

GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP SUMMARY
March 2, 2015 – Noticed Agenda Attached

Meeting Convened: 5:14 p.m. in the City Auditorium

Meeting Adjourned: 8:13 p.m.

City Council Members present: All.

Staff present: Englehart, Shaver, Moore, Lanning, Tice, Portner, Watkins, and Tuin.

Others: Biz Collins, Kristin Heumann, Julie Sabin, Jeff Kuhr, Rob Bleiberg, Ilana Moir, Tim Fry, Tracey Garchar, Sue Tuffin, Kim Kerk, Rick Taggart, and Dennis Simpson

Agenda Topic 1. Workforce Center

Tracey Garchar, Executive Director for the Mesa County Department of Human Services and Acting Workforce Center Director introduced Sue Tuffin, past Workforce Center Director, and Tim Fry, Workforce Center Board Vice Chair. Mr. Garchar explained that the Workforce Center has an opportunity because of legislation passed in 2014 to seek federal designation as their own Workforce Center area. They currently operate in Mesa County as a sub region of the Colorado Rural Consortium. The key in seeking federal designation is that it would give them the same status as eight other Colorado regions and would allow them to work directly through Colorado Labor and Employment as well as the Governors Workforce Development Council and they would have the ability to define their own measures, operations, partnerships that would fit this area. One of the requirements for the federal designation is to ensure that the community business leaders, community partners, and municipalities within Mesa County support the Workforce Center in becoming their own federally designated region. They are asking for a letter of support from City Council.

Ms. Tuffin advised that the money for the Workforce Center would still come through the County Board of Commissioners and they will still be County operated but the federal designation would allow them to create their own contracts and grants and to develop some training opportunities by working with their partners. They will be meeting with Grand Junction Economic Partnership (GJEP) Executive Committee, the Chamber Executive Committee, Fruita, Palisade, and will be sending letters out to the rest of the Town Managers in Mesa County.

Mr. Garchar said that they believe that their funding will go up because currently funds are withheld for administration with the Consortium. He stressed that they are not asking the City for funding.

Tim Fry, Workforce Center Board Vice Chair, said he sat on the board for the Rural Consortium and it was always frustrating to fight to get the funding allocation for Mesa County and he feels that this is a great opportunity to get more funding for the Workforce Center.

City Council was in favor of providing a letter of support for designating the Mesa County Workforce Center as a federally recognized workforce region. Ms. Tuffin advised that they will draft a letter for City Council's review.

City Manager Englehart advised that this matter will be added to the agenda for the March 4, 2015 regular City Council meeting.

Agenda Topic 2. Mesa Land Trust Request

Rob Bleiberg, Mesa Land Trust Executive Director, introduced Ilana Moir, Land Protection Specialist, and thanked Council for allowing them to make a presentation. They were requesting funding for a matching Great Outdoors Colorado grant and a letter of support for a conservation agreement on a working, multigenerational farm between Palisade and Grand Junction. Mr. Bleiberg reviewed the history since 2009 where they started working with the fruit growers to sustain the fruit industry. Approximately 90% of the fruit that is grown in Mesa County is exported out to the Midwest and approximately half of the remaining 10% go to tourists locally for fruit and wine. Mr. Bleiberg showed some statistics of the overall economic effects of wine based tourism and sales in Colorado and how much funding has been invested by local partners. They are seeking funding of \$25,000 and a letter of support from the City for the acquisition of a perpetual conservation easement for a 22 acre piece of property in Palisade. The total value of the property is \$379,840.

When asked if Mesa Land Trust controls how the money is spent by the owners, Mr. Bleiberg answered was no, but he gave examples on how the money has been used for past projects.

Mr. Bleiberg broke out the total projected value and how much each partner will or be asked to put in for the acquisition of the easement.

With Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) as a federal government partner, language would be put into an agreement requiring that only federally lawful crops be grown on the property.

There was discussion about the easements being perpetual, the property being outside the City limits, future water availability, and future status change with the property.

When asked if there is the \$25,000 being requested in the budget for Mesa Land Trust, City Manager Englehart said that on the Capital Project side of the budget, there was \$120,000 set aside for any new requests, which is what this is. It is part of the Economic Development and would require an appropriation. There is about \$450,000 in the Economic Development fund that is not committed.

City Council discussed whether or not the City would support this project, what the long term advantages and disadvantages are. When polled, Councilmembers Boeschstein, Doody and Susuras were in favor of supporting the project while Councilmembers Chazen, McArthur, and Council President Norris were not in favor, and Councilmember Traylor Smith was unsure and would like to see the amount that the County is willing to put in.

