

**GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP SUMMARY
October 3, 2005**

The City Council of the City of Grand Junction, Colorado met on Monday, October 3, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. in the City Hall Auditorium to discuss workshop items. Those present were Councilmembers Bonnie Beckstein, Teresa Coons, Jim Doody, Gregg Palmer, Doug Thomason and President of the Council Bruce Hill. Councilmember Jim Spehar was absent.

Summaries and action on the following topics:

1. **AVALON THEATRE REPORT:** City Manager Kelly Arnold introduced the topic and overviewed the history. Up until three years ago, the Theatre was managed and coordinated by the Avalon Foundation. They contracted with DDA for the hands on management. City Manager Arnold said he was approached by the Avalon Board on how to keep the Theatre operational. The board asked how the City could take over the operations, and how the Avalon could get back into fundraising for capital improvements. Three years ago, the City took over on a three year trial basis to operate the Theater. Now at the end of the trial period, staff was hired to promote and coordinate the Avalon events, hired through Parks & Recreation and was folded into the Two River Convention Center operations as an adjunct facility. That position has resulted to an event coordinator for both facilities. Also, at that time, a prioritized list of needs for the building was established with safety being primary, which some of the items have already been accomplished. He said fundraising has not been as successful as anticipated so, in the meantime, Cinema at the Avalon has used the facility and that operation has grown. The agreement with Cinema at the Avalon was a two year trial period and they have been very successful but, at the same time they received a reduced rate from the City. The Cinema at the Avalon has helped with the installation of new screens. Mr. Arnold said the Cinema at the Avalon trial periods are also coming to an end and the need to move forward needs to be addressed. He said Dr. Moorman just recently done a study for Montrose for their recreation center so Mr. Arnold approached Dr. Moorman about doing a study relative to the Avalon. In conclusion, Mr. Arnold suggested that Council listen to the presentation and in a month, the matter will be brought back for additional discussion.

Dr. Jerry Moorman presented the final report on the Avalon Study for 2005. It took him eight months to complete the report. He said the goal was for the Avalon Theater to still be successful when it turns 100 years old in fifteen years. He met with the Avalon Board, the DDA Board and the Cinema at the Avalon board and said the study is part of a strategic planning process for the Avalon Theatre which includes a plan for the continued success of the Theatre including marketing strategies and key factors for success. Dr. Moorman said other entities and patrons were solicited for input. He said that he collected financial

data and found that \$550 per day was the break even point. He then looked at the competition, community demographics and compared the Theatre with other facilities. He found that the deficit of \$62,000 is very small comparatively speaking and complimented the running of the facility. He then developed a questionnaire to various groups and got a 30% response, and then the three boards were reapproached. Dr. Moorman said the result was 33% marketing strategies, 17% key factors for success and he came to twelve conclusions and recommendations. He reviewed some of his conclusions and recommendations and said the biggest challenge is that there are too many people involved. He recommended that there should be one manager so that one person knows everything that is going on. He said everyone is doing a good job, but there just isn't enough communication and recommended a coordinating committee that has representatives from each board with one outside user representative. He thought that CAI was part of the success and said they should be encouraged to stay. He felt the Avalon is one of the anchors for downtown Grand Junction and did not think the operation is failing; but is fairly successful.

Councilmember Coons asked about Dr. Moorman recommendations on marketing and infrastructure. She asked how critical are those infrastructure needs to be successful with the marketing strategies.

Dr. Moorman said some of those needs are very much needed and the City should use some funds to get matching funds from other business. He said there are a lot of new companies that are coming into Grand Junction and the City should approach them. He said there are some stage issues for certain activities that need to be address and also, the Avalon should come up with a classy sign, similar to St. Mary's electronic new sign.

Councilmember Coons questioned if Dr. Moorman feels if there will be any conflicts with the three boards for CAI if they concentrate on fewer uses.

