

**GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP SUMMARY
March 19, 2007**

The City Council of the City of Grand Junction, Colorado met on Monday, March 19, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. in the City Hall Auditorium to discuss workshop items. Those present were Councilmembers Teresa Coons, Bruce Hill, Gregg Palmer, Jim Spehar, Doug Thomason, and Council President Jim Doody. Absent was Councilmember Bonnie Beckstein.

Summaries and action on the following topics:

1. **UPDATE ON LAS COLONIAS PARK MASTER PLAN:** The Master Plan was revised because a portion of the site was necessary for Riverside Parkway alignment which significantly impacted the initial Master Plan. Parks and Recreation Director Joe Stevens explained how the changes to the Master Plan have come about. He introduced the consultant from EDAW, Kurt Friesen, who gave an overview of the history of the site. Mr. Friesen then described the site itself and the preparation that took place prior to the update of the Master Plan. One of the goals of the Master Plan was to bring some vibrancy to the area so the park will feel safe and usable in the evening. A workshop was held and was well attended and a number of goals were developed. From those goals, nine program elements were identified to be included in any Master Plan. He showed a number of examples of river walk developments in other municipalities. Two alternatives were then presented for consideration. He pointed out the unique elements of each proposal. He then presented the final proposed plan. The proposed phasing of the project was then shown, identifying elements that would be included in each phase.

Councilmember Coons commended the consultant work at the workshop and how a large, diverse group was brought together.

Councilmember Hill praised the amount of usable open space. The Plan gives the Council and future Councils the ability to make progress on a Plan without it being overwhelming. He pointed out that the property where there are mixed use designations are not owned by the City. He noted the access issue for the parking which the consultant acknowledged. The Plan creates the opportunity to give the river back to the community. He noted the incorporation of a few of the Riverside Parkway remnants into the Plan.

Councilmember Spehar agreed with retaining the small remnant and using it as an entrance into the Botanical Gardens. The parcels north of the Parkway perhaps could be traded in order to try to direct development. He said that it makes some sense to trade with parcels on the south side and try to direct the uses. He hoped that the groundwater and mill tailings that remain on the one end were discussed. He would like to see a boat access to the river. He would also like to see room left to have an adequate park maintenance facility. He said this is the kind of a plan that leaves the opportunity for phased affordable development and that is something the Parks Board could look at as a recommendation to start something sooner.

Councilmember Coons mentioned that at the teleconference Senator Salazar mentioned the importance of the "Grand Junction", that it be highlighted and made good use of.

Councilmember Thomason said it was a good conceptualization but he does not know how it will fit in with the current priorities of the Parks Board.

Councilmember Spehar said he thought this could be done on an affordable basis and might be a good project for going back to some of the other partners for funding sources, such as GOCO (Great Outdoors Colorado).

Councilmember Coons noted the comment made by Tom Dixon, Chair of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, that the park development at Canyon View was an economic development tool and this park could also develop into such a tool.

Councilmember Palmer pointed out some of the elements that are not on City-owned land but he felt the concept reflects features that are feasible; he likes the amphitheatre, festival area, parks maintenance facility, and dog park pieces of the proposal.

Councilmember Hill asked about the park maintenance facility and the cost. Parks and Recreation Director Joe Stevens advised a facility will be needed at more than one park, perhaps one in each of the quadrants of the City. The numbers assumed the facility would be sufficient to cover the south end of the City.

Councilmember Spehar thought that with the new connections to other parts of the City this makes the location ideal.

Council President Doody praised the Plan and the opportunity to reclaim the river for the citizens.

Councilmember Spehar asked how this Plan gets approved. Mr. Stevens advised that if the Plan is adopted, the City gets more leverage when applying for grants. Mr. Stevens advised that the comments about phasing and a part of the Strategic Plan goal to regain river access were both incorporated into this plan.

Councilmember Spehar stated that he is in favor of adoption as it will give Staff direction for land trades and inform the south downtown owners of the planning process.

Councilmember Thomason asked when this Plan will be presented to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. Mr. Stevens said they have been involved but it can be presented for their recommendation first. Councilmember Thomason said having it to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board first is one option. Mr. Stevens said the Riverfront Commission has also been involved.

Councilmember Coons agreed with Councilmember Thomason and noted the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board's desire to be more involved.

Councilmember Hill cautioned that the Council should prioritize capital expenditures.

