

**GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP SUMMARY
November 14, 2005**

The City Council of the City of Grand Junction, Colorado met on Monday, November 14, 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, Jim Spehar, Doug Thomason and President of the Council Bruce Hill.

Summaries and action on the following topics:

1. **APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS & COMMISSIONS:** Applications have closed for the Historic Preservation Board and the Visitor and Convention Bureau Board of Directors. City Clerk Stephanie Tuin distributed another application for the VCB Board of Directors and asked Council to set a date for interviews for the VCB. Clerk Tuin then asked Council to review their application packets and email her a list of six candidates to interview for the VCB by November 21st and for Council to select two appointees for the Historic Preservation Board by November 28th.

Action Summary: Council set the VCB interviews for either November 30th or December 1st.

2. **YOUTH COUNCIL PRESENTATION RE: MINORS IN POSSESSION:** The City Youth Council, as requested by the City Council, has considered the proposed ordinances that would allow for the prosecution of minors in possession of alcohol and marijuana at the municipal level. After careful deliberation and consultation with legal staff at the County and City level, the Youth Council is in support of the proposed ordinances. Mario Ramos, Management Intern, introduced Brian Conklin and Lisa Truong, chair and vice chair of the City Youth Council.

Brian Conklin said the City Youth Council has put a lot of work into this. He said they met with Teen Court participants, Municipal Court, and County Court Officials. He said both alcohol and marijuana is a big problem in the valley and one of the big problems is under enforcement. Mr. Conklin said the Youth Council feels the concept of the ordinance is a good one and said there may be a few things that need to be worked out. One concern expressed was that the \$1,000 maximum penalty as set forth in the Municipal Court may be too high for first offenders. Advantages to having the offenses written into Municipal Court would be the offenders would get more individual attention and have direct communication with the judge, that there would be the option of transferring the case to teen court, where there is peer pressure, and the public service option being through the Partners program.

Some of the other concerns brought up by Youth Council members and the City Council were the additional load on Municipal Court, the need to impose community service on first time offenders, whether summons into Municipal Court will be more of a deterrent, the lack of communication between the Municipal Court and the statewide incident reporting system (CCIC).

City Attorney Shaver advised that the judge can convert a fine to useful public service and that would be through the Partners program. The City is looking at getting on the State communication system by mid-2006 but for the time being can access information through the District Attorney's office. The ability to write cases into Municipal Court does not preclude the ability to also write them into District Court. Regarding the minor's ability to pay fines, Municipal Court does not accept payment from the parents. The minor would be required to work off the fine through useful public service. Another method is for the judge to suspend a portion of the fine based on good behavior.

Councilmember Coons inquired about sales to a minor. City Attorney Shaver advised that contributing to delinquency of a minor is a felony, and such offenses can affect liquor license renewals also.

Management Intern Mario Ramos advised that the change to Municipal Court for these violations is supported by the School District so that the teen court option can be utilized.

Action Summary: City Council directed staff to schedule the ordinances on a formal agenda to get them adopted with the caveat that staff communicates to the Court the emphasis on useful public service. They thanked all the members of the CYC that were present in support of the presentation.

The Council President called a recess at 8:25 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 8:35 p.m.

3. MESA LAND TRUST AND PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

UPDATE: Rob Bleiberg, Mesa Land Trust, introduced Margie Latta also of the Mesa Land Trust and presented the Annual Report to City Council. Mr. Bleiberg reviewed the history and mission of the Land Trust. He then reviewed the history and the activities of the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Committee over the last five years. He explained what a conservation easement is and the liability the Trust has when accepting these easements. Mr. Bleiberg said the Purchase of Development Rights Committee approved every transaction made and listed the upcoming grants and purchases anticipated. He said Mesa County has footed the bill for Mesa Land Trust in the amount of \$60,000 per year and would like the other partners to share in that cost, which would increase the amount of the budget for this item which is currently at \$103,000.

Council President Hill questioned what the total acreage is in the two buffer zones. Mr. Bleiberg said approximately 10,000 acres. The Land Trust has acquired about 10% of that and will surpass that figure by year end.

Councilmember Coons questioned the IGA between the municipalities that has established the buffer zone and asked how binding is that to the parcels that are already acquired. Mr. Bleiberg said the zoning cannot be changed unless all three entities agree with the IGA. He said water and sewer won't be provided and there will be no annexations into those buffer zones and said that although a portion of the buffer zone in the Redlands is higher density, the bulk of the acreage is AFT zoning.

Councilmember Thomason asked if there will be any funds left over to rollover into 2006. Mr. Bleiberg said the \$97,000 budgeted for 2005 will be completely spent this year and said in the past, when they have not spent all of the funds, they have rolled over into the next year.

Councilmember Palmer asked how close the PDR is getting to their goal. Mr. Bleiberg said there really is no set goal.

