

**GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP SUMMARY
January 30, 2006**

The City Council of the City of Grand Junction, Colorado met on Monday, January 30, 2006 at 7:03 p.m. in the City Hall Auditorium to discuss workshop items. Those present were Councilmembers Jim Doody, Gregg Palmer, Doug Thomason and President of the Council Bruce Hill. Absent were Councilmembers Bonnie Beckstein, Teresa Coons, and Jim Spehar.

Summaries and action on the following topics:

1. **INTRODUCE NEW CITY EMPLOYEES:** Department Directors introduced their new employees to the City Council.

2. **MEET WITH THE PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD:** Joe Stevens, Parks & Recreation Department Director, introduced those Parks & Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) members in attendance: Tom Dixon, Chair, and board members Jack Neckels, David Detwiler, Bernie Goss, and Dennis Teeters. He referred to the material provided for discussion and turned the discussion over to the City Council.

Council President Hill expressed his lack of clarity as to the purpose of the meeting. He noted that the Master Plan is a utilized document, but the City Council also takes advantage of different opportunities that come along such as the partnerships with the schools for the activity centers. He agreed with having a dialogue with the Board and said he looks forward to the next two years as to what is planned. Chair Tom Dixon distributed an excerpt from the Master Plan and asked for feedback as to how the PRAB has proceeded in meeting the highlighted goals. Mr. Dixon said the completion of Canyon View Park is on the list, however the Board knows there is no money budgeted but does not want Phase III of Canyon View to be forgotten. Mr. Dixon summarized what is included in Phase III: more tennis courts, a concession stand/pro shop, a water splash ground, plus other items. The development of new neighborhood parks is also on the list. He said Wingate Park was completed last year and some improvements were made to some of the neighborhood parks and schools, again he mentioned the partnership with the schools that is in process right now. Lastly, the canal trail development is still being worked on.

Council President Pro Tem Palmer inquired if the new partnerships with the schools changed the plan for neighborhood parks in those same areas. Parks and Recreation Director Stevens said the plan has not changed but as with the rest of the City they are still chasing growth and looking for opportunities for neighborhood parks in those new areas.

Council President Pro Tem Palmer asked about the development of Burkey Park. Mr. Stevens noted that the City has other properties for park development such as the Matchett Park, Saccomanno Park, and with the Riverside Parkway project, Los Colonias might be a prime opportunity. However, the Department has 58 parks and open space areas they maintain; the number of pocket parks is more than what people realize. Council President Pro Tem Palmer asked if there are small things that could be done to various properties that would make them more usable. Mr. Stevens said that PRAB could develop some possibilities and look at some tiered development that would start with some informal activities and noted there are such opportunities but many times that starts to raise expectations and also controversy.

Council President Hill noted there is no dedicated funding source for development of parks and said sometimes things don't get finished. He said there needs to be a balance of the regional park needs with the neighborhood's needs. Also, any designation of a piece of ground that is a park requires approval of the voters to be disposed of and the voters never approve that.

Tom Dixon, Chair, agreed that the completion of Canyon View Park should not take precedence over other park development. He noted a small improvement such as a trail can increase the use of a park tremendously. Mr. Dixon noted with the upcoming meeting with Mesa County, the City Council may re-initiate discussions on the formation of a Parks District. He said that could eliminate the resident and non-resident differential in fees, and a District would create a dedicated fee for parks and facilities development.

Council President Hill expressed it is his experience any formation would require specifics for a chance of acceptance by the voters. He said relative to a resident versus non-resident fee, the Parks Board minutes indicate the Board is in favor of retaining the differential, whereas the Parks Staff says it is a nightmare administratively. He stated that he would like to see more data.

Mr. Dixon said the Board's discussion resulted in a split opinion. He summarized the differing opinions and said the Board decided to keep it as is and ask Council for their opinion.

Council President Pro Tem Palmer asked if it was unanimously voted on to retain. Mr. Dixon said yes it was.

Council President Pro Tem Palmer questioned if a significant amount of sales tax comes from non-residents. Jack Neckels, Board member, said the reason the Board voted unanimously to retain the differential is

because it was decided that it was a political decision so should be deferred to City Council.

