

GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP SUMMARY
March 16, 2015 – Noticed Agenda Attached

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

Meeting Adjourned: 8:08 p.m.

City Council Members present: All.

Staff present: Englehart, Shaver, Moore, Lanning, Tice, Thornton, Kovalik, and Tuin.

Others: Rick Taggart, Chris Kennedy, Chuck Keller, Vara Kusal, Clark Atkinson, Tim Foster, and Kristi Pollard

Agenda Topic 1. Tax-Free Zone

Discussion on this Agenda Topic was postponed until the arrival of Colorado Mesa University (CMU) President Foster.

Agenda Topic 2. Potential Text Amendments to the Zoning and Development Code

Tim Moore, Deputy City Manager, provided some background on the need for the text amendments. He advised Council that they seeking Council's input whether or not the requested changes should be made. The first potential amendment was to allow bay doors at the front of a building in I-1 and I-2 industrial zone districts. After discussion, specifically businesses within the 24 Road corridor, Council was in favor of moving forward with the bay door amendment to the Zoning and Development Code.

The second potential amendment to the Zoning and Development Code that was discussed was changing the size of lettering for building signs within the 24 Road corridor. Mr. Moore explained that several businesses have requested and have been approved through the variance process to change the size of the letters on their signs. By changing the Zoning and Development Code to allow larger letters on the signs, it would speed up the process for businesses. Council was in favor of the code amendment being put forward.

The last potential amendment to look at the Zoning and Development Code was the Development Improvements Agreements (DIA) guarantee/security requirements. Mr. Moore advised Council that currently the City requires a DIA with a security of 120% of the value of the public improvements. He explained how the process currently works and how the security is released for each completed and accepted public improvement with the exception of the last 20%, which is kept for a warranty period of one year.

City Attorney Shaver explained that they are asking Council if they would like to see a change or a different way that the DIA's are administered. There were a number of platted subdivisions that were undeveloped when Exxon pulled out (Black Sunday). The law allowed lots to be sold since they were platted but if the infrastructure is not complete, the people who purchased the lots may not have had the benefit of water, sewer, complete roads, etc. The City had to deal with these types of subdivisions during annexations. As a result and in order to protect the City, a DIA process was put in place which "over-secures" the City to ensure the improvements are completed. Due to the tight economic times now, it is difficult for developers to provide that percentage for security. Because of this, the City has accepted other forms of collateral. There was discussion regarding possible options which included more frequent inspections on infrastructure, and comparisons with how Mesa County and other municipalities handle the security. City Council was in favor of further research for this amendment, making it a priority, and getting Councilmembers Boeschstein and McArthur involved in discussions. Staff was directed to do more research including finding out information from other municipalities, developers, the County (keeping any plan somewhat consistent with the County), and then bring it back to Council.

Agenda Topic 3. Legislative Update

Elizabeth Tice, Legislative and Management Liaison, reported that letters of support have been sent with the Mayor's signature for Representative Willet's Rural Economic Development Grant Program bill and the Safe Routes to School bill. On March 20th, the State will issue the latest revenue forecast and that will trigger a lot of action from the Appropriation Committee. There was some discussion on the Rural Economic Development Grant Program since currently there is not a lot of grant opportunities available for communities like Mesa County because, even though Mesa County is rural, Grand Junction is urban. Legislation such as this would open up funding for communities such as Mesa County.

Ms. Tice reported that the State has introduced some new labor bills called the Workforce Development Package which consists of five bills: Pathways into Technology which would create a new kind of school (P-Tech schools); Mobile Learning Labs; Creation of Career Pathways for Students; Career and Tech Ed in Concurrent Enrollment; and Skilled Worker Training Grant Program. She also reported that some bills that will be discussed at the Chamber Legislative Video Conference on Tuesday, March 17th are Enhanced Unemployment Compensation Benefits and the FAMLI (Family and Medical Leave Insurance) Program Wage Replacement Bill. CML does not take a position on these two bills because there is no unfunded mandate associated with them. Ms. Tice noted that another bill that will be discussed is the Employee Leave to Attend Child's Academic Activities Bill.

Ms. Tice stated that other efforts that may be coming up in reference to labor include a ballot question to raise the minimum wage and an effort to repeal existing State Statutes that prohibit local governments from enacting their own minimum wages.

Colorado Municipal League (CML) is opposing the Homeless Person Bill of Rights Bill which would invalidate local panhandling ordinances; however, Ms. Tice did not think that Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado (AGNC) is opposing it. The City is not taking a position on the Homeless Person Bill of Rights bill due to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) lawsuit. CML is also opposing the Data Collection for Policing Bill.

Ms. Tice spoke about the new TechHire Initiative that President Obama launched and stated that Longmont has moved forward with a program in place. The purpose is to connect people with training to fill available jobs. There is grant money available for the program.

That concluded the Legislative Update.

Agenda Topic 4. Horizon Drive Update

Greg Lanning, Public Works Director, provided Council with an update on Horizon Drive including design concepts, costs/funding, and a schedule for construction. The concept is that Phase One will be from the Interstate 70 to G Road which will include a wide single lane roundabout at G Road. He advised that raised medians will take the place of the center left turn lane. There will be the ability for wide U-turn ability in the center of the approximately ½ mile long corridor which will be able to accommodate ambulances and large pick-up trucks. He reviewed cost estimates for four different options for the project. He stated that grant monies could be available. Contribution amounts from the Horizon Drive Association Business Improvement District (HDABID) and the City would need to be discussed. He showed Council a schedule for the buildout which buildout would be complete in 2017 or 2018.

