

STUDY SESSION NOTES
CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO
Hybrid - Virtual Meeting
August 7, 2023

Mayor Starker called the Study Session to order at 6:30 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, Amanda Weaver, Leah Dozeman, Janeece Hoppe, and Rachel Hultin. Valerie Nosler Beck was absent due to illness.

Also present: City Clerk, Steve Kirkpatrick, City Manager Patrick Goff; Deputy City Manager, Allison Scheck; Assistant City Manager, Marianne Schilling; Management Analyst, Cole Haselip; Elizabeth Moran, Executive Director, ARC; and interested residents.

Public's Right to Speak

Betsy Coppock, 25 Skyline Dr. Came to support charging stations for electric vehicles (EV). She asserted that currently a lack of charging stations at rental properties create a gap between those residents and people living in single family homes. People also need and want opportunities to purchase EV and get the various rebates and tax credits. Please, make those opportunities available to more residents as you make decisions about EV charging requirements for new residential and business construction.

Kelly Blynn, 4175 Brentwood St., also came to support EV charging stations. She works for an agency that supports state efforts to foster EV purchases and use. She urged the City to pass an ordinance requiring EV charging stations in several locations across the City. She noted that within 10-12 years, all new vehicles built or sold in the US will be EV. She also fosters requiring E-bike charging stations at new construction of multi-family homes.

Jenny Snell, 7020 W. 35th Ave. – she came to speak about a diversity and inclusion task force. She served as vice-chair of the current task force. She came to thank Council for supporting these prior efforts and sustaining them going forward.

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. Presentation from The ARC Thrift Store, Wheat Ridge Location

Issue

The Arc Thrift in Wheat Ridge opened in March 2023. Staff from The Arc would like to share more about their organization and how The Arc and the City can work together encourage Wheat Ridge to be a fully inclusive place where people with disabilities are welcome and valued members of the community.

Staff Reports

Assistant City Manager, Marianne Schilling presented the background on the issue and discussion of the issue which included how in 1968, the first Arc Thrift Store (then called Value Village) opened in Denver. Since then, Arc Thrift has provided millions of dollars of mission-critical funding to chapters of The Arc in Colorado's front range communities, allowing them to collectively advocate for countless people.

Elizabeth Moran, Executive Director, who represented Arc Thrift, shared a video of the Fischer family, Wheat Ridge residents with firsthand experience of navigating the world with an IDD. We will also have a discussion on the common barrier's individuals with IDDs face and ways that Wheat Ridge can become an even more inclusive community.

Afterwards they were available to answer questions from City Council.

Councilmembers had questions and comments:

- Several CM thanked Staff and Arc for their hard work that yielded the presentation tonight.
- CM asked detailed questions about the program and how to achieve the City's objectives. A lengthy discussion among staff and CM addressed several of these questions.
- CM Hultin recounted her family's friendship with the Fisher family, who appeared in the promotion video The Arc presented. She later suggested that one way to include The Arc in our efforts is through our boards and commissions.

- Ms. Moran opined that The Arc believes that people with disabilities should be included in any effort at inclusiveness in our community.
- CM Hutchinson disclosed that her brother had Down's Syndrome but in the 1950's there was simply no resource to help him or their family. There were strong impacts on the family as they tried to cope. So, CM Hutchinson thanked The Arc for all they have done to change that situation and continues to do.
- The Mayor graciously thanked The Arc representatives.

2. Boards and Commissions Code Update Discussion

Issue

The City of Wheat Ridge has seen an exceptional increase in the desire to join City Boards and Commissions. Recognizing this, Council requested the City's Boards and Commissions Code be studied to provide greater opportunities for interested residents, streamline the board application process, and allow residents to serve on multiple boards. Additionally, Staff has included an analysis of several other related changes for the Council to review and consider.

Staff Reports

Management Analyst, Cole Haselip, presented the issue and summarized background on the issue.

Discussion on the items included where the Council specifically requested the following items:

1. Term limits that do not prevent a term-limited board member from serving another term in the absence of any other applicants.
2. Serving on more than one board at once.
3. Improving the board application process.

And after further analysis, Staff has identified the following topics for consideration by the Council:

4. Broadening Council's authority to remove board members.
5. Simplifying the Unexcused Absences Code.
6. Amending the City Manager's appointment to the Cultural Commission.
7. Codifying the Board of Adjustment's Alternate Board Members.
8. Developing a policy to determine when committee members should be appointed by the Council, City Staff, or both.
9. Amending the resident and registered voter requirement to allow people who live, work, attend school, own a business, or represent a relevant organization to serve on certain boards.

Mr. Haselip also reported that the City of Wheat Ridge that uses three different public bodies, in addition to the Council, to support the achievement of its objectives, examples given were:

1. Renewal Wheat Ridge, the City's Urban Renewal Authority, operates under the governance of Colorado's Urban Renewal Laws. The Wheat Ridge Housing Authority is governed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
2. Boards and commissions are a part of the city. They are governed by the City's Charter and Municipal Code.
3. Uncodified committees, task forces, authorities and other city-created or sanctioned groups also exist in the City of Wheat Ridge. These bodies are not bound by the City's Charter or Municipal Code.

