fitzgerald

Agenda Topic 1. Riverfront Commission Strategic Plan

Riverfront Commission Co-Chair Brad Taylor introduced himself, Commission member Stacy Beough, and Co-Chair Frank Watt, and advised that the Commission has been working on a written Strategic Plan. He provided the history of the Riverfront Commission. He displayed photos of areas that have been cleaned up; by the riverfront, at Watson Island, the future Las Colonias Park, and at the Botanical Gardens. He explained how the areas were cleaned up. There is still a gap in the trail at 33 ½ Road and at the west end of Riverbend Park in Palisade. The trail which they are calling the “String of Pearls” joining Grand Junction with Fruita should be completed in August 2014. School groups are using the trail to learn about the wildlife and ecosystems. They are hoping that eventually the trail could be completed someday all the way to the Loma boat launch which would then connect to the Kokopelli Trail. There is a bronze plaque down from the 5th Street Bridge which is dedicated to the thousands of volunteers who have helped with the trail.

Mr. Taylor reviewed the funding of approximately \$66 million for the Riverfront Trail which included Mesa County, City of Grand Junction, City of Fruita, Town of Palisade, Colorado River State Parks, Colorado Conservation Fund (Lottery), and Great Outdoors Colorado.

Stacy Beough, Riverfront Commission member and Executive Director for the Tamarisk Coalition, reviewed the mission statement and the vision statement for the Riverfront Commission. She also reviewed the strategies and goals for the Riverfront Commission Strategic Plan which included cultivating the economic, cultural, and ecological values of the corridor, supporting multiple uses of the river corridor, and inspiring stewardship of the river systems.

Mr. Taylor answered questions regarding who maintains the Riverfront Trail, staffing for the Riverfront Commission, partnerships for signage, vandalism, safety issues, better signage on the trail, and the necessary easements needed to be obtained to close the gaps on the trail.

Mr. Taylor said that they would like to give Council an update every year. Council President Norris said that it would be good if a presentation could be made at one of the quarterly Municipalities Dinners where the Mesa County Commissioners, Palisade Town Board, Fruita City Council, and the Grand Junction City Council get together and meet.

City Manager Englehart advised Council that they contribute \$17,000 from their budget to the Riverfront Commission.

Council thanked Mr. Taylor and Ms. Beagh for their presentation.

Agenda Topic 2. Urban Trails Committee Update

City Manager Englehart introduced this topic. He said that even though the members of the Urban Trails Committee are appointed by the Riverfront Commission, who focus on the river, Urban Trails have a much broader focus. The structure of the two entities might want to be looked at.

Biz Collins, co-chair of the Urban Trails Committee, introduced Dan Fitzgerald, Urban Trails Committee member, and Jody Kliska (to answer any professional questions).

Ms. Collins reviewed a presentation which gave the background for the Urban Trails, when they were formed, their Committee members, their accomplishments (review agency for development applications, Urban Trails Master Plan, active transportation advocate/ establishment of 104 miles of bike lanes, Safe Routes to School program, and 2013 walking and biking trails summit), their current activities (Bike Month and Bike to Work Day, 2015 walking and biking trails summit, Safe Routes to School program, Healthy Mesa County Built Environment and Leadership for Healthy Community Design Team, development review committee, 2040 Transportation Plan, active transportation priorities), and the Committee's priorities (Tier 1 – 1st Street from Ouray to Orchard, Orchard Avenue from 29 Road to Mesa Mall, Horizon Drive/Horizon Drive Channel/Patterson Road, Redlands Parkway from the Riverfront Trail to Patterson Road, B ½ Road/Hwy. 50 crossing, and the Riverfront Trail from 27 ½ Road to 29 Road; Tier 2 – Monument Road trail, Redlands Parkway/South Broadway, Crosby Avenue from pedestrian bridge to 25 ½ Road, Black Bridge, 20 ¾ Road Colorado River crossing; Tier 3 – 12th Street from Gunnison Avenue to Bonita Avenue, 7th Street from Grand Avenue to Horizon Drive, Grand Avenue from Spruce Street to 7th Street, S. 7th Street from Main Street to the Riverfront Trail, D Road from Riverside Parkway to 9th Street, and 9th Street from D Road to Main Street).

