

STUDY SESSION NOTES
CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO
City Council Chambers 7500 W. 29th Avenue
September 19, 2022

Mayor Bud Starker called the Study Session to order at 6:33 p.m.

Mayor Starker welcomed the Council, other elected officials, staff and interested citizens.

The Mayor also explained the meeting format how citizens will have the opportunity to be heard, and the procedures and policies to be followed.

Wheat Ridge Speaks – there were no comments entered for this session.

Also present: City Clerk, Steve Kirkpatrick; City Manager Patrick Goff; Community Development Director, Ken Johnstone; Director of Administration Allison Scheck; Director of Parks and Recreation, Karen O'Donnell, members of the Land Acknowledgement Committee, other staff and interested citizens.

Wheat Ridge Speaks – there were no comments entered for this session.

Citizens' Right to Speak

Renee Millard-Chacon came to represent her indigenous community, which has lived in Colorado for centuries. She spoke about environmental racism. Land acknowledgement is long overdue and will have a significant impact on the self-image and public perception of indigenous First Nations. She listed the many of the 48 First Nations of indigenous peoples who live and have lived in Colorado. Her life's work has focused on the rights of indigenous First Nations peoples and their oppression and expropriation of their lands.

1. Land Acknowledgement Committee Update

ISSUE:

Ms. O'Donnell introduced the LAC's presentation to update the Mayor and Council.

Councilmembers Hoppe and Nosler-Beck requested a study session to discuss with the Mayor and City Council the establishment of a land acknowledgement program for the City of Wheat Ridge. That meeting was held on October 4, 2021. The City's Land Acknowledgement Committee would like to provide the City Council with an update on their progress and next steps.

What is land acknowledgement?

Indigenous land acknowledgment is an effort to recognize the Indigenous past, present, and future of a particular location and to understand our own place within that relationship. Usually, land acknowledgements take the form of written and/or verbal

statements. It's becoming more and more common to see land acknowledgements delivered at conferences, community gatherings, places of worship, concerts, and festivals, etc.

Ms. O'Donnell and the Committee members (Morgan Richards, Jenny Snell, and Kathleen Martel, who could not attend) gave a detailed report to Council on their work to date and their plans for next steps. For instance, they brought artifacts that are part of the indigenous First Nations traveling display for Council's appreciation.

CM had comments and questions:

- CM Hoppe thanked the Committee for an excellent and thorough presentation and asked about next steps the Committee would recommend.
- CM Weaver commented that perhaps private landowners might like to participate in this effort and a part of the acknowledgement.
- CM Hultin thanked the Committee members, who she commented are bringing these concepts and calls to action in a thoughtful, deliberate, and inclusive way. We can use the process the Committee has fostered as we address other issues and movements in the future. Keep up the great work! Later she thanked her friend Renee for her presence and for her impact whenever we meet with her.
- CM Nosler Beck commented on her experience participating in one of the Committee's sessions. She was grateful to be invited to participate in a very open process. She thanked the Committee for their hard work. She also commented on her family's history in Wheat Ridge and opined that this topic is a missing piece of our history and heritage. Progress requires that we look deep into ourselves as we move forward. She believes that working with the schools is a very important part of the Committee's action plans. She commented that a shortened version of the proclamation draft might be made a part of our organizational culture.
- CM Dozeman echoed her peers' comments, and specifically supported the idea of including the schools in our efforts to acknowledge our history.
- CM Stites agreed as well. This hard work means a lot to us, but more so to those who came before us. The words the Committee spoke is less important than the actions they recommend we take to make our history part of our current mindset.
- CM Ohm also agreed, thanking staff and the Committee, for many great ideas produced by hard work. He recently saw a display of native plants with signs naming them in both English and Ute, which he felt was an important learning opportunity. His background includes indigenous peoples, so this is near his own heart.

- CM Hutchinson also thanked those involved and encouraged the Committee to keep its programs as simple and easy to understand as possible, especially for our elementary school students.
- Mayor Starker commented on their hard work and encouraged the group to continue their work.

Staff Reports

Mr. Goff deferred.

Elected Officials Matters

City Clerk Steve Kirkpatrick announced that the recent referendum petition to refer Ordinance 1744, ADU, to the voters resulted an insufficient number of valid signatures collected. Any Wheat Ridge elector (registered voter) may file a protest regarding the insufficient petition until October 4, 2022.

CM Hultin thanked Local Works for dumpster day that was so well attended that the dumpsters were full in an hour. Very successful event; we are now rid of some of our trash. On October 1 at 10 am she and CM Ohm will hold a District meeting.

CM Stites reported that he and CM Weaver had a successful dumpster event and an informative conversations. He also commented on an event he recently attended at Kullerstrand.

CM Ohm on Sept 24 there is a clean-up effort at Clear Creek Crossing.

CM Nosler Beck on October 24 the Jeffco School Board will hold a meeting to discuss plans to close three neighborhood schools in Wheat Ridge.

CM Dozeman thanked the Parks and Rec staff for their recent work at Anderson Park to provide a new play area. She thinks the one-half of one cent tax increase is well spent.

ADJOURNMENT

The Study Session adjourned at 7:22 pm.

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL ON November 14, 2022.



Steve Kirkpatrick, City Clerk



Rachel Grace Hultin, Mayor Pro Tem