When asked about Mesa Land Trust's timeline, Mr. Bleiberg said that they plan to submit a grant request the following week, therefore would like a letter of support from City Council before submitting the grant request. In June, they should find out if they will be awarded the grant to fund the project and close the project in about one year.

There was discussion about other programs that the City subsidized such as the North Avenue Catalyst Program, other industry support through GJEP, and the Maker Space.

Mr. Bleiberg said that they did have a briefing that morning with County officials but he is unsure of their commitment. He pointed out that the Grand Junction Visitor and Convention Bureau's website promotes peaches and wine grapes on their website. That is what brings people into Mesa County.

City Manager Englehart said he will look at the budget to find out where the money could come from, check with the County to see what they may be putting in, and place this item on the Wednesday, March 4th regular City Council meeting. He asked Mr. Bleiberg if he will be bringing forth a buffer zone project this year. Mr. Bleiberg said no, not for the buffer zone. City Manager Englehart advised that Council set aside \$15,000 for a buffer zone project and that may be able to be looked at whether or not that could be used for this project.

Agenda Topic 3. Urban Trails Committee

Kathy Portner, Community Development Manager, introduced members present from the Urban Trails Committee (UTC), Kristin Heumann, Julie Sabin, Biz Collins, and Jeff Kuhr. Ms. Portner advised Council that they will be seeking their direction after the presentation.

Ms. Sabin thanked Council for the recent adoption of the bylaws for the Urban Trails Committee. She reviewed that the Urban Trails Committee is an advisory board to the City Council and it is all about safe and efficient pedestrian and bicycle travel throughout the community. She reviewed the list of the current members and advised that they have two vacant positions which they are recruiting to fill at this time.

Ms. Collins reviewed some highlights of the Strategic Plan they are currently working on which included supporting healthy lifestyles, interfacing with and providing connectivity to recreational trails on public lands, cultivating and promoting safe walking and biking opportunities, and promoting the economic benefits of a walkable/bikeable community.

Ms. Sabin reviewed some the current UTC activities which included the 2015 Walking and Biking Summit and Bike Month and Bike to Work Day.

Ms. Heumann reviewed other current activities such as the Healthy Mesa County Built Environment and Leadership for Healthy Community Design Team to develop some leadership opportunities to promote Safe Routes to School Program and the work to obtain a Bicycle Friendly Community Designation.

Ms. Collins reviewed more current activities which included Active Transportation Priorities; Safe Routes to School Program, and the upcoming Mayor's challenge.

Mr. Kuhr reviewed the recommended Safe Routes to School priorities which included Orchard Avenue Elementary, Thunder Mountain Elementary, Pear Park Elementary, and a route between Pomona Elementary – West Middle School which included two alternative ideas.

Ms. Portner advised that the Urban Trails Committee will evaluate the four schools for the Safe Route to Schools Program and see which ones will be eligible for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding and will bring two of those to Council for their consideration. Mr. Portner advised that the Urban Trails Committee is seeking Council support in the Bicycle Friendly Community Designation to receive the recognition of what has already been done. There are four levels of recognition. They are also looking for direction from Council on whether or not they can take the pledge for the Mayor's Challenge.

Councilmember Boeschenstein advised that the Horizon Drive Association Business Improvement District Board (HDABID) has proposed a bike route that the hotels on Horizon Drive are interested in. They would like to see a bike path that runs between Bookcliff Country Club and behind the hotels to the existing concrete trail that runs from of Safeway on Horizon Drive for safe walking and biking. Also, the Department of Energy (DOE) compound is landlocked; should a train ever derail they will need another way out of the compound which could be a bicycle/pedestrian bridge over the Gunnison River. Ms. Sabin advised that those projects are already on their list of other priorities.

City Manager Englehart said that the group was tasked to put together a Master Plan. They are putting together a list of priorities for trails and that will be coming back to Council.

All of Council thanked the Urban Trails Committee for all of their work.

Agenda Topic 4. City Property Inventory

City Manager Englehart presented maps that identified properties within the valley floor and up at the watershed that the City owns. The School District has been in contact with the City regarding properties that may be exchanged or that the School District wants to dispose of that the City may be interested in.

Deputy City Manager Tim Moore explained the maps. The watershed map showed some green areas which are properties that could be sold, yellow areas that have long term leases associated with the properties, and the red areas are areas where they are required for the watershed or parklands that can't be disposed of without a vote of the people. The map that shows the City owned properties within the valley showed the same color codes for properties, green for properties that could be sold, yellow areas that have long term leases associated with the properties, and red properties that are by in large parks and would take a vote of the people to dispose of. Deputy City Manager Moore said the next step would be to look at the School District's map and compare and see what may be of interest to either dispose of or to trade.