Ms. Collins answered questions from City Council which included the Safe Routes to School Program that was recently passed in legislation, the three years of secured funding they were able to get, and the education program at schools for kids that the Urban Trails Committee does.

City Council thanked Ms. Collins for her presentation.

City Manager Englehart advised that Deputy City Manager Moore is looking at ways to streamline and be more engaged with Urban Trails Committee.

Agenda Topic 3. Update on the Greater Downtown Plan

Deputy City Manager Moore provided City Council with a review of the activity since the adoption of the Greater Downtown Plan in 2013. There were 131 areas of activity which included general meetings, a variance request, a TED's exception, simple subdivisions, a rezone, revocable permits, changes of use, site plan reviews, planning clearances, and sign permits. That was not enough information to really tell how the regulations are impacting the City. There were not any problems for meeting the standards and guidelines for the few that did reach the threshold to kick in the standards and guidelines.

Kathy Portner, Community Development, added that in the central business district area, there has not been anything to trigger the standards and guidelines, only in the residential and corridor areas. The flexibility that is in place when applying the standards and guidelines has been very helpful.

Deputy City Manager Moore advised that review will be provided to Council in one year.

Councilmember Boeschstein pointed out that the Avalon Theatre is one example of how the Greater Downtown Plan is working.

Agenda Topic 4. Board Reports

Tabled to the end of the meeting.

Agenda Topic 5. Other Business

Whitman Park

City Manager Englehart reported that the Vagrancy Committee has met and has had a lot of discussions on ideas for the vagrancy issue at Whitman Park. Police Chief Camper and the HOT Team have been working on putting together some statistics from the law enforcement and emergency services side.

City Council said that would like to hear from the Vagrancy Committee and asked who is on the Committee. City Manager Englehart said that it is made up of Department Heads, Police Staff, Fire Staff, Parks Staff, the HOT Team, Downtown Development Authority, and three City Council members.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the vagrancy at the Park and how to address that. It was noted that there are 26 different agencies that work with the vagrants and the homeless but there are none that deal with the chronically homeless.

Councilmember Boeschstein said that Whitman Park should be a benefit to the City as it is in the center of town. It is affecting the Museum. The vagrants should be treated humanely and sensitively which the HOT Team currently does.

Police Chief John Camper advised Council that Police Officer Cory Tomps is working on an addendum to the 2012 Homelessness Report. He is comparing municipal, health care, and other costs and looking at ten people who are the highest contacts with Police, medical facilities, and the Fire Department. The project is not done yet and the costs are up over \$700,000. A report will be provided as soon as it is complete. He explained the Duluth Model that appears to be working for the chronically homeless. A lot of enforcement is still being done. There have been 175 arrests out of 477 calls for service at Whitman Park. A change of use for the park would be a good idea as there is no parking and nothing around the park.

Councilmember Traylor Smith mentioned that funding was supposed to help people with mental disorders back in the 1970's but that didn't happen. Those people were put out in the street.

City Manager Englehart advised that they have talked about getting a coordinator to get assistance in a coordinated effort.

Further discussion was held regarding ideas of how to address the situation from regional medical centers, drug treatment centers, funding availability from the State, Catholic Outreach program, asking the community what they would like to see at the Park, having a round table discussion that is spearheaded by Parks and Recreation Director Rob Schoeber, addressing the safety concern, disposing of the Park which would require a vote from the citizens, repurposing the Park, and using it as a special events venue.

Peter Booth, Executive Director of Museum of Western Colorado, introduced Carrie Beard, President of their Board, and advised Council that the cost for the Park is a loss of tourism. The Park needs attention now.

Carrie Beard, President of the Board for the Museum, said the City is a vibrant place with many amenities, the riverfront, the trails, etc. The Park should be looked at as a link to the trails, river, etc. She encouraged Council to think of a vision for downtown, the Museum, and the park connecting to the river. She questions whether the Museum could make it at the current location under the current situation.

Downtown Development Authority Executive Director Harry Weiss said that vagrancy is a community-wide problem. He has seen this with other downtowns. It will have to be a partnership model to address the issue of vagrancy at the Park. The community would like to see success for the area.

City Council agreed that once the Matchett Park Master Plan is complete, City Manager Englehart and Parks and Recreation Director Schoeber could put some staffing resources

together to address Whitman Park and internally look at getting a coordinator, putting some partners together, getting a consensus, and working together on a solution.

