

Special Study Session – City Council
CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO
City Council Chambers 7500 W. 29th Avenue
June 26, 2023

Upon adjournment of the Regular City Council Meeting, and after a short recess, the Mayor called this Special Study Session to order at 7:55 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.

After calling the meeting to order, presiding official Mayor Pro-Tem Stites stated the rules and procedures necessitated by this meeting format.

Mayor Pro-Tem Stites welcomed the Council, other elected officials, staff and interested citizens.

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

Councilmembers present: Judy Hutchinson, Scott Ohm, Rachel Hultin, Janeece Hoppe Amanda Weaver, Korey Stites, and Leah Dozeman.

Absent: Mayor Starker represented the City at a CML strategic planning session; Mayor Pro-Tem Stites presided this evening. CM Valerie Nosler Beck was absent due to illness.

Also, present: City Manager Patrick Goff; City Attorney Gerald Dahl; Business Development Manager, Steve Art; staff, guests and interested citizens.

Public Comment on Agenda Items –

No one came forward to speak. Please, also see the minutes of tonight's regular Council session.

Note about Wheat Ridge Speaks:

Citizens 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 citizens 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, including items that include a public hearing (verbatim, if the comments do not contain lascivious language or unlawful hate speech).

There were no citizen comments entered into Wheat Ridge Speaks related to this session, but there were at this evening's regular Council Meeting. Those comments

appear in the minutes for tonight's regularly scheduled City Council business meeting.

1. The Ives Affordable Housing Project, Phase 2 – Foothills Regional Housing Issue

The City purchased the Bank of the West property located at 7525 W. 44th Avenue in January 2021 for right-of-way required for the Improve Wadsworth project. After the necessary right-of-way was dedicated for the Wadsworth project, a remnant parcel of 15,435 square feet and a structure remain. Foothills Regional Housing (FRH) has made a request to the City to contribute this parcel for inclusion into The Ives affordable housing development project.

Staff Report

City Manager, Patrick Goff gave a detailed report on how in April 2015, the City was awarded funding through the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to improve Wadsworth Boulevard from 35th Avenue to 48th Avenue. A professional services contract for right-of-way acquisition was approved by City Council in December 2018 to negotiate with and purchase from property owners, along this segment of Wadsworth Boulevard, the necessary rights-of-way to complete this project.

Foothills Regional Housing (FRH) is currently working through pre-development activities to produce new affordable housing at the NW corner of 44th Avenue and Wadsworth Boulevard. They already own three parcels at the site, and the zoning is in place as use-by-right to allow affordable housing. This site, what FRH is calling The Ives, is a master-planned assemblage of various parcels and is anticipated to be developed in four phases.

FRH is asking for the City Council to consider contributing the remaining Bank of the West parcel for Phase 2 of The Ives project which will produce another 97 affordable units. In exchange, the City's homeless and housing navigation program will be able to make direct referrals to FRH for residents they work with for housing in these subsidized units

Councilmember questions and comments:

A lengthy and detailed discussion of topics and specific questions followed among and between staff and CM. For example, how do we set the income eligibility levels? Could we include retail spaces in the new design for this property? Does the plan account for the location of the AAA Propane business and their ongoing compliance with safety regulations for propane as future nearby residential property gets occupied?

CM thanked the staff and Foothills Housing Authority for their hard work on this issue.

CM opined that this project is a positive step forward for the City and specifically the Affordable Housing Strategy.

Will there be any cost to the City if a part of the building cannot be used for a construction office?

What is the current zoning for that parcel, and does it need to change to move forward with this effort?

CM are glad that this development includes family-sized units with 2- and 3-bedrooms.

Several CM expressed strong support for leaving the AAA Propane business in place, and that the City does not pressure them to move.

MPT Stites proposed a consensus to direct staff to bring to Council the necessary proposed ordinance and other actions required to move forward with this project as described in this evening's Council packet.

Consensus attained.

2. Membership of the Urban Renewal Authority

Issue

In 2015, the Legislature amended the Urban Renewal statute to require a membership of thirteen, with three members appointed by out-of-city authorities: one by the Board of County Commissioners, one by the school district, and one by the special districts having a mill levy in the City. The 2015 requirement only applies to urban renewal authorities governing urban renewal districts formed after the effective date of the bill. Because until now, the City has not created any new urban renewal areas since 2015, it was permitted to retain its seven-member authority.

Staff Report

City Attorney's, Gerald Dahl and Nick Klein gave detailed descriptions on the item because the City is preparing to create one or more new urban renewal areas, the state statute will apply, and the membership of the Authority must be increased to thirteen. As a side note, the charter requirement that there be equal representation from each council district does not apply to authorities, only "boards and commissions." To expand to thirteen members overall, there must be ten "City" members in addition to the three appointed by the county, the school district and the special districts. There are two options to do this:

- Retain the current four "district" members and increase the at large members to six.
- Increase the district members to 2 from each council district, then have two at large.

Councilmember questions and comments:

A detailed discussion of topics followed among and between staff and CM.

Councilmembers and staff discussed whether to require an elected CM on the Authority Board, and how to appoint the other members required to fill the new requirement that the board have 13 members.

CM also discussed various approaches to deciding how Council will fill the whole slate of new members: district representation; appointments by the Mayor; at-large seats; etc.

Discussion ensued about the length of terms, how many terms one may serve (consecutively and how long between terms after they term-out). Mr. Dahl reported that other municipalities most frequently set terms at 5 years with two consecutive terms maximum, but one can return to office after a two-year hiatus.

How shall we align city council terms with URA board membership so that we do not create vacancies when CM terms end or they resign mid-term?

CM Hoppe asked for a **consensus** to direct staff to bring forward a proposed ordinance to address compliance with the new Urban Renewal Authority statutes, based on a 5-year term, limited to two consecutive terms and eligibility to be seated again after a 2-year hiatus.

Consensus attained.

3. Staff Report(s)

Nothing more.

4. Elected Officials' Report(s)

CM Hultin announced that there are new plantings going into Happiness Gardens and asked that those who are interested volunteer to help with that work.

Nothing further this evening since we did this earlier at the end of the regular Council meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The Special Study Session adjourned at 9:02 pm.

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL ON July 24, 2023.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'SK', is written over a horizontal line.

Steve Kirkpatrick, City Clerk

Korey Stites

Korey Stites, Mayor Pro Tem