Dr. Moorman said he did not see any real conflict with the three boards. He said the heightened awareness of the facility is due to the CAI. He felt if the City could acquire the green room across the alley and remodeled it for a smaller theatre facility. He said to break even is a great goal but keeping it at \$100,000 subsidy or less is pretty good.

Councilmember Palmer said there is a business approach to this, using public funds to support this. He said that he would like to talk about more and did not want to rush.

Dr. Moorman said he too would like to spend at least 3 to 4 more hours talking about this and said that he looked at this from a business perspective. He asked that Council to let him know when and where.

Council President Hill agreed more time is needed and questioned the concept of a stand alone department. He said it would need a specific manager but questioned could it be stand alone under the direction of Parks & Recreation.

Dr. Moorman said certainly but the staff person involved has other duties and this position would need to concentrate on more marketing.

City Manager Kelly Arnold asked Council to schedule more workshop time naming some of the key persons and groups, then suggested Council to have time at a lunch workshop for more discussion.

Action Summary: The City Council thanked Dr. Moorman and agreed with City Manager Arnold to schedule a lunch workshop for additional discussion.

Council President Hill called a recess at 8:24 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 8:31 p.m.

2. **BOTANICAL GARDENS:** The Botanical Garden Board has requested a meeting with the City Council to review and update the City on recent events and issues of concern. City Manager Kelly Arnold introduced the presentation. He noted a copy of the Botanical Gardens outside funding grant application was also included in the packet and he recommended that Council consider that request during their budget deliberations.

Carl Vostatek, current president, introduced other members that were in attendance and gave an overview of the history of the Gardens. He described the current structures on the property. Mr. Vostatek then listed the assistance that the City has already granted the Gardens. He talked about their current revenue streams and the amount of volunteer time they utilize.

Beth Campbell, Vice President of the Board, then addressed the Council. She described their vision, their benefits to the community and their efforts for water conservation. She said they focus on many groups for education and conservation.

Katie Ames, Treasurer for the Gardens, reviewed the financial situation. She said their expenses have grown along with their facilities. Ms. Ames said initially there were no financial statements but at this time they currently generate monthly financial statements. She said they have reduced expenses including a paid executive director, which the board has been running the operations and has been a challenge. Ms. Ames said in 2004 they reduced operating expenses to \$137,000 but they are just at break even.

Clara Ward, a staff person, talked about the daily activities at the Gardens. She mentioned all the groups that have helped them grow and said besides herself, there are very few paid part-time staff, but there are 100 volunteers.

Mr. Vostatek concluded by discussing a number of setbacks that have occurred. The first being the possible alignment of the Riverside Parkway may reduce memberships and supporters and said the final alignment was moved further north which has no affect on the property. He said two years ago the storm sewer affected the access which affected the attendance and memberships. Mr. Vostatek said they then discovered their water supply was drawing ground water which was too salty so they had to go on City water. He then said the final blow was a torn pond liner which is out of commission and will cost over \$10,000 to repair. He said they do not have the mechanism to raise the operation funds, but did say the capital fund raising is going well. Therefore, they have five requests: approve the outside agency grant request for \$50,000 to hire an executive director, water problem during high usage, unable to pay City's water bill, and the City Manger deferred payment but said Council would have to approve any waiver. Mr. Vostatek said the toilets that are being for the Riverfront Trail users, makes security a challenge. He said they have asked for another restroom to be constructed for the Riverfront Trail or for this facility access be waived for security purposes. He also asked for the application fee to be waived.

Councilmember Thomason asked if the Executive Director will be a grant writer.

Mr. Vostatek said the main focus of the Executive Director will be fund raising experience primarily.

Councilmember Coons said she is a member and has taken landscaping classes, and said it is a wonderful facility but, questioned if the waiver of the fees are for this year or will it be ongoing.

Mr. Vostatek said it could go either way.

Councilmember Palmer asked if the intent was to run the business as a non-profit.

Mr. Vostatek responded yes, as a 501 c3 non-profit. He said that he suggested a profit corporation but was voted down.

