

**STUDY SESSION NOTES**  
**CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO**  
**Hybrid - Virtual Meeting**  
**March 6, 2023**

Mayor Starker called the Study Session to order at 6:32 p.m.

This meeting was conducted both as a virtual meeting and hybrid, where some members of the Council or City staff were physically present at the Municipal building, and some members of the public attended in person as well. A quorum of members (eight) of Council were present in Council Chambers for this session.

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

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

Council members present Scott Ohm, Judy Hutchinson, Korey Stites, Leah Dozeman, and Rachel Hultin.

Amanda Weaver, Janeece Hoppe, and Valerie Nosler Beck excused themselves due to illnesses.

Also present: City Clerk, Steve Kirkpatrick, City Treasurer, Chris Miller; City Manager Patrick Goff; Deputy City Manager, Allison Scheck; Director of Community Development, Lauran Mikulak; Assistant City Manager, Marianne Schilling; Senator Jessie Danielson; from the Colorado Municipal League (CML), Heather Stauffer, interested residents and guests.

**Public's Right to Speak**

None tonight.

**Note about Wheat Ridge Speaks:**

Members of the public may visit the Wheat Ridge Speaks website and enter written comments of up to 1,000 words on any Council agenda item. The deadline for the public to submit comments is 12:00 Noon Mountain Time on the day of a Council session so that Council members, other elected officials and City Staff have time to review the comments before the meeting on Monday evening.

The City Clerk's Office transcribes those Wheat Ridge Speaks comments into these minutes, placing each comment along with the record for that agenda item.

No comments appeared in Wheat Ridge Speaks for this session of Council.

## **1. 2023 Colorado Legislative Session Update**

### **Issue**

The Legislative Update is an opportunity for the City's elected officials and staff to discuss legislative priorities, current legislation and Wheat Ridge positions and priorities for the 2023 session. Senator Jessie Danielson and Representative Monica Duran will be in attendance, and Colorado Municipal League Legislative Advocacy Manager Heather Stauffer will be available to review legislation and answer questions.

### **Staff Reports**

Assistant City Manager Marianne Schilling presented an overview of tonight's topics and introduced the speakers and guests.

Senator Jessie Danielson spoke to Council about bills she is sponsoring, including a measure to raise the age for legally purchasing a firearm to 21. She also discussed at length a bill she is sponsoring to address the issue of Missing and Murdered Relatives of Indigenous Peoples.

Councilmembers had questions and comments:

Mayor Starker asked the Senator about efforts to enable our ageing residents to live in place for their remaining days.

Ms. Stauffer gave an overview of the bills traversing the legislative process this year that impact municipal governments and their efforts to improve life in Colorado.

CM Hultin expressed her support for bills that encourage people to ride public transit and reduce carbon emissions.

CM Dozeman asked about a bill to address the operation of ethics commissions. Ms. Stauffer replied that Home Rule cities will not be restrained in their efforts to establish local ethics commissions. She also asked about valuations and re-assessments for property taxes. Ms. Stauffer reported that the proposed reductions in property values would have some impact on municipalities' revenues, albeit small.

CM Ohm asked about a bill that creates a Code Board for addressing the issues related to urban-wildlands interfaces and building codes in those areas.

The Mayor asked about a bill that would address construction defects, and Ms. Stauffer replied that they are reviewing the bill.

Chief Murtha addressed several bills now before the legislature. He commented specifically on the proposed bill to address the plague of auto thefts in Colorado.

Representative Monica Duran was unable to attend due to pressing matters in her role as House Majority Leader.

Senator Danielson thanked the Mayor and Council for making Wheat Ridge a wonderful place to live.

CM universally thanked the elected officials for their hard work on this and gave special thanks.

## **2. Proposed Urban Renewal Plan Area (SW corner of I-70 and Wadsworth)**

Staff has received interest for development of a new light industrial building on the U.S. Truck Driving School property located at 8150 W. 48<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The City occasionally receives interest concerning redevelopment of this parcel and the area surrounding it. The establishment of an urban renewal plan for this area would allow for the use of tax increment financing (TIF) to finance the extraordinary costs associated with redevelopment of this property including potential environmental cleanup and floodplain improvements. Staff is seeking consensus from City Council to authorize Renewal Wheat Ridge to begin the process of creating a new urban renewal area and plan for this 33.3-acre site just south of I-70, north of Clear Creek, east of Carr Street and west of Wadsworth Boulevard.

### **Staff Reports**

Steve Art, Renewal Wheat Ridge Executive Director spoke on the background of the item explaining that Colorado Revised Statutes of 1973, Section 31-25-101, allows for the organization and establishment of urban renewal authorities at the local level. The Wheat Ridge Urban Renewal Authority d/b/a Renewal Wheat Ridge (RWR) was established by City Council in 1981 to accomplish the redevelopment and rehabilitation of blighted areas in the City to provide a safer and more useful environment for their users and inhabitants; to promote improved traffic patterns and eliminate traffic hazards.

Also addressed were

- Tax Increment Financing
- Forming a new urban renewal plan area
- Implications of forming a new urban renewal plan area

Councilmembers had questions and comments:

Councilmembers asked detailed questions about several topics, engaging in discussion among themselves and with staff including Mr. Art and Ms. Mikulak who answered their questions in detail.

- CM raised the question of flood plain restrictions, which staff addresses.
- If this moves forward, would there be consideration of improving the traffic infrastructure in the area, especially the Carr St. underpass below I-70.
- CM universally thanked staff for their hard work on this taxing process.

Mayor Starker entertained a consensus to direct staff to authorize Renewal Wheat Ridge to begin the process of creating a new urban renewal area and plan for the area including and surrounding the U.S. Truck Driving School and return to Council with their proposals for necessary Council action.

**Consensus attained.**

### **3. Staff Report(s)**

Mr. Goff announced that Senators Hickenlooper and Bennett will release their funding priorities this Friday. The City is proposing that a priority the Senators might include is affordable housing. We are considering asking for funding in the range of \$2 million to help us implement our Affordable Housing Strategy.

The City is working on a grant for about \$200,000 to support the Wheat Ridge Maker Space, as an economic driver and new business incubator.

We are also looking into a grant to fund replacement of our incident command vehicle.

Ms. Scheck announced an ARPA funded effort in mental health education. WR High School has hired a clinician with that ARPA funding

### **4. Elected Officials' Report(s)**

CM Ohm recently attended the county event for municipal officials. He also noted that there is a company promoting electric trans vehicles.

CM Stites announced that the School Superintendent cancelled a meeting tonight. Councilmembers Stites and Weaver will hold a District III meeting on Saturday, March 9 from 9-11 am at the Rec Center.

CM Hultin suggested we think about using funding for transportation projects to ensure that charging and safe storage for e-bikes are included.

The Mayor will host Coffee with the Mayor at 9:00 this Saturday, March 11 at Vinnola's.

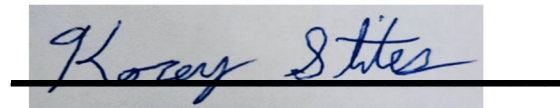
### **ADJOURNMENT**

The Study Session adjourned at 8:10 pm.

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL ON April 10, 2023.



Steve Kirkpatrick, City Clerk



Korey Stites, Mayor Pro Tem