

**GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP SUMMARY
June 13, 2005**

The City Council of the City of Grand Junction, Colorado met on Monday, June 13, 2005 at 7:02 p.m. in the City Hall Auditorium to discuss workshop items. Those present were Councilmembers Bonnie Beckstein, Teresa Coons, Jim Doody, Jim Spehar, Doug Thomason and President of the Council Bruce Hill. Council President Pro Tem Gregg Palmer was absent.

Summaries and action on the following topics:

1. **APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS & COMMISSIONS:** An update to City Council on soliciting applications for the Riverfront Commission and the VCB Board and the process for appointments to the Ridges Architectural Control Committee. City Clerk Stephanie Tuin reviewed the status of the various advertising for volunteer boards and requested direction on appointments to the Ridges ACC. She also pointed out that Parks & Recreation interviews will take place on June 14th and those appointments could be added to the Wednesday agenda.

Action summary: The City Council agreed with extending the advertising for Riverfront Commission and Ridges ACC, acknowledged they will appoint to the Ridges based on applications, and directed City Clerk Tuin to add Parks and Recreation Advisory Board appointments to Wednesday's agenda.

2. **BUSINESS INCENTIVE PROPOSALS:** An existing business expansion request from the Chamber and two new business incentive requests from the Grand Junction Economic Partnership (GJEP). Diane Schwenke, Executive Director of the Chamber, requested an existing business incentive. The request was for Lewis Engineering, which looks like it will be successful in securing a contract for work that Hamilton Sunstrand used to do. She said they will be expanding their work force and completing a physical expansion. Ms. Schwenke said all of the paperwork is not complete but it appears the expansion will qualify under the guidelines. She said it is not a new job creation, it is actually job retention and they would probably qualify for the \$2000 per job, which will total around \$40,000.

Councilmember Coons asked what would happen if they do not receive the incentive. Ms. Schwenke was not sure and said the owner of Lewis Engineering is proceeding with his plans based on receiving the incentive.

Council President Hill asked if Lewis Engineering will take advantage of the certification incentive. Ms. Schwenke said no, since they already

started going forward with this program. She said they have already expended \$50,000 for that certification but may ask for help with recertification.

Council President Hill said that Council in the future wants to look at other areas that would have more impact and have the resources to respond to the requests.

Ms. Schwenke asked if Council would be willing to look at this request as a new job creation and asked if Lewis Engineering should complete the application. Ms. Schwenke said she would support the completion of the application.

Councilmember Spehar said he would be willing to look at the application in that regard and recognize out of the box things with Hamilton Sundstrand and try to keep the jobs here.

Councilmember Coons also supports the review of the application.

City Attorney John Shaver stated the review can be justified but cautioned Council not to make it a precedent and to review such requests on a case by case basis only.

Councilmember Thomason stated that he supports the review.

Ann Driggers, GJEP Director, presented the next request. First, she reviewed how the incentive program works. She has two other requests from small companies. She said the first company builds custom glass blocks and said the company has been growing at a rate of 25% per year. Ms. Driggers said 100% of the product will be exported outside Mesa County. She said the company initially started with ten new jobs and over the next four years there will be another ten jobs. The average wage is \$13 per hour with benefits and the capital investment is in excess of \$1 million in a new or existing facility. The indirect economic impact is estimated at \$7.7 million. She said the incentive will be secured. Ms. Driggers said the second request is another small company in manufacturing and has been in business since 1982. The company manufactures stainless steel restaurant equipment and is looking at Grand Junction to have some synergy with the wine industry. Ms. Driggers said the company is currently turning away business and said the average wage for the 10 new jobs will be \$14 to \$15 per hour. She said the capital investment is estimated over \$1 million which the City would be looking at \$2.8 million in economic impact. The request is for \$2,000 per job so a total of \$20,000.

Council President Hill asked if there will be a State match. Ms. Driggers said yes. Council President Hill asked if the County will match as well. Ms. Driggers said the County had declined to participate.

Councilmember Coons asked if Grand Junction has the work force available. Ms. Driggers said yes since some of the Sunstrand employees that were laid off could qualify for these jobs. Councilmember Coons stated that some communities are trying to move away from incentive programs. Ms. Driggers said perhaps other communities are not as diligent as Grand Junction and also some communities put out millions for programs like this one so there is a higher risk.

Councilmember Spehar asked about employee benefits with the second company. Ms. Driggers said they provide medical insurance.

Councilmember Beckstein asked if there are existing facilities that would accommodate either one of these two companies. Ms. Driggers said the first company is looking for an existing facility but will probably have to build a new building.

Councilmember Doody asked if the State will match the incentive. Ms. Driggers said the Government has appointed an Economic Development Council to oversee a \$5 million dollar fund to use to offer incentives, but a local match is required. She said there is more emphasis on rural areas and Grand Junction is considered a rural area.

Councilmember Beckstein asked if the wages will be comparable for the CNC operators from Sunstrand. Ms. Driggers said yes.

Action summary: Council supported the existing business expansion request proposal from the Chamber and directed Ms. Schwenke to work with the applicant on completing the application. Council was willing to go forward with the GJEP requests and asked Ms. Driggers to encourage the second company to complete an application by the end of the year. Council directed Staff to add the first GJEP incentive request to Wednesday's agenda on the Consent Calendar.