Clark Atkinson, Past President of the Horizon Drive Association Business Improvement District, advised that the medians will be wider to allow a larger radius for turning around and to encourage traffic to slow down. It will also eliminate the lane known as the suicide lane. There will be bicycle lanes. Crosswalks will be put in when there is a safe haven in the middle of the existing ninety feet of blacktop. The only right-of-way acquisition necessary is for the I-70 interchange and that acquisition is currently underway with Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). The modeling that was done showed that there would be economic payback to the City with the improvements.

There was a discussion regarding the impact of additional traffic in the future for the areas that are not included in this project which has been taken into account with the Regional Transportation Plan. They discussed other priority issues that need to be addressed in the interim such as more law enforcement, lowering the speed limit, talking to Xcel Energy about increasing the lumens in the street lights, the timing for applying for DOLA grants, etc. Council felt that it is important to do something about the lighting in the interim to increase visibility. They also discussed the concept, the priority for the project, whether going forward with the project should wait until after the April 7th elections, and then look further at the project, decide on applying for the grant, and discuss the budget for matching dollars for the grant. It

can be a topic for a retreat after the elections. It was suggested education for the businesses to advise their customers who are driving, walking, or crossing the road to be careful.

Council was in favor of starting the design and discussing this matter further during a retreat after the April 7th election.

Agenda Topic 1. Tax-Free Zone (continued)

CMU President Tim Foster advised City Council that there is a bill being drafted and carried by the majority leaders in the legislature for a Tax-Free Zone. The City and the County will have to opt in for it to happen. He said that there is a large part of Colorado that is not benefiting from the economic boom. The concept started in New York for economically depressed areas. A business has to be a new, unique business to Colorado and has to be a complimentary business and not a competitive business to qualify for the program. If the business qualifies, it gets a 10 year tax holiday from income, sales, and property taxes. In New York, they connected the businesses to higher education institutions for qualifications, internships, workforce training, research, etc. It could be limited to just new, unique businesses within a boundary that the City/County determines. Mr. Foster said that if the City chooses to opt in, it could be by resolution or the vote of the people, the method of opting in is up to the City. Mesa County has expressed their support.

Kristi Pollard, Office of the CMU President, stated that they have worked with a group of local businesses on the concept.

Mr. Foster said the only criticism they have received is that the cost of labor will be driven up. They discussed how the process would work and how the businesses would be found by using the necessary resources and partners to encourage new businesses. He said there will be safety nets to assure businesses will stay. Mr. Foster said that CMU could be a facilitator for the program.

City Council was in favor of sending a letter of support to the legislature for the bill.

Agenda Topic 5. Other Business

Public Works Director Greg Lanning addressed the City Council on the plan to remove Patterson Road from the current overlay contract and overlay D Road instead. The reason for the switch is because of an Xcel Energy pipeline going in on Patterson Road. D Road was slated for reconstruction for a double overlay which will last 10 years, between 29 and 30 Roads. There is a small portion which is in the County so the County will be participating with that portion. Mr. Lanning reviewed the pricing as well as other streets that are slated for paving. There was discussion about the bike lanes on 1st Street and 7th Street and where the money is coming from in the budget for the paving project. The City Council had no objections.

Councilmember Traylor Smith advised that there is a junior college baseball team in the Western District in Nevada who has been to JUCO twice and their administration is considering defunding the program. The coach has requested letters of support from various people and Councilmember Traylor Smith feels that a letter of support from City Council to the President of the University identifying what JUCO means to the teams might be considered.

Council President Norris thought it would be a good idea to write a letter of support for all the teams who participate in JUCO thanking them and encouraging them to continue to participate. Council agreed to send a letter to all of the teams. City Manager Englehart will draft a letter to send out to all of the teams.

Agenda Topic 5. Board Reports

Councilmember Susuras stated that he has two more meetings left with Grand Junction Economic Partnership (GJEP) and the Airport Authority Board and asked, because they are both in the recruitment stage for a new Director, should he step down now from those boards and let someone else attend those meetings. City Council was in favor of Councilmember Susuras staying on both boards until his term is up in May. There was some discussion about the recruitment for a new director for GJEP.

Councilmember Traylor Smith reported that she received an email regarding the Housing Authority (HA) and the drainage project. The Grand Valley Drainage District (GVDD) is asking the HA to sign some documents they are not comfortable with. City Attorney Shaver advised that the City has been involved and is aware of the concerns between the GVDD and the HA.

Councilmember Boeschstein stated that the Las Colonias groundbreaking is at 10:00 a.m. on March 25, 2015.

Councilmember Doody advised that the Canyon View Park playground equipment is going in.

Councilmember McArthur advised that the 5-2-1 Drainage Authority Annual meeting is that week and he anticipates that the model for the expanded drainage district will be complete within 30 days.

Councilmember Chazen stated that there is talk about using the Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado (AGNC) as a regional economic development group. The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) will talk to Council on March 17th about the Tax Increment Financing (TIF).

With no other business, the meeting adjourned.

**GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL
MONDAY, MARCH 16, 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. **Tax-Free Zone:** CMU President Tim Foster will present information on Tax-Free Colorado which is a proposal to help spur employment, economic development and new businesses in economically distressed areas. **Attachment W-1**

2. **Potential Text Amendments to the Zoning and Development Code:** Staff is seeking direction from Council for the first 3 potential amendments. These amendments include 1) amending the Code for Bay Doors in Industrial Zones, 2) increasing the size of sign lettering allowed on buildings within the 24 Road Corridor, and 3) establishing different Development Improvement Agreements (DIA) guarantee and security requirements. **Attachment W-2**

3. **Legislative Update**

4. **Horizon Drive Update**

5. **Other Business**

6. **Board Reports**