City Manager Arnold said the initial agreement was based on gross receipts, so it was contemplated that if successful, the City would share in gross receipts.

Councilmember Palmer stated that in the current circumstances, there was an operating profit last year and said they have had success in capital funding. He asked if there was a reason that they have not found any operation funds.

Mr. Vostatek said most grants are for capital improvements only and said there are very few grants that give for operational funds.

Councilmember Palmer said it doesn't appear that the community is supporting it to the level that it needs to be supported.

Councilmember Beckstein asked for clarification on the irrigation.

Ms. Ames explained how they discovered the salinity and said it can't be fixed without it costing a lot.

Mr. Vostatek said they ran a line directly to the Colorado River and worked with Public Works to try to figure out a way, but it was very costly.

Councilmember Palmer questioned how many people come through in a month

Ms. Ames said the attendance is high on free Sundays.

Ms. Ward said there are usually around 200 to 600 people on free Sunday and said at least 2000 per month during the summer months.

Councilmember Palmer questioned how much is the water bill.

Ms. Ward responded approximately \$1700.

Council President Hill questioned if the outside funding request, is it going to be an annual request.

Mr. Vostatek said yes unless a benefactor comes forward.

Councilmember Palmer questioned if they foresee asking for more money in the future.

Mr. Vostatek said yes, that they will need to hire more staff such as a full time gardener.

Councilmember Doody questioned if they have ever approached the City to buy the property.

Mr. Vosatek said no.

Mr. Ames said they would not have funds to pay the debt.

Action Summary: Council President Hill said Council will take this under consideration during budget discussions.

3. **7TH STREET CORRIDOR PLAN:** Public Works staff to provide City Council with options for the 7th Street Corridor Plan. Mark Relph, Public Works and Utilities Director, introduced the topic and gave an overview of the presentation. He introduced City Engineer Mike McDill.

Mr. McDill said the led design consultant Ted Ciavonne is present and they are looking for direction from Council. He noted a correction in the report and said the most important thing that came out of the open house is to preserve the traffic capacity. He then deferred to Mr. Ciavonne.

Mr. Ciavonne reviewed the open house and compared the three concepts. He said the amount of advertising for the open house was extensive and described the format of the open house. Mr. Ciavonne said that over 200 people attended and said 75 people liked the three lane option, exactly as shown. He said people were given a choice of adding or subtracting elements.

Council President Hill questioned which option moved traffic the fastest and which is the most efficient.

Mr. Ciavonne said the three lanes moved traffic the quickest.

Council President Hill questioned if it was because the stop light is removed.

Mr. Ciavonne said that will move the traffic quicker at a slower speed.

Councilmember Beckstein questioned the vehicle vs pedestrian situations.

Mr. Ciavonne said there are only 8 conflicts with a roundabout, but there will be slower cars which will make it safer for pedestrians to cross.

Councilmember Doody questioned the reverse angle parking and asked are there any safety issues.

Mr. Ciavonne said that normal angle is backing into an active space, with reverse angle you are backing into static space and then head out into active space so the is much safer.

Councilmember Palmer questioned the difficulty to back in.

Mr. Ciavonne said you have to back up either way and said there will also be more space to maneuver.

Councilmember Coons asked if there will be any information for first time users.

Mr. Ciavonne said there is a signage program and said there will be a practice area that will be available while the project is being built.

Councilmember Beckstein questioned the size of roundabout.

Mr. Ciavonne said the studies show that there is no need for two lanes but the jury still out. He said the thought of slip lanes are being considered and the models are being closely watched at 25 Road, 24 1/2 Road and G Road.

Council President Hill questioned why this would be faster and safer. Then, asked for explanations.

Mr. Ciavonne said the removal of the stop light and you will not have to watch for cross traffic.