City Attorney Shaver advised Council that no matter what the color of the properties are, there are some with unique characteristics that could have some restrictions with the title to the property so each one may have to be looked at individually for concerns.

City Manager Englehart said that Staff will sit down with the School District to see what areas they are looking at and at some point have a meeting with Council and the School District to have discussion about this. Matchett Park would be one property to be discussed.

Agenda Topic 5. Update on North Star Visit

City Manager Englehart said that North Star couldn't make it due to the weather and asked that Elizabeth Tice, Legislative and Management Liaison, provide an update to Council.

Ms. Tice said that North Star is the lead contractor for the branding initiative. Even though their people from Nashville, Tennessee were not able to make it because of the weather, their people from California and Ohio were able to make it to tour the community for the day and their focus is purely on economic development. The Tennessee North Star people are planning on coming to Grand Junction on April 6th.

Economic Development Update

Ms. Tice reviewed the latest Quarterly Economic Update for the fourth quarter of 2014. For unemployment in Grand Junction MSA, the jobs showed an increase but the workforce showed a loss. She reviewed the unemployment rate, the annual wages and employment by industry, and the 3rd quarter wages and employment by industry. Ms. Tice also reviewed the sales tax revenue using a 5 year comparison by category and by location. She advised that natural gas and crude oil prices were down and that has affected the employment because of layoffs, mostly being on the Front Range in the Denver area. Ms. Tice showed a comparison of drilling permits comparing those obtained in Weld County with Western Colorado. She advised that the Purchasing Managers Index is monitored as an overall indicator of economic health for manufacturing nationwide. Real estate transactions showed a slight increase in Mesa County for the fourth quarter of 2014. Mesa County is almost at pre-recession numbers for foreclosure sales and filings. The City of Grand Junction was one of the main contributors for Building

Permits in 2014 and advised that solar panel installation is the largest contributor in the commercial, industrial, and public works category for building permits.

Ms. Tice advised Council that she and City Manager Englehart met with Matt Rosenberg and Derek Wagner from Colorado Mesa University (CMU) regarding a partnership opportunity. CMU has an economist on staff and they are talking about having CMU provide economic indicator tracking and reporting for the community. They have talked to CMU about crafting a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with them. Using CMU would provide third party credibility. It could provide opportunities to have interns or students working on some of the compilation. City Council thought that this would be a good idea however, it would be important to keep all of the benchmarks and the partners involved.

When asked if North Star was on track, Ms. Tice said the cluster analysis and the industry screening is ahead of schedule. Visioning and branding will be delayed approximately one to two weeks.

Agenda Topic 6. Legislative Update

Ms. Tice advised that there are a couple of bills that she would recommend letters of support from Council. The first one is House Bill 15-1177 which is the Rural Economic Development Initiative Grant Program. It proposes a different way of calculating for distressed counties who were previously not eligible for funding under the traditional program. Some would now be eligible under the new program. Under the new provisions, Mesa County would qualify as economically distressed and would qualify for the program. The other bill she would recommend a letter of support would be Senate Bill 15-091 which would reduce the statute of limitations for construction defect litigation. She explained the difference between the two construction defect bills, Senate Bill 15-091 and Senate Bill 15-177.

City Council was in favor of supporting those bills. Ms. Tice will prepare letters for review and signature.

Ms. Tice advised that they met with Kelly Flenniken who sits on the board for Economic Development Council of Colorado (EDCC) which takes positions on bills. They compared notes on bills to support or oppose and will add their position to the letters.

Ms. Tice said that it looks like Foresight Park will be added as an Enterprise Zone along with others. Also, a compromised Urban Renewal bill is out there without a lot of movement.

One policing efforts bill has been introduced and more will be introduced in regards to data used for tracking demographics for persons arrested, interviewed, canvassed, etc.

The Oil and Gas Task Force has posted their findings and recommendations and the report is 140 pages.

Ms. Tice informed Council that the State Budget Forecast comes out on March 20th.

Ms. Tice advised that another bill to write a letter of support for would be House Bill 15-1003 for funding the Safe Routes to School Program as well as House Bill 15-1109 which extends Senate Bill 09-228 for transfers to HUTF and CCF. She advised that these bills won't move too fast.

Council was in favor of sending a letter of support for House Bill 15-1003.