Councilmember Thomason asked about a discussion of prioritizing properties. Mr. Bleiberg said each property is ranked differently and there is some talk of revisiting that ranking system.

Council President Hill said there should be a higher emphasis placed along the visual corridor (where one drives) from a gateway perspective.

Councilmember Coons asked if the PDR actively solicits landowners. Mr. Bleiberg said yes, a lot of it is word of mouth and outreach. He said they have found that to be the most effective method and also the reason this program is successful is that it is all voluntary.

Councilmember Palmer asked how the boundaries were established. Mr. Bleiberg said initially it was narrower in Palisade, but through discussion and with landowners input the boundaries were adjusted. He said on the Fruita side it is also a narrower strip, but they didn't have the landowner feedback like they did in Palisade.

Councilmember Palmer asked about the amount of money that is put in by each partner and how that was determined. Mr. Bleiberg said he was not sure how the original numbers were determined. Assistant City Manager David Varley said when it first started, it was the amount that everyone was able to put in which was all voluntary, and over the last 5 years the program has succeeded and support has increased.

Mr. Bleiberg invited Council to their press events and their quarterly meetings.

Action Summary: The City Council thanked Mr. Bleiberg for the annual report of the Mesa Land Trust and Purchase of Development Rights Update.

4. **STRATEGIC PLAN REPORT FROM TEAM #4 - WEEDS:** An update from Team 4 regarding City Council's Strategic Plan Goal. Efforts of this team will be presented as a summary of the information provided in the City Council workshop packet. Sheryl Trent, Assistant to City Manager, and Doug Cline, Street Superintendent, presented the update. Doug Cline reviewed the reasons for the objective, that citizens were becoming dissatisfied with the City's weed program. He said weed control is managed by three different departments which are Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and Community Development's Code Enforcement. He described the enforcement including the costs.

Ms. Trent said one of items team 4 found was the need for perception of what the City's responsibility is and what the public's responsibility is. She said the growth of the weeds between cut cycles was a concern and the removal of the dead weeds. She said the City has been utilizing Partners to help keep the weeds down and outlined a number of outreach efforts including the "Weed Wrangler" program. Ms. Trent said the City now has a full-time weed sprayer on staff and there is a budget request for funds to hire Partners to help with weed cutting.

Mr. Cline said there are several changes proposed to the City ordinance regarding weeds. He said they would like to increase the perimeter from 20 feet to 40 feet on vacant lots and said the Code also allows a total of 17 days for compliance after the receipt of the notice. The proposal is to shorten that to 7 days. He said the State's noxious weed ordinance is updated annually and suggested the City adopt the State's list and add goatheads to the ordinance. He also suggested that a \$50 fine be added on top of the cutting cost for non-compliance, as the City offers a really good deal for cutting. Lastly, staff suggests the removal of the exemption of agricultural lands from the ordinance.

Ms. Trent said that weeds have been the number one issue in surveys so staff wants to continue to survey on that item to see if satisfaction has increased.

Council President Hill questioned about the folks that need the City to cut their weeds. Mr. Cline said staff is not sure if those that use the service is because it is needed or just wanted.

Council President Hill asked if the list of contractors provided to citizens includes Partners. Ms. Trent replied yes.

Council President Hill asked about the 40 feet versus 20 feet. Mr. Cline said the citizens only go to a certain point and leave the rest of the weeds. He said

hopefully by changing the requirement to 40 feet on the street side it will eliminate a lot of those weeds.

City Attorney John Shaver talked about the administrative fee and suggested staff to add re-offender fees with a progressive penalty fee for each offense. He also suggested taking out the discretion of the City Manager and making it a non-discretionary. He also advised that Council could pass an ordinance making it illegal to have weeds and making it a criminal charge.

Councilmember Palmer agreed with taking away discretion and liked the fee charge to discourage citizens from using the City to cut their weeds.

Councilmember Spehar said he is comfortable with the \$50 fee recommended by the committee and stepping up the fee for repeat offenders.

Action Summary: Council reviewed the strategic plan report from team #4 regarding weeds and would like to proceed with the update of the ordinance.

5. **STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE:** Assistant City Manager David Varley reviewed the update. He highlighted some areas and programs that are being worked on such as the Clean Cities Coalition for the Western Slope that is being created, transportation issues, Open Spaces, the update from Mesa Land Trust, the Historic Resources Survey, which is about a year late, but it should be completed by January 2006, the City Youth Council activity as shown tonight, shelters, and neighborhood programs and housing groups. He noted that all the goals are being worked on and being kept track of.

Councilmember Thomason asked if the updates are available on the web site. Mr. Varley said he thought it might have been overlooked but he will make sure the updates are available on the web site.

Action Summary: Council reviewed the strategic plan update regarding programs that are happening around the City.

ADJOURN:

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.