

**GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP SUMMARY
November 13, 2006**

The City Council of the City of Grand Junction, Colorado met on Monday, November 13th, 2006 at 7:04 p.m. in the City Hall Auditorium to discuss workshop items. Those present were Councilmembers Bonnie Beckstein, Teresa Coons, Bruce Hill, Gregg Palmer, Jim Spehar, Doug Thomason, and Council President Jim Doody.

Summaries and action on the following topics:

1. **APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:** The City Clerk updated the City Council on the status of the current vacancies.

Action Summary: The City Council had no changes to the process being followed.

2. **RECREATION CENTER(S) FEASIBILITY STUDY:** The leaders of this project to present their plan for engaging the community in this effort. Sally Schaefer, a community volunteer, addressed the City Council regarding a recreation center. She asked the City to contribute \$20,000 toward the feasibility project and said Mesa County has committed to the same amount. Ms. Schaefer said they are working on a feasibility study that will test the beliefs of the groups interest in pursuing this project. She said they are looking at eventually getting a question on the ballot and said they are shooting for a 2008 ballot issue.

Councilmember Coons asked about the process of their plan to gain the community's interest. Ms. Schaefer advised that all of the groups involved in the recreation initiatives came to her to lead this effort. She said there were three groups that were ongoing and they are now combining efforts.

Councilmember Beckstein asked if other jurisdictions have been approached regarding participation. Ms. Schaefer said yes, they have been in communication with them all. She revealed her vision of the recreation center at Matchett Park with pools and senior recreation space. She envisioned the City running the Center. Ms. Schaefer said Fruita would like to participate in this program as well as Palisade and Clifton.

Councilmember Coons asked about the interests of private health clubs. Ms. Schaefer said they are involved in this planning as well and said they do not want to duplicate the private clubs; the goal is to create something different for the community.

Councilmember Hill noted that there have been other attempts to fund recreation centers which have not been successful. Ms. Schaefer said the difference now is that the community is different. She said previous attempts were limited to the City and there was no private funding in the mix. She said recreation centers in the past were misunderstood of what the burden would be to the taxpayers. Ms. Schaefer said they will do their homework and make sure all the right questions are asked from all of the right people.

Councilmember Spehar asked if the question will include funding questions. Ms. Schaefer said yes there will be. Councilmember Spehar asked about multiple facilities. Ms. Schaefer said their efforts are to see one big facility as the jewel. Councilmember Spehar stated that Mesa State plans to build a 50 meter pool that will be open to the public. Ms. Schaefer said she has had conversations with Mr. Tim Foster with Mesa State and he feels that facility will not meet the public need because Mesa State's main priority will be to serve their students, athletes, and their faculty first.

Councilmember Palmer said Ms. Schaefer stated that the City is the recreational experts and asked how much City involvement is this program asking for, such as programming or operating the facility. Ms. Schaefer said she would like to see the City be involved in running the main facility if placed at the Matchett property. Councilmember Palmer asked if the facility is placed at the Matchett property, would the program be looking at the City to donate part of that property for the facility. Ms. Schaefer said yes they would. Councilmember Palmer said his concern from prior experience with other facilities that were placed on City-owned property is that they become financially unable to carry themselves and then become a burden of the City. Ms. Schaefer said that is a valid concern and said they will address those issues.

Councilmember Coons is supportive of the City being involved at this early stage of the program. She feels there will be community support and is glad to see the various groups pull together.

Councilmember Palmer said this is the best coalition of folks to work on this project.

Ms. Schaefer said they are hoping to have more details to discuss with Council by December 15th.

Councilmember Spehar said he hopes the location is discussed, because the Matchett property is a more expensive location to develop and not necessarily the most convenient location. Ms. Schaefer said they have had several discussions where that issue was pointed out, but convenience hasn't affected the use of Canyon View Park.

Councilmember Hill stated that when asking a question on the ballot, there has to be pointed questions. He feels that if this facility is going to be very reasonable or free to certain community members then the facility will need an ongoing funding source. Ms. Schaefer agreed and said building the facility is easy, running it and keeping it affordable will be the challenge.