3. **BILLBOARD MORATORIUM FOR THE RIVERSIDE PARKWAY:**
Discussion on whether to make the temporary condition of not accepting sign applications along the Riverside Parkway permanent and if so, what conditions, restrictions and/or modification(s) of the Zoning and Development Code will be adopted to protect the public health, safety and welfare. City Attorney John Shaver reviewed the research he had completed and provided it to Council. City Attorney Shaver said discussion has taken place with Mr. Mark Gamble, owner of Colorado West Outdoor Advertising, and he is not opposed of the precluding signs

along Riverside Parkway but is concerned about the extent of the regulations. City Attorney Shaver said there are areas in close proximity to Highway 6 & 50 where the proposed buffer area would affect those areas. After this discussion, City Attorney Shaver said if Council wants to go forward with an ordinance, the matter will need to go to the Planning Commission for a recommendation and then it will come forward, at which time the Council's process would take place and be scheduled for a public hearing.

Council President Hill asked how many signs were affected. City Attorney Shaver said there were four signs that have already been affected and the number that would be affected in the future is a great number, as a number of locations along the alignment are appropriately zoned for signage at 600 foot intervals.

Council President Hill referred to Mr. Gamble's letter. He said the letter asked that Council allow signage on a parcel by parcel basis.

City Attorney Shaver displayed the alignment along the Parkway and identified the affected areas.

Councilmember Thomason said that looking at parcels individually, distance and proximity are considerations.

City Attorney Shaver said the current code requires a 600 foot separation between signs and the proposed ordinance makes that separation perpendicularly. He said Mr. Gamble's concern is the visibility, which makes it more complicated and may make for more enforcement issues.

Mark Gamble, Colorado West Outdoor Advertising, asked about the 1500 foot separation. City Attorney Shaver said that includes the width of the roadway. Mr. Gamble gave a brief history; he said he had 4 billboard locations in the Parkway alignment that had to be moved and there are still 12 to 18 signs that are within the proposed sign-free corridor. He said that he was approached by Trent Prall and Jim Shanks, Project Engineers for the Riverside Parkway, and was told to initially to relocate the billboard signs, then was told the City was not going to allow billboard signs along Riverside Parkway, so negotiations took place for the removal of the signs. Mr. Gamble said he is the only billboard guy in the City, the rules and regulations are prohibitive of another company coming in and his ability to build new ones is pretty restrictive. He said without the Riverside Parkway there will be no new opportunities to relocate or to add new billboard signs. Mr. Gamble said 300 square feet is the largest billboard sign allowed and the law prohibits billboards within 660 feet of the interstate. He said that he has worked with Mesa Mall for years and finally received permission for a new location when he heard about the

moratorium. He said there is a big concern regarding the distance and the clause “no portion of a sign” in the ordinance that makes all his signs along that roadway illegal. City Attorney Shaver said any existing signs are legal non-conforming signs and can continue, unless they are not rebuilt or abandoned.

Council President Hill summarized Mr. Gamble’s concerns and thanked him for his comments.

City Attorney Shaver said there are two issues that need careful consideration. He said there will be elevated portions of the Riverside Parkway that the City will have to deal with elevated signs without distance and the other issue is the placement of billboards along the railroad right-of-way.

Councilmember Spehar asked for clarification on the 600 feet. City Attorney Shaver said the proposed ordinance has 750 feet from the center line of Parkway as the corridor where no signs will be allowed.

Council President Hill reviewed the overlap area along I-70B (Highway 6 & 50). He said the intention was to deal with Riverside Parkway and he did not realize how close it was to the other roadway. It will make the corridor slimmer on the north side. City Attorney Shaver said it is possible to use discreet points, and that it would be easily incorporated into the ordinance.

Councilmember Coons asked if the intent is only to affect the Riverside Parkway. City Attorney Shaver said yes; and only for new permits.

Councilmember Spehar said the Parkway corridor should not have an impact on the north side, he agrees with not allowing conforming and non-conforming uses and he recalls no previous discussion on amortizing the non-conforming signs.

Council President Hill stated that Council should deal with the Riverside Parkway issues only and not with the non-conforming issues. He said the tricky part is north side and the railroad right-of-way regarding new signs. City Attorney Shaver said the non-conforming issue is that signs exist which will be non-conforming. A serpentine swath could eliminate that.

Councilmember Coons said she has concerns with no signs on the Parkway since she feels there is a benefit to some signs, but is concerned with the visual clutter.

Councilmember Spehar asked that staff do more research and come back with other options. He said that it is impossible to keep billboard signs off of the Parkway without prohibiting it on railroad property.

City Manager Kelly Arnold said they perhaps need to investigate railroad right-of-way and or some distance from the railroad right-of-way, and look at the bubble diagram at the Highway 6 & 50 overlap and the area west of Mesa Mall more closely.

Community Development Director Bob Blanchard clarified that the City's regulations will apply to railroad right-of-way and any new ordinances adopted will apply to new signs and any existing signs will become legal non-conforming. He said that any changes will necessitate the sign coming into conformance. He said the same situation currently exists with the size of the sign, which the maximum was reduced a few years ago.

Council President Hill said it was not his intent to restrict signage on any other roadway.

Action summary: Staff was directed to take another look and bring back more options which may include looking at individual parcels and were told to keep the lone billboard company owner advised.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 9:22 p.m.