Agenda Topic 7. Other Business

City Manager Englehart updated Council on the difference with the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant program for the Fire Department from previous SAFER grants. There is no requirement to keep the positions filled once the grant money is gone.

Fire Chief Ken Watkins handed out a paper for frequent asked questions regarding the program. He described the program and the reason for the request. There is currently one Staff vacancy everyday on one fire engine. They want to use the grant monies to hire straight Fire Fighter and Paramedic positions. They anticipate they won't hear anything on the grant until summer and then there would be a 180 recruiting period. They would hope to know whether or not they will be funded by the 2016 budget process. The grant would pay for salary and benefits for two years. There would be some costs for training. He said that, if the grant is awarded, the intent would be to keep the additional positions once the grant monies are gone, but they would not have any requirement to do so. This item is on the Wednesday, March 4th City Council Regular Meeting agenda.

City Manager Englehart informed Council on a few more items including: Horizon Drive's options will be brought back to the next workshop; he thinks it would be a good idea to set up a Property Committee for the property matter with the School District; he will be out of the office the following week; and to dispel any false rumors, he clarified to Council that there is money in the projected budgets for right-of-way acquisition in F ½, 25 Road, and 24 Road projects (Westside Beltway).

Council President Norris said she received a letter from Grand Valley Drainage District and they want to meet with a group of people that they listed and asked that the City Manager Rich Englehart be involved. A letter will be sent to them explaining that the City already knows what all of the issues are and felt there is no need for more meetings.

City Attorney Shaver clarified that in the draft letter two things were asked; 1) the funding issue and if the City is supportive of the fee and 2) what will occur with the development in the interim.

Councilmember McArthur said he met with County Commissioner Scott McInnis, representatives from Palisade and Fruita, and the Grand Valley Drainage District Board and it

was recommended that a committee be put together to develop a model for a future entity. They discussed the basics with the Board, and they were supportive of a single entity. The legislation will be on hold and the question would be if it could or should happen this year. One contention during the meeting was the Buthorn Drain issue but Staff has come up with a temporary solution for the ending of the Buthorn Drain which is additional piping to alleviate the flows.

City Attorney Shaver explained to Council the reason for the dissolution of Redlands Mesa Metro District that is on the consent agenda for Wednesday, March 4, 2015 City Council meeting. The City has no issue with it, it is a requirement by Title 32 that the District has the City's approval for the dissolution and then the District Court can dissolve the District.

Board Reports

Councilmember Chazen advised that on Wednesday, March 4th, the Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado (AGNC) group will be going to Parachute to look at various projects to distribute dollars from a mini-grant program.

Councilmember Traylor Smith advised that the Housing Authority is moving forward on their renovation of their administration space.

Councilmember Susuras reported that Grand Junction Economic Partnership (GJEP) Executive Committee held a meeting recently and is in support of the two ballot measures that were presented to them by Council President Norris, City Manager Englehart, and Legislative and Management Liaison Elizabeth Tice.

Councilmember Boeschstein said that the Las Colonias architects were here for the amphitheater and it is close to being designed. The groundbreaking should be soon. He also reported that the Incubator will be producing bicycle pins with their 3-D printer for bicycle/pedestrian month.

Councilmember McArthur advised that there was an update on the Jordan Cove L & G project (construct a pipeline from the Piceance Creek area to Oregon) at the Club 20 meeting and the project is going through the Federal Government and anticipating approval within the next year. It is expected to be a four year project. The project could be a tremendous boom to the Economic Development.

With no other business, the meeting adjourned.

**GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL
MONDAY, MARCH 2, 2015**

**WORKSHOP, 5:00 P.M.
CITY AUDITORIUM
250 N. 5TH STREET**

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

1. **Workforce Center:** Mr. Tracey Garchar, Executive Director of the Mesa County Department of Human Services, will present a brief explanation of the current structure of the Mesa County Workforce Center. He will also describe the opportunity that the Center has to be designated as its own standalone locally controlled Workforce Region. Mr. Garchar will be requesting support for this request via a Council vote. **Attachment**
2. **Mesa Land Trust Request:** Executive Director Rob Bleiberg will present a request for matching funds in anticipation of an application to Great Outdoors Colorado for a grant to obtain a conservation easement on an east valley property.
3. **Urban Trails Committee:** Members of the Urban Trails Committee will brief City Council on their draft strategic plan and recommended Safe Routes to School priorities. **Attachment**
4. **City Property Inventory**
5. **Update on North Star Visit**
6. **Legislative Update**
7. **Other Business**
8. **Board Report**