HomewardBound Request

Council President Norris advised she received a letter from HomewardBound and they are requesting the City's support to get money for their Chapter, which the City is already supporting them in the grant program. Council agreed that the City should support the request.

Agenda Topic 4. Board Reports

Councilmember Traylor Smith reported that the Housing Authority meeting was canceled and she has no report.

Councilmember Boeschstein reported that there was no Land Trust meeting and they are still looking to get the bookends to the Three Sisters purchased. The Avalon Theatre is opening in August for the church, and the Symphony grand opening will be in September. Economic, Convention, and Visitor Services (ECVS) Director Debbie Kovalik said the church is actually starting in July in the old part of the theatre only, the Paver Program is underway, tours are being conducted daily, investors are continuing to support the theatre, and money is continuing to come in.

City Manager Englehart advised that FCI Constructors would like to have their logo on a plaque at the Theatre. He recommended that the City Council have a plaque with the 2014 City Council and City logo on it instead of utilizing a private sector on a plaque. City Council agreed that a plaque with City Council would be best.

Councilmember Susuras reported that he met with the Chairman of the Airport Authority and they are looking at a sublease for a hanger for the Police Department's automobiles. City Attorney Shaver explained some further details on the hold up for a sublease. Councilmember Susuras said that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) grant is not moving forward and they may have to get the U.S. Representative and Senator involved. The Airport is still working on hiring an Airport Manager; there were 62 applicants and there is currently one finalist. Councilmember Susuras recently went on a three day tour of the Yampa River and reported that it was a fun tour and the River is very well managed. The reason he took the tour is because the Yampa River flows into the Green River which flows into the Colorado River.

Councilmember Doody advised that the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meeting got trumped by Elam Construction and he will let Council President Norris report on the Fire meeting.

Councilmember Chazen said that at the Visitors and Convention Bureau Board of Directors (VCB) meeting and there was a presentation on the changes for Horizon Drive and it is looking positive. The VCB numbers are showing a 6% increase in revenue which is good. He attended the Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado (AGNC) meeting regarding the re-

permitting of the Bonanza Power Plant. There is a problem because the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) had overlooked something at the time of permitting. There will be another meeting in Rangely on June 26th.

Councilmember McArthur reported that a response is pending on the letter that City Attorney Shaver wrote to the 521 Drainage Authority and the next meeting has been postponed. City Attorney Shaver said that they were very appreciative in the tact on the proposal for the committee structure and segregating out the agricultural issues from the urban issues. Council President Norris asked that Councilmember Boeschenstein work with Councilmember McArthur on the Committee for that.

Council President Norris reported that there was no Grand Valley Regional Transportation Committee (GVRTC) meeting but they will meet later in the month. She and Councilmember Doody met with the Pear Park Fire group and a name change has occurred to a Fire Authority Committee because Clifton Fire has agreed to look at moving towards a Fire Authority. The goal is to have this ready to roll out in two years which would be comprised of Grand Junction Fire, Clifton Fire, and Grand Junction Rural Fire. It will probably take a full time staff person to work on putting an Authority together and look at Durango's Fire Authority as a model. City Manager Englehart said that, with being able to do some restructuring and utilizing Legislative Liaison Elizabeth Tice to perform some financial analysis, get Human Resources and the Legal Department involved, and with the help of Fire Chief Watkins, it should all work out. Council President Norris said the other thing to look at is who will be on the very time consuming committee.

With no other business, the meeting adjourned.

**GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP**

**MONDAY, JUNE 16, 2014, 5:00 P.M.
CITY AUDITORIUM
250 N. 5TH STREET**

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

- 1. Riverfront Commission Strategic Plan:** Colorado Riverfront Commission Chairs Brad Taylor and Frank Watt will present the Riverfront Commission's Strategic Plan Adopted on May 20, 2014. **Attachment**

- 2. Urban Trails Committee Update:** Members of the Urban Trails Committee will present an update on their activities and recommendations on bicycle and pedestrian improvement priorities.

- 3. Update on the Greater Downtown Plan:** With the adoption of the Greater Downtown Plan and Overlay District on March 12, 2013, the City Council requested that Staff do an annual review of activity in the area. **Attachment**

- 4. Board Reports**

- 5. Other Business**
HomewardBound Request – Mayor Norris
Whitman Park