Joe Stevens, Parks and Recreation Department Director, said it is a tool that goes back 30 or 35 years which allows a 20% discount for residents. He said with the current system, residents can register on the internet and said the Parks and Recreation Department does verify residency.

Council President Hill questioned if the Parks and Recreation Board thought about the opportunity of providing outdoor basketball courts at some of the facilities.

Mr. Dixon said that is not a big discussion item but there are examples of similar activities such as Frisbee Golf at Westlake Park.

Mr. Stevens said the Parks and Recreation Department was contacted from several groups that would like to start a "Friends of Dog Park" group and a volleyball area. He said additional swimming facilities are needed also.

Jack Neckels said he thought the Master Plan is in good shape and said there is no need to revise the Plan, but maybe some site plan updates. He said one suggestion is to look at how to partner with others valley-wide and look for other opportunities to acquire more land.

Regarding the canal trails development, City Manager Kelly Arnold said the Urban Trails Committee Chair will be writing a letter to Council. He said there are legal items that are still pending which hopefully will be clarified soon. Mr. Arnold said then the strategies are to be laid out for Council.

Councilmember Thomason said it is very important to have a good dialogue with the various boards and keep the communication open, which is helpful and necessary for Council to give clear direction.

Board member Bernie Goss said he has been on the board for six years and said it is important to step back and take a look at the progress and changes that have occurred within the last six years. He would like to encourage the review of the Master Plan every couple of years and get some insight from the Council that is currently seated.

Council President Hill agreed with staying in touch with the various boards, exchange ideas and keep in mind some of the ideas brought forward tonight.

Action Summary: The City Council appreciated the service of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board members and thanked the members for presenting their ideas tonight, noting the number of options available.

Council President Hill called a recess at 9:01 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 9:16 p.m.

3. **METHAMPHETAMINE TASK FORCE REPORT:** Interim Police Chief Bill Gardner reviewed the Methamphetamine Task Force Report including the newly released white paper. He summarized the key elements as to what led up to the formation of the Task Force, the highlights of the white paper, and listed some of the strategies to reduce the problem.

Chief Gardner listed the tragic statistics and the direct affect locally. He said the strategies include reducing the supply and the demand; he then listed a number of goals. Chief Gardner stated that Captain Troy Smith and another officer attended a Methamphetamine Task Force meeting in Las Vegas. He stated that there are two common themes; the first is that there needs to be a drug court system to get early offenders into treatment. He said District Attorney Hautzinger and Deputy District Attorney Rubenstein are working on getting that drug court up and running. Chief Gardner said Mesa County is also funding the construction of a treatment center and said the local enforcement is specifically targeting drug dealers. He said there is additional training that is needed for all local police officers to effectively fight this problem; however, there are only so many resources to direct at this problem. He said the other option is to not stop the support of the regional task force, and said it would be a mistake to remove Grand Junction from the Drug Enforcement Agency Task Force. Chief Gardner said a street crime task force would consist of uniformed officers in marked cars that are highly trained in this area and led by an experienced supervisor, which is not just for drug enforcement, but would also be involved in related crimes of burglary, theft, etc. He said the challenge of staffing such a unit and with reassignments, that it could threaten some of the current programs. Chief Gardner said the Methamphetamine Task Force is requesting a contribution of \$5,000 from each entity to fund a coordinator position for the Task Force.

Council President Hill suggested expediting the hiring of the five 2007 police officers to 2006 and look at ways to realign the existing manpower. He questioned how many officers are needed. Chief Gardner said six officers are needed and said that he needs the City Council and the City Manager to hear this as a priority and grant the authority to use every opportunity to create this task force.

Ron Lappi, Finance Director, said four of the officers to be hired were to be funded through traffic enforcement revenue, that is traffic patrol would offset the cost.

Council President Pro Tem Palmer said that given the impact of this problem, it should be a high priority.

Chief Gardner said the responsibility to maintain a strong resource officer program in the school is still a high priority but their focus could be shifted to specifically address methamphetamine.

City Manager Arnold said the School District should help fund the resource officers and he could approach the School District on that issue.

Councilmember Doody favored the acceleration of hiring of the 2007 officers.

City Manager Arnold cautioned Council that it may not be a temporary situation.

Action Summary: The City Council was supportive of making the Methamphetamine Task Force a priority and work with Staff and the City Manager.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 9:58 p.m.