Councilmember Beckstein asked if they have had discussions with the School District. Ms. Schaefer said yes, but all entities at this early stage in the program have come together to discuss different scenarios for this project.

Councilmember Palmer asked if Council could see the surveying questions. Ms. Schaefer said the primary survey went out Labor Day, but she would like Council to be involved in crafting the polling questions.

David Varley, Interim City Manager, said City Council should place this item on the Wednesday agenda to take formal action.

Action Summary: Staff was directed to place this item on the agenda for Wednesday, November 15th Council Meeting.

3. **FIRE HAZARD ASSESSMENT REPORT:** Connie Clementson, US Forest Service District Ranger, and Tim Foley, BLM Fire Management Officer, will give a progress report on the Fire Hazard Management Plan.

Mark Relph, Public Works and Utilities Director, introduced this topic. He introduced Connie Clementson, Forest District Ranger. He said Ms. Clementson's staff along with City staff will be back before Council with a final report in February 2007.

Connie Clementson, Forest District Ranger, introduced Tim Foley, Fire Management Officer, and Angie Foster, Fuels Management Specialist. Ms. Clementson said they are before Council to give an update of the fire hazard assessment. She said the United States Forest Service (USFS) and the City signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) renewing the partnership to manage the City's watershed in the Kannah Creek basin. One of the main concerns is catastrophic fire affecting the watershed. Ms. Clementson said in 2005 there was a commitment from Council to enter into the Fire Hazard Assessment agreement with the BLM. She said tonight they are here to update Council as to what has been learned so far and what could happen. She said there are about 59,000 acres on the Grand Mesa that will be discussed. Ms. Clementson said the presentation will review the type of vegetation, the fire hazard assessment, and the fire hazard treatments.

Tim Foley, Fire Management Officer, reviewed the various vegetation and the slopes the vegetation exist on. Mr. Foley said the steep slopes that are greater than 30% are more prone to fire hazards. He said those fires are harder to combat and harder to get the equipment up to the fire. He said looking at the fire hazard assessment, the fire suppression measures have been successful, but that can be due to the deterrent since it allows more fire fuel to exist. The vast majority of fires are caused by lightning, usually accompanied by precipitation and higher humidity. The public tends to report those fires quickly. He reviewed the fire in 2002, which was during the drought, in the City's watershed. He said they happened to have eight air tankers at Walker Field and were able to contain the fire at 12 acres. Mr. Foley said the high hazards are human caused fires. There have been eight arson fires this year and that risk is increasing.

Councilmember Coons asked if the eight arsons were accidental or intentional. Mr. Foley said they were all intentional.

Mr. Foley said they looked at two different scenarios; the first was located at the Bob's Knob Fire, which would be the worse case scenario. The second scenario was located at the trailhead fire and said they used that fire to calculate the damage outcome. He reviewed the desired future conditions which are to reduce fire intensity, re-establish natural fire regimens, improve the overall ecosystem, and the use of fuel treatments.

Councilmember Palmer asked if there are any areas on the Grand Mesa where fires are allowed to burn themselves out. Mr. Foley said not in the watershed area.

Ms. Clementson gave a quick overview of what they are working on and said they will have a presentation before Council in February 2007. She said they are working with City staff to fine tune the treatment areas and the tools needed to finalize the assessment.

Councilmember Spehar said this is a great outcome of the MOU and is looking forward to a long term commitment with the BLM.

Councilmember Hill echoed Councilmember Spehar's comments and thanked Ms. Clementson for all of her and her staff's work on this assessment.

Action Summary: City Council lauded the efforts and the cooperation on this Fire Hazard Assessment.

Council President Doody called a recess at 8:47 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 8:58 p.m.

4. **GRAND VALLEY HOUSING PARTNERSHIP:** Partnership members Jody Kole and Bill Whaley will present a proposal for funding local affordable housing projects.

