

**GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP SUMMARY
July 16, 2007**

The City Council of the City of Grand Junction, Colorado met on Monday, July 16, 2007 at 7:06 p.m. in the City Hall Auditorium to discuss workshop items. Those present were Councilmembers, Teresa Coons, Bruce Hill, Gregg Palmer, Doug Thomason, Linda Romer Todd and Council President Pro Tem Bonnie Beckstein. Council President Jim Doody was absent.

Summaries and action on the following topics:

1. **STREET CONSTRUCTION COSTS:** Council President Pro Tem Beckstein asked Public Works and Planning Director Tim Moore to review the cost increases that have occurred regarding materials and labor for street construction as it is impacting the City's ability to keep up with street repair and maintenance. Councilmember Palmer asked if the Transportation Capacity Payment (TCP) amount needs to be increased. Mr. Moore concurred that to be the case; that in order to keep up with the current costs, the TCP would need to be increased by nearly triple. He explained how the City had changed its policy in 2005 to encourage the payment of the TCP instead of having the developer perform the improvements themselves, since the previous policy resulted in a patchwork of improvements. Council President Pro Tem Beckstein urged the Council's attention on this issue as it cannot wait until the completion of the Comprehensive Plan.

Councilmember Hill agreed, noting the policy was correct, but the fee has not kept up with the increase in construction costs.

Action summary: The City Council appreciated the information being brought forward.

Council President Pro Tem Beckstein called a recess at 8:09 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 8:15 p.m.

2. **CITY-OWNED PROPERTY ADJACENT TO TIARA RADO:** City Attorney John Shaver presented a resolution that would include 80 acres of City-owned property adjacent to Tiara Rado in a Growth Plan Amendment application. Inclusion does not approve the project, but only allows for the inclusion of the 80 acres. The developer does intend to provide the City with another nine-hole golf course. Mr. Shaver reviewed the various provisions contained within the resolution.

Councilmember Palmer inquired what the current Growth Plan designation is for the subject property. City Attorney Shaver advised it is CSR (Community Services and Recreation). He explained the two options for the application coming forward. The request for zoning would come from Staff and the

developer. The purpose is to segregate the City Manager and Staff from any consideration that the Council will have when the application comes before them.

Council President Pro Tem Beckstein confirmed that the public hearing process will still need to be completed. City Attorney Shaver concurred, but noted that the City Council does have the option to become more involved and to decide what will be in the application if that is their preference.

City Attorney Shaver said there is really no legal conflict of interest because no member of Council will benefit financially from the application. As to whether there is a perception of a conflict, City Attorney Shaver felt assured that Council will review the application and decide on their action on the application based on the evidence presented.

Councilmember Hill asked for some changes in the resolution and thought there should be another step before Staff files a joint application, an outreach perhaps through the Parks and Recreation Department and further review.

Councilmember Coons felt this first step would not preclude that additional review and outreach.

Councilmember Todd agreed with Councilmember Hill on the wording changes. Councilmember Thomason did not disagree but thought this decision in the resolution is the first step.

Council President Pro Tem Beckstein noted that a Growth Plan amendment is separate from the development. Mr. Shaver agreed except if the plan comes forward as a Planned Development.

Councilmember Hill agreed the City Council can make those decisions based on the evidence but there is that perceived conflict. He still thought the Parks and Recreation Department could still do some outreach first and let the community participate.

Both Councilmember Coons and Todd thought the inclusion and the resolution will open up the process. Councilmember Thomason said the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board did look at this and weighed in on it. He agreed that the resolution will open up the discussion.

Council President Pro Tem Beckstein felt the process will allow the community to comment so she supports going forward with the resolution.

Action summary: Staff was directed by a majority of Council to correct the wording as discussed and then place the amended resolution on Wednesday's agenda.

3. **PLANNING UPDATE:** Planning Manager Lisa Cox reviewed some of the changes that have occurred in the Planning Division, the goals that have been identified, and the action steps being taken to achieve those goals. Customer

service improvements include improved communications through a newsletter, prompt return of phone calls and email contacts plus being available to meet with customers. Education of citizens is another goal and Ms. Cox listed some of the ways education is being achieved, including a program called Planning 101, an outreach educational session for citizens. In-house training to keep planners up-to-date is a priority. This includes peer-to-peer training from conferences, etc. Community outreach and building partnerships in the community, including meeting with the Chamber Planning Oversight Committee and others, is another goal.

Planning Manager Cox reviewed the current workload and number of applications in the pipeline as well as the complexity of those projects.