Councilmember Spehar said that maybe it would be a good idea to wait a couple of weeks to give Staff a chance to talk to the two other boards for any objections and then bring it to Council for approval.

Action summary: Staff was directed to take the conceptual plan to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the Riverfront Commission for their comments and input and bring it back to City Council in a couple of weeks for adoption.

Council President Doody called a recess at 8:27 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 8:38 p.m.

2. **UPDATE ON AIR QUALITY IN THE GRAND VALLEY:** Perry Buda from the Mesa County Health Department Air Quality Division provided the annual update on Grand Valley air quality issues and explained how air quality monitoring devices should be installed in the area. He advised that the area has not really kept up on the changes that have taken place in the valley. A Grand Valley/Uncompahgre/North Fork airshed has recently been identified. Many times air can be stagnant in these areas. The population in the three county area is nearly 200,000. The State has the task of monitoring the air and there are different processes. He explained the current process. There is a monitoring station at 7th and Pitkin. There are a number of stations currently in the three county area. However there is no way to pull data from these stations and create a single reporting system. An attempt was made to get a grant for such a system and the project ran short of funds. The stations use different software and so a system to combine that data into a common product is needed.

Councilmember Coons pointed out that the other systems do not monitor air quality, only meteorological data. Mr. Buda concurred.

Mr. Buda listed the pollutants currently being monitored. There is no complete monitoring system for the general public. Mr. Buda raised a number of other issues such as a number of pollutants that react with elements in the atmosphere and turn into other toxic and pollutant elements. Funding for monitoring comes from the federal government.

Councilmember Spehar asked if the facility or the operational aspect is most costly. Mr. Buda said it depends on the pollutant. There are some air toxins that are hard to monitor and then there are some very high costs involved in monitoring. Councilmember Spehar asked why Energy Impact Grants could not be used to get the equipment in place. Mr. Buda said the capital element could be addressed at the local level since the federal process takes time.

Mr. Buda explained the indexing system that is used for public dissemination. He then compared what pollutants are monitored here versus the Denver area. Some of those pollutants include ozone, nitrogen dioxide, lead, and sulfur dioxide. Sulfur dioxide levels could increase if any new refining operations get going.

Mr. Buda then addressed PM 10 emissions associated with vehicle travel including four-wheelers. Another significant source is construction sources. There are other sources such as wood-burning stoves which contribute to the amount of PM 10 emissions. Construction contribution goes down and wood stoves contribution goes up in the winter.

He then spoke to the urban Air Toxics Study that includes the VOCs (volatile organic compounds), carbonyls and metals. A study took place and it showed that Grand Junction is seeing higher concentrations of these items, similar to the Denver area.

Mr. Buda identified some concerns: the area is at a threshold of crossing the line from small urban/rural to a metropolitan area; the margin for maintaining attainment is reduced in 3 ways; and enhanced monitoring may be an additional regulatory requirement.

Councilmember Coons inquired as to how these compounds are rated as to their affect on humans. Mr. Buda said there is a risk assessment done on these chemicals. There is a concern but the exact risk is not quite known. Councilmember Coons asked where the additional monitoring stations should be located. Mr. Buda said most of the emissions are traffic-related so the current location is sufficient. The particulate levels need more monitoring sites; one possible location is at Clifton Sanitation District's new plant on 32 Road. He said another location toward Fruita is needed. Councilmember Coons noted this discussion came up during the watershed protection discussion and it was realized that the valley did not have a good monitoring system. She asked what should be done to improve the situation. Mr. Buda said a centrally located monitoring station is needed because ozone is a secondary pollutant and is formed in the atmosphere. He said the idea is to locate an ozone monitor up on Grand Mesa, by Purdy Mesa. It is primarily a summertime pollutant because the chemicals need sunlight to react and form ozone.

Councilmember Spehar asked for specifics regarding funding to get these stations built and what the cost will be. Mr. Buda said he does not have good numbers on those installations. He said the units are around \$50,000 but they only work in the summer. The systems that do not use solar power cost about twice that.

Councilmember Palmer asked if the City can buy the monitors or do they have to go through the State. Mr. Buda said there is a process to accomplish that but it is difficult.

Councilmember Spehar asked if the City could buy the equipment and then have the State run it, having the companies that are drilling in the watershed pay for the equipment. Mr. Buda thought it could go forward.