David Thornton, Community Development Principal Planner, introduced this item. He reviewed the efforts of the Grand Valley Housing Partnership. He then turned over the presentation to Bill Whaley, Colorado Division of Housing. Mr. Whaley reviewed the Partnership's mission and goals and lauded the efforts of all those that have participated. Jody Kole, Grand Junction Housing Authority Director, addressed the Council and said the Partnership has tried to craft the best proposal to utilize the City's funding. She said finding stable supportive housing for homeless folks is a key goal and at the other end is sweat equity housing. Ms. Kole said they are also working on workforce rental housing and on developing a Housing Authority revolving loan fund. She said \$100,000 will leverage \$9 million in loans for housing dollars. Ms. Kole listed the projects being proposed:

<u>Project</u>	<u>CDBG</u>	<u>General Fund</u>	<u>Total Funding</u>
Chronic Homeless: GVCO	\$ 100,000	\$ 0	\$ 100,000
Ultronics: GJHA	\$ 178,630	\$ 181,370	\$ 360,000
Elm Properties: GJHA	\$ 119,707	\$ 119,707	
Crawford Commons: HRWC	\$ 81,000	\$ 81,000	
Revolving Loan Fund	\$ 0	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000
Totals:	\$ 278,630	\$ 482,077	\$ 760,707

Ms. Kole listed the sponsors for each project, noting each will detail their projects. She said Grand Valley Catholic Outreach is being represented by one of their board members Doug Aden.

Mr. Aden said their intent is to build a permanent supportive housing for the chronically homeless. He said their intent is to build a 22 unit building to house chronically homeless folks. Residents will have to pay a percentage of whatever income they have, which typically is very little. Mr. Aden said the Catholic Outreach has substantial funds to put into this project. He said the operating funds for the first three years will be covered through a HUD grant. It is a renewable grant but if not renewed the Catholic Outreach will support the operation. He lauded the staff and Director Sister Karen Bland for all of their hard work on this project.

Councilmember Coons asked what is the importance of City funds for this project. Mr. Aden said the funds would help build out all 22 units at once instead of phasing the project. He said they have been working with Shaw Construction and Chamberlain Architects on this project.

Councilmember Palmer asked about time frame for the whole project. Mr. Aden said they would begin construction in the spring and be done by this time next year. Councilmember Palmer questioned how the number of units were determined. Mr. Aden said the 22 units is based on the resources that are available, what the site would accommodate, and also what the budget would accommodate for the project.

Councilmember Hill asked what the footprint for this project would be. Mr. Aden said they want this facility to be a nice looking project, but at this time they are not sure of the design.

Councilmember Palmer asked about the length of residency each individual would have. Mr. Aden said residents will be able to stay as long as they need to.

Council President Doody asked if the \$100,000 is leverage dollars. Mr. Aden said this would be a one time grant. He said they are seeking another \$500,000 from other foundations plus HUD grants.

Councilmember Spehar asked if there would be additional requests for infill/redevelopment funds. Mr. Aden said yes, that they were encouraged by Community Development to attempt that.

Dan Whalen, Housing Resources Director, described some of the efforts of his organization and its history. He said their proposal is Crawford Commons which is a portion of the property that belongs to Mesa County. He said that facility is a self help housing program with sweat equity being the down payment. He said the construction for this project is planned to begin in May, 2007. He said the estimated cost of this project is \$846,000. The City contribution will help leverage additional funds and allow Housing Resources to continue with other projects, some of which are in the Grand Junction city limits.

Councilmember Coons questioned, why ask for City funds for a project that is located outside the city limits. Mr. Whalen said partially for cooperation with Mesa County and said this project is the project that needs the funds the most. He said the residents that live there will shop and work in the city limits and the materials to build the projects will come from within the city limits. Councilmember Coons questioned what type of folks would benefit from this kind of a project. He listed some of the folks that would benefit and the need depends on the size of the family.

Councilmember Hill reiterated some of the factors listed by Mr. Whalen and noted that it is close to the City boundary and a boundary line is not the point.

Councilmember Spehar agreed and said this is a regional problem and the City Council agreed to address it regionally.