Mr. McDill said the key is the signals; he then went into the recommendations of the three lane option. He said it best accommodates the current and future traffic through 2030 with the parkway built. He said there will be less traffic, more efficient, and safer for pedestrians and bicycles. Mr. McDill said this is the least expensive option and said currently the City is maintaining more lanes than what is needed. Mr. McDill said the second recommendation is to use reverse angle parking. He said when leaving space for an auxiliary lane, which is a 7 foot lane, it will be safer and will allow parkers to get out of traffic. Mr. McDill said it would be easy to convert the existing parking to reverse angle parking if the City would like to try this on a trial bases to see how it works. The third recommendation is to do a design and build a roundabout at 7th and Main. He said the roundabouts will be designed to be sensitive to emergency vehicles and most accommodating to pedestrians and bicyclers. Lastly, Mr. McDill recommended a properly designed roundabout at Grand & 7th Street in place of the stop light. Mr. McDill said regarding the budget, he suggests completing each of them in different phases. Phase I to be funded by Transportation Enhancement Grant, which is a nice fit for the 7th and Grand intersection; phase II with the cooperation of the DDA for the roundabout at 7th and Main; and phase III would be south of Main. Mr. McDill asked for feedback and direction from Council.

Council President Hill asked for more clarifications regarding the different phases and asked for a break down for each of the roundabouts.

Mr. McDill said approximately \$300,000 per block.

Councilmember Palmer asked about architectural drawings.

Mr. McDill said they can provide architectural drawings and said it is also on the website.

Councilmember Palmer asked Mr. McDill to email him the drawings.

Council President Hill said there are representatives from DDA and a citizen in attendance. Mr. Hill said there are a number of questions that need to be answered and said he would like Council to decide on a direction to move forward and agree on a configuration, then look at financing options.

Councilmember Coons said Council should listen to the DDA representatives if they have something new to bring to Council and then hear from the citizens.

DDA had no comments.

Della Dutcher, 3206 D ½ Road, Clifton 81520, said she had an idea that is better than the roundabouts, which is raised pavement like what is on Orchard, medians like what is located on upper 7th and blend it in together with flower planters and art on the corners. She said it would be cheaper and be more sensible. She said that she doesn't understand how the one lane roundabouts will move traffic better than the existing two lanes on each side of the road.

Councilmember Coons said that she likes the three lane options, roundabouts, and the reverse angle parking and supports staff's recommendation.

Councilmember Doody said he supports staff's recommendation.

Councilmember Thomason also supports staff's recommendation but has financing concerns.

Mark Relph, Public Works and Utilities Director discussed traffic projections and the affect that the Riverside Parkway will have.

Councilmember Beckstein asked about the projected time lines.

Mr. Relph said the upper end is 18,000 vehicles per day so there will be plenty of capacity while building the parkway.

Councilmember Beckstein said her concerns have been addressed so she also supports staff's recommendations.

Councilmember Palmer said he is struggling with the traffic numbers and in deference to Councilmember Coons, he has heard concerns from the public. He said he is trying to balance this out and wants to see this corridor improved. He said that he likes the roundabouts but has some discomfort with the reverse angle parking. He said he cannot support the roundabout at 7th and Grand and would like more time to review.

Council President Hill said maybe with the improvements at 7th and Main, traffic may pick up. He said he supports staff's recommendation and feels that it may

help people find Main Street. He suggested to do 7th and Main first then move north.

Councilmember Coons said it makes sense to set Grand Avenue and 7th Street roundabout aside for a later discussion.

Councilmember Doody said he agrees with Council President Hill to discuss more about Grand Avenue and 7th Street until further discussion.

Mr. Relph said staff will be back with more details regarding Grand Avenue and 7th Street.

Action Summary: The consensus was to go forward with Staff recommendations and start with 7th and Main. Council decided to discuss Grand Avenue and 7th Street roundabout until a later time..

The discussion regarding the 24 Road committee and City Clerk Stephanie Tuins' memo on the volunteer boards was tabled until Wednesday night.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 10:25 p.m.