Councilmember Hill asked about elevations higher than the 6,000 feet that is not included in the airshed. He asked if the same monitoring system would monitor the other pollutants and if the State will then object to going outside the airshed. Mr. Buda said the airshed is designated locally. The 6,000 feet was based on a study of inversions. Councilmember Hill asked if the air at those elevations should even be monitored.

Councilmember Coons clarified that things that occur at one end of the valley can affect the other end due to the air flow and pollutants that are released in outer areas of the valley can affect those areas in town due to the weather patterns where they come in and get trapped under the inversion. Mr. Buda concurred.

Council President Doody asked if this is being presented to the other Counties and Cities in the airshed. Mr. Buda said the presentations are being made but the participation has been limited, except in Delta County. It will be presented to Mesa County Commissioners in the near future, as well as the other municipalities in the valley.

Councilmember Spehar suggested the City Council could encourage audience with the other entities and get something going.

Mr. Buda expressed that the State would probably be receptive to the communities in the valley providing the monitoring equipment and would in turn provide the operating resources.

Eileen List, Environmental Regulatory Compliance Coordinator, authored the proposed resolution. She noted it followed an earlier resolution on this subject.

Councilmember Palmer asked if the resolution would have more impact if it were a joint resolution with the other entities. Ms. List said she saw this as a good first step.

Council President Doody pointed out the numerous references to the oil and gas industry, whereas the information presented showed other sources for these emissions.

Councilmember Spehar agreed that the resolution was too specific to the one industry and the pollutants come from a variety of sources.

Councilmember Hill agreed that the blame was being directed at the oil and gas industry.

Councilmember Coons suggested simplifying the resolution and not attribute any particular source to the emissions.

Councilmember Spehar said he would like to see a resolution rather than just a letter. It should be a resolution that addresses the increase in population and the need for baseline data.

Action summary: The City Council wanted to move forward and to gain cooperation with the other Mesa County communities to get funding to purchase the equipment, with direction to Mr. Buda to acquire costs for such monitoring devices. Staff was directed to draft a new resolution and place it on Wednesday's agenda.

3. **C.A.S.T. POLICY STATEMENT CONCERNING GLOBAL WARMING:** The Colorado Association of Ski Towns (CAST) has developed a policy statement concerning global warming. They would like their member towns to adopt this policy statement. City Manager David Varley described the Policy Statement and highlighted the various areas of the Policy Statement. He also described many of the activities that the other cities are doing to reduce their carbon footprint. He referred to the energy conservation measures that are being done locally. The first meeting of the City's Energy Conservation Committee took place today and Kathy Portner is heading up that group. There are a number of activities the City can do and does do to reduce the use of energy. The City plans to go forward regardless of whether the City Council adopts the CAST Policy Statement.

Councilmember Coons, the City's representative on CAST, was present at the discussion of the Policy Statement. The reason there are not specific goals and measurements was because it was recognized that each City had their own perspectives and issues. The statement is meant to be philosophical stating the concern. The intent is to pay attention to the wise use of resources.

Councilmember Hill would like to see a policy statement put together that acknowledges what the City has already done. He would like to see the Energy Conservation Committee bring forward a recommendation.

Councilmember Palmer agreed.

Council President Doody agreed as he is not sure of all the issues yet.

Councilmember Coons stated that they could debate global warming all night but whether all of Council agrees, they can all agree that it does make sense to have conservation measures and use resources wisely. It is important to talk about living in this world appropriately. She supported Councilmember Hill's idea to talk about what the City needs to do because it would convey that the City is responsible and wants to leave the world in as good as shape as it can for all the future generations.

Councilmember Spehar agreed and pointed out various opportunities; he agreed the Committee is a good place to start as long as it is not just a recitation of what the City is already doing but also what additional things will be done. The City could make a statement that will set the City on a logical path to make better use of the resources.

City Manager David Varley identified a number of ideas that came up at the first meeting. Councilmember Spehar suggested also accumulating baseline data and then setting some goals to reduce the current impact. City Manager Varley said there is an energy audit that was done a couple of years ago. Such document will be reviewed by the Committee to see what other things can be done.

Action summary: City Manager Varley was directed to have the Energy Conservation Committee do the things mentioned and develop an entity-specific statement for Grand Junction, which acknowledges what the City has already done and what additional things will be done. It would be a statement that will set the City on a logical path to make better use of the resources. Councilmember Spehar suggested the City Committee contact Fort Collins and possibly Salt Lake City and seek out ideas about partnerships and other innovations they have pursued.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 10:14 p.m.