Ms. Cox explained the challenges they have had to fill vacancies in the division, and some of the measures being taken to fill those spots. In addition, contracts, partnerships, and training opportunities in the community are being explored and put into place to ensure continuity so that customer service stays in place.

In conclusion, Ms. Cox spoke to some of the long term planning projects, including the South Downtown Plan and the Comprehensive Plan.

Action summary: City Council said they are hearing positive comments relative to the community outreach. The Listening to Business Report Part 2 presented at the noon workshop had positive feedback regarding the development process.

4. **NORTH AVENUE CORRIDOR PLAN:** Kathy Portner, Neighborhood Services Manager, introduced the topic and introduced the consultants. She described the project and noted that besides presenting the draft plan, the discussion should address implementation strategies. Phase One of the North Avenue Corridor is defined as North Avenue from 12th Street east to I-70 Business Loop.

Steve Wilensky, the Consultant from EDAW introduced EDAW's Senior Planner, Silvia Kjolseth and Bill Cunningham, from Leland Consulting Group, and then spoke of his physical planning and policy planning process as well as some of the goals and strategies. Mr. Wilensky pointed out many of the challenges the project faces including bicycle and pedestrian access, the lack of a theme along the corridor, and the streetscape being hazardous and aesthetically unpleasing.

Mr. Cunningham said the purpose is for the City Council to buy into the guiding principle and then let Staff and others work on the nuts and bolts. The strategy is to inform the Council on the process so they are confident in it and to lay the groundwork for future investment. Mr. Cunningham stated that revitalizing such an area means overcoming a number of barriers. The barriers in this corridor they identified: lost market identify, fragmented ownership, street relationship, over-zoning, and lack of a strong cheerleader for the area like a neighborhood association.

Mr. Wilensky said a linear corridor is hard to address. Using Mesa State College as a resource is one opportunity, as well as the stadiums, and the VA Hospital.

Districting the corridor was one idea, as well as something to keep the lights on after five o'clock. 29 Road is one catalyst, as well as 28th and 12th, two other major intersections. Mr. Wilensky put forward a number of EDAW's ideas.

Ms. Kjolseth pointed out how some of the changes can happen with the existing right-of-ways including landscaping and streetscaping.

Mr. Cunningham noted that private investment will happen quicker if the City is willing to advance the ideas. Higher standards will require offsetting incentives to support demonstration projects like a plaza. He listed a number of things that Staff can do to help implementation, including outreach, and a complete regulatory review to identify any gaps. He also stated that the time frames may take anywhere from ten to fifty years, but measures of success will appear.

Ms. Portner then said the next step will be to put the draft plan back out for public review and then come back to the Council later. Staff is looking for input.

Council President Pro Tem Beckstein asked why the corridor does not start at First Street. Ms. Portner explained that they were looking at the most manageable pieces and they took the least manageable piece first.

Council President Pro Tem Beckstein asked about criticism from the public as to minimizing the north-south corridors for traffic, especially in regards to public safety and in getting to St. Mary's. She is concerned with safety with the amount of truck traffic.

It is Council President Pro Tem Beckstein's desire to keep the student population north of North Avenue and west of 12th Street. She disagrees with student housing east of 12th Street.

Councilmember Coons appreciated the involvement of Mesa State College and wondered why there were not more college centered activities. Addressing issues such as the unmanageable traffic corridor, looking at safety improvements, and more shopping opportunities at the east end has real potential.

Councilmember Palmer stated it was good to be proactive and the area will be very blighted in the future without revitalization. Creating an opportunity to reinvest and reinvent, making it more pedestrian friendly, creating opportunity for student workforce and senior housing, all these will make it less of a commercial corridor.

Councilmember Todd said signs hiding behind trees are an issue and the land use code needs to be revisited. There should be relief for buildings that cannot meet landscaping and parking requirements and allow expansion for existing businesses, while being cautious with mobile homes and affordable housing.

Councilmember Hill stated it is key they be ready for private investment, to lay out the vision when 29 Road gets open and creates accessibility, as it becomes

more difficult even further east. A mixed use overlay to create housing, food, service and amenities should all be part of a development package. He stated not changing the driving lanes, but suggested improving the pedestrian experience. He agrees with the need for a cheerleader similar to the Horizon Drive urban renewal situation.

Council President Pro Tem Beckstein suggested reorganizing the North Avenue Neighborhood Group, keeping the street as a main thoroughfare, and she hopes that 29 Road is an incentive for development.

Councilmember Todd said the existing business owners need to be kept in mind.

Action summary: The City Council thanked them for the update and were supportive of many of the ideas put forward.