Councilmember Palmer said he is uncomfortable spending City funds outside the city limits.

Councilmember Hill noted this is in the Pear Park area and the City limit line may be to that area at some point.

Don Hartmann, new development director for the Grand Junction Housing Authority, reviewed the Grand Junction Housing Authority (GJHA) mission. He then reviewed one of two projects for the GJHA, the first project is the Ultronics property which is under contract and the closing is set for December 15, 2006. He said the building will be removed by the sellers and the contamination has already been removed. He said they plan to build 75 to 80 affordable rental housing units and the City funding is needed to close on the property. Mr. Hartmann then presented the second proposal which is located at 28th and Elm Avenue. He said there are four parcels under contract that are also proposed to close on the 15th of December. Mr. Hartmann said there is a fifth parcel that is still in negotiations.

Councilmember Coons questioned if there will there be a subsequent application for infill/redevelopment incentives. Mr. Hartmann said yes.

Jody Kole, Grand Junction Housing Authority Director, advised that other projects are detailed in the Staff report. The GJHA Ultronic property project is the main priority. She thanked Councilmembers Spehar and Coons for their persistence in this program.

Councilmember Spehar asked about the revolving loan fund. Ms. Kole said the Funding Partners for Housing Solutions, Inc. will administer the funds as they do in other communities. They have funds that investors want to invest in housing projects. She said it is a business venture where the investors will get a return on their investment. The \$100,000 leverages a larger pool of funds and at the local commitment level, it allows local partners to set the guidelines, the priorities, and standards for loans.

Councilmember Coons questioned who would use the funds, individuals or organizations. Ms. Kole said they do not anticipate that these funds will be available to individual borrowers. She said this pool will be available primarily as a predevelopment fund.

Councilmember Spehar wanted to clarify that this revolving loan would not be for down payment assistance. Ms. Kole said that is correct. Councilmember Spehar asked who will set the standards. Ms. Kole said the Grand Valley Housing Partnership and the City Council would have final say.

Doug Smith, CEO with Rocky Mountain Mutual Housing that operates across the State, said he is here to support the work of their colleagues and express support for the Grand Valley Partnership's efforts. He expressed his experience with the Funding Partners organization.

Councilmember Coons lauded the efforts of the Partnership and encouraged Council to support the recommendations of the Housing Partnership.

Councilmember Spehar supported the recommendation with one exception. He said one concern is he would like to see some portion of the funds be consumer accessible and to be used on market-built housing.

Councilmember Palmer asked for clarification from Mr. Ron Lappi, Finance Director, regarding the funding sources. He asked if the general fund money is currently budgeted. Mr. Lappi said yes, the general funds are already budgeted. Councilmember Palmer said he has concerns on the loan funds as Councilmember Spehar does and said the Catholic Outreach project is a wonderful plan and is much needed. He also feels the Ultronic project is a great opportunity to get rid of an eyesore. He is supportive of the 28th and Elm project, but has a concern with the Crawford Commons; i.e. applying General Fund money to a project outside city limits.

Councilmember Hill said he is proud of this group and is supportive of the proposal, but agrees with Councilmember Spehar on wanting some funds be available to consumers. He said this money is actually leveraging \$30 million because of the access to the revolving loan fund.

Councilmember Beckstein agreed with Councilmember Hill and is supportive of the proposals.

Councilmember Thomason agreed with Councilmember Palmer in regards to the use of funds outside the city limits.

Council President Doody questioned if the Revolving Loan Fund is similar to the revolving fund at the Incubator. Mr. Lappi said this is a very unique program and said this program takes advantage of funding commitments that are already in place across the State of Colorado.

David Varley, Interim City Manager, asked Council if they would like to have Staff add this item to the Wednesday's agenda for formal approval. Council agreed.

Action Summary: The City Council consensus was to support the Grand Valley Housing Partnership proposals and agreed with the Interim City Manager to have staff add this item to Wednesday's November 15th agenda for formal approval.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 10:25 p.m.