He listed additional data where:

- boards have three-year terms, except for the election commission which has a two-year term.
- analyzed a dataset tracking the number of years that a person has served on a board since 1970. Since that time, there have been 468 appointments to City boards.
- long-term board members have had a disproportionate impact on their respective boards. Despite accounting for only 11% of all appointees, board members that have held their position for more than nine years account for 42% of the time served by all board members in the City of Wheat Ridge since 1970

and asked for direction on the following items:

1. Mid-Term Appointments
2. Extended Term Length
3. Maximum Number of Extended Terms
4. Permanent or Consecutive Term Limits
5. Serving on Multiple Boards at Once
6. Application Changes
7. Liaison Recommendations
8. Board Member Removal Process
9. Defining an Unexcused Absence
10. Maximum Unexcused Absences
11. Amending the City Manager's Appointment to the Cultural Commission.
12. Codifying Alternates to the Board of Adjustment
13. Committee Appointments Policy
14. Resident and Registered Voter Requirement

Councilmembers asked detailed questions about several topics, engaging in discussion among themselves and with staff including:

- Several CM expressed their thanks for the staff efforts on this complex issue.

- A detailed discussion of Mr. Haselip research and recommended actions. He presented a series of 13 issues he had researched, offering Council a list of at least three options for moving forward with each of the 13.
- The Mayor and CM Hultin opined that the role of the Mayor should be included in this process and that the Mayor should have a role to play.

CM Hoppe proposed a consensus to accept staff recommendations on items 2, 3, 8, 12, and 13.

Consensus attained.

CM Hultin asked later in the session to revise this consensus to further study item 13 at a future Study Session focusing on who appoints members to which groups.

Change in the consensus attained.

Council then discussed each of the remaining items.

CM Stites and the Mayor proposed a consensus to require each board or commission to deliver an annual report to Council, including the board/commission's activities, accomplishments and attendance data..

Consensus attained.

Item 1 – CM Hoppe proposed a consensus to codify three-year terms and limited to two terms, for any one board or commission.

Consensus attained without unanimity.

Item 4 – CM Hoppe proposed a consensus to move forward with staff's recommendations regarding item 4.

Consensus attained.

Item 6 – CM Hoppe proposed a consensus take no actions to limit serving on multiple boards at once.

Consensus attained.

Item 7 – CM Hoppe proposed a consensus to not take any action on this item, and that Councilmembers may informally seek input from staff, or from the chairs of boards and commissions as the CM see fit.

Consensus attained.

CM Hoppe asked that staff begin developing and delivering training for staff liaisons focusing on their roles, responsibilities and operating practices.

Item 9 – MPT Stites proposed a consensus to accept the staff recommendations on this item.

Consensus attained.

Item 10 – CM MPT Stites proposed a consensus to accept the staff recommendations with the additional proviso that a member with 2 unexcused absences may appeal to the board or commission to reverse one or both of the excused absences by a majority vote of the members present (excluding that member whose absences are under review).

Consensus attained.

Item 11 – CM Hoppe proposed a consensus to adopt staff recommendation 1.

Consensus attained.

Council expects to discuss these issues further in either another Study Session or when proposed Ordinances come before them.

3. Creating a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Focused Advisory Committee

Issue

Staff requests consensus from the City Council to determine the scope of work, structure, budget, implementation timeline and title of a diversity, equity, and inclusion focused advisory committee.

Staff Reports

Management Analyst, Cole Haselip presented the issue, prior actions and summarized the background of the issue. Where staff as completed a thorough analysis of regional and national diversity, equity, and inclusion advisory committees and prepared several recommendations and options for the Council to determine the committee's scope of work, structure, budget, implementation timeline, and title.

Discussion on the items included:

- Scope of Work
- Structure
- Committee Size
- Rules
- Council Liaison
- Budget
- Implementation Timeline
- Title

Councilmembers had questions and comments:

- CM asked detailed questions about several topics, engaging in discussion among themselves and with staff, who answered their questions in detail.
- CM thanked staff for their hard work on this issue.

- CM had several questions about how the proposed changes would impact various aspects of creating this board, or committee, or commission.
- CM discussed ensuring that a majority of the members are WR residents, while also allowing non-residents to join the committee so that people with strong backgrounds and qualifications are eligible for appointment.

CM Hoppe asked for a consensus to accept staff's recommendations with the following changes and decisions:

- Choose the name IDEA (Inclusion Diversity Equity and Accessibility)
- Defer discussion on appointments until the Item 1 is discussed at a future Study Session.

Consensus attained.

4. Parking and Charging for Electric Vehicles and Bicycles

By Consensus, this item 4 was postponed to a future study session due to the long discussion of items 1 and 2 and the late hour when Council took up item 3 (9:08 pm).

5. Staff Report(s)

Mr. Goff reminded us that the Carnation Festival is this weekend.

6. Elected Officials' Report(s)

CM Hultin reported on the progress at Happiness Gardens, which a number of volunteers have made possible. She also opined that there are too many off-leash dogs in the Wilmore Davis neighborhood.

CM Weaver discussed the Carnation Festival and the pie baking contest. Anyone in Wheat Ridge may enter a pie to win prizes. After the judging the public will be able to purchase pieces of the pies.

MPT Stites, a judge for many years, asked that the pie baking competitors bring their best efforts. He announced that CM Nosler Beck contacted him about her absence this evening, expressing her regrets she was unable to attend. He attended the opening of a new restaurant this past week and is delighted to have welcomed the new business to our City.

Mayor Starker thanked those who attended his restaurant's 10-year anniversary celebration. WR Native Mathew Dominic will command a NASA mission to space in 2024.


CM Dozeman also commented on the pie baking contest at the Festival. She expressed her gratitude for all who have worked so hard to make the Festival a success. She also noted that Mr. Goff made a successful effort to get media coverage about transforming Fruitdale Elementary to housing with solar power.

CM Hutchinson noted that those solar panels are on a flat roof, which is very unusual for a solar panel installation.


ADJOURNMENT

The Study Session adjourned at 9:39 pm.

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL ON August 21, 2023.



Steve Kirkpatrick, City Clerk



Korey Stites, Mayor Pro Tem