5. **ANNUAL BUFFER PROGRAM UPDATE:** Margy Latta, Mesa Land Trust (MLT) presented an annual update, identifying the number of current easements under their trust and reviewing the history of the organization. The Trust reports to the Purchase of Development Rights Committee, on which Councilmember Thomason serves on behalf of the City. The MLT has a number of roles in the buffer zone project, the purpose of which is to maintain buffer areas between the municipalities in the Grand Valley.

Ms. Latta identified a number of possible properties for conservation easements. She listed the buffer accomplishments and the buffer partner contributions. She expressed appreciation for Grand Junction's support. The biggest portions of properties are donated by the property owners. The property owners can get tax credits which they can sell for cash. The bulk of the funding comes from GOCO and National Resource Conservation funds.

Rob Bleiberg, Director of MLT, pointed out that for every dollar Grand Junction puts into the project, \$20 of property is conserved.

Councilmember Coons asked Ms. Latta to explain what those conservation easements mean.

Ms. Latta explained that the easement goes with the land in perpetuity, building envelopes are identified, clustering of buildings is encouraged, and trail easements along the river are requested but are at the discretion of the land owners. A conservation easement identifies general uses; it keeps agricultural property agricultural and water rights stay with the property. She stated that she can review the 28 pages of a conservation easement with anyone interested.

Councilmember Coons noted that these are voluntary agreements, but once signed it is in perpetuity.

Councilmember Todd asked what happens when a hobby farmer decides not to farm again.

Mr. Bleiberg stated that the owner decides on what rights they want to retain. The restrictions stay in place upon sale and the next buyer will have to adhere to those restrictions.

Mr. Bleiberg talked about the how's, the why's and how important it is to protect the natural resources and how this brings dollars to the community by bringing in outside dollars and tax incentives. The vision for Mesa County is that the growth is happening quite rapidly; both for folks who live here now and those coming to the area. There are shared interests; the buffer zones want to identify those special places in the community and preserve them.

Action summary: Rob Bleiberg distributed a newsletter and invited City Councilmembers to schedule site visits.

Councilmember Hill said with the future buffer properties, one thing that the group needs to look at is a zoning overlay to address the small parcels in order to retain the buffer separation.

Councilmember Palmer agreed, pointing out that it is really up to the policy makers. He also felt that the adjoining municipalities should participate at a higher level. Mr. Bleiberg said the MLT stays out of land use proceedings but they can look at other options or tools for the smaller pieces.

Councilmember Thomason asked Mr. Bleiberg to distinguish between TDR and a conservation easement. Mr. Bleiberg explained that TDR is a transfer of development rights; the owner can sell the development rights to someone in the adjoining city. Conservation easements extinguish those development rights.

Councilmember Todd said TDR's aren't really effective. Ms. Latta said TDR's are done with deed restrictions and that it is not as strong of a document as a conservation easement.

6. **FILLING THE CITY MANAGER POSITION:** City Council discussed how they will proceed to fill the City Manager's position. City Attorney John Shaver advised that it was his understanding that it is Council's desire to discuss how to go forward.

Council President Pro Tem Beckstein said it is her desire for a resolution to be brought forward for Ms. Kadrich to be the candidate for the position.

Councilmember Coons said there are options to appoint a City Manager; one option is a formal review and recruitment process or to talk about the potential merits of the Acting City Manager and the advisability of appointing her.

Councilmember Palmer stated when McKenney and Peckham were hired to recruit for the City Manager position, there was a year's grace period if the candidate did not stay a year. The City currently has the option to begin another search but there would be some expenses incurred. From the last national search, the current Acting City Manager was in the top three then.

Councilmember Palmer is comfortable with current person's job performance and the Council has already lost institutional memory and he would like to minimize that from occurring again. Councilmember Palmer believes there is effective leadership at this time and does not want to do another search.

Councilmember Todd concurred that there is a capable leader in place already.

Councilmember Thomason was not interested in exploring other options.

Councilmember Coons said that another national search does not make sense if Ms. Kadrach is interested in being the candidate.

Councilmember Palmer was comfortable with Ms. Kadrach's performance, and believes that the right person is in place right now.

Councilmember Hill said the City doesn't need to spend the time or the money because the last City Manager put the next Manager in place by hiring Laurie Kadrach as the Deputy.

Councilmember Coons received numerous positive comments from Department Heads and others regarding Ms. Kadrach.

Councilmember Todd would like to have the City Attorney draft the resolution needed to be able to take the action on Wednesday night.

Council President Pro Tem Beckstein was in agreement.

Action summary: The City Attorney was directed to draft a resolution for Wednesday's agenda to appoint Laurie Kadrach as the City Manager.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 11:12 p.m.