

SPECIAL STUDY SESSION NOTES
CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO
City Council Chambers 7500 W. 29th Avenue
January 24, 2022

Upon adjournment of the Regular City Council Meeting, the Mayor called this Special Study Session to order after a brief recess at 8:40 p.m.

This meeting was conducted as a VIRTUAL MEETING.

No members of the Council were physically present at the Municipal building for this meeting; the public did not attend in person.

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

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

Council members present: Amanda Weaver, Judy Hutchinson, Scott Ohm, Janeece Hoppe, Rachel Hultin, Korey Stites, Valerie Nosler Beck, and Leah Dozeman.

Also present: City Attorney Gerald Dahl; City Clerk, Steve Kirkpatrick; City Treasurer Chris Miller, City Manager Patrick Goff; Director of Administration, Allison Scheck; Director of Planning, Lauren Mikulak; Stephanie Stevens, Senior City Planner; City Attorney, Jerry Dahl; Director of Finance, Mark Colvin, Lori Rosendahl, Jefferson Housing Authority, guests and interested citizens.

Public Comment on Agenda Items –

Dennis Peter, Skyline Estates. Called to ask if Council is discussing a specific project. The Mayor answered that Council is not considering a particular project at this time.

Note about Wheat Ridge Speaks:

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 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 public comments entered into Wheat Ridge Speaks related to this session.

1. Delegation of Private Activity Bond Cap to Foothills Regional Housing Issue

The City of Wheat Ridge has received an allocation of \$1,789,050 for the purpose of issuing Private Activity Bonds (PABs) in 2022 under the state ceiling imposed by the Tax Reform Act of 1987. Staff recommends assigning 100 percent of the City's allocation to Jefferson County Housing Authority d/b/a Foothills Regional Housing (FRH) which has agreed to issue PABs for the produce new affordable housing units on two sites within the City of Wheat Ridge. Due to ongoing negotiations regarding land acquisition, FRH is unable to publicly provide greater specificity on site location. However, project summaries for both sites can be found in the attached PAB request letter from FRH.

City Manager Patrick Goff Director explained that Private Activity Bonds (PABs) are tax exempt bonds designed to offer low-cost financing to private sector borrowers for projects that create jobs and expand the tax bases of local communities. PABs may be used to finance a broad array of community development projects including housing, manufacturing, higher education, infrastructure, and environmental projects. The bonding authority which allows the issuance of PABs is Volume Cap, created under the federal Tax Reform Act of 1986.

The federal government allocates a maximum amount of Volume Cap use to each state annually. Per Colorado statute, the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) administers the state's allocation of Volume Cap. Under the statute, 50 percent of Colorado's allocation is given to five statewide authorities, with DOLA deciding the proportional allocation of each

Councilmembers had questions and comments:

CM Hutchinson asked Ms. Case when we need to have these funds approved. Ms. Case replied: September 2022.

CM Hutchinson opined that the communication about this matter has confused our residents. She is concerned that there are no disclosures about where projects will be funded or where they will be located. People are freaking out because they feel unfairly treated. Please, be transparent and disclose what you plan to do with these funds.

CM Hoppe asked staff to explain what happens if WR does not accept this money. Mr. Goff explained the monies will go back to the State. CM Hoppe asked Mr. Goff to explain the process the Housing Authority would have to undertake in order to get a project through Planning staff and Planning Commission, which would take years and require many public meetings and hearings.

CM Nosler Beck asked whether the two sites listed were intended as examples of the kinds of projects that would be possible as opposed to proposed projects. Ms. Case provided a detailed response. She recalled an earlier Study Session on affordable

housing and gave examples of people who would benefit from affordable housing. She asked that people consider real people who might live in this housing, like those who take care of our elderly and our first responders.

Ms. Rosendahl commented that there is no public housing in Jefferson County, there never has been any; there is no Section 8 housing in Jefferson County, and none is planned or even proposed.

CM Dozeman commented on how the memo distributed for this evening's meeting would arouse opposition among residents. It was confusing and easily misinterpreted. She understands that affordable housing is important in WR, and that there are some community discussions we need to have.

CM Hutchinson asked what the City's target for a total population in Wheat Ridge. She believes that there are too many more residents coming based on staff's plans for growth. Mr. Goff replied to CM Hutchinson's comments, saying that staff has no such target population number and that he resented the implication of inappropriate behavior on the part of our staff.

CM Hultin proposed a consensus to move forward with specific code changes and make the grace period to come into compliance within 3-6 months of the date when the ordinance takes effect, with a variance process.

CM Ohm asked the Housing Authority whether the Housing Authority funds mixed use housing and commercial developments. Ms. Rosendahl answered in great detail with examples.

CM Hultin commented that she supports this Activity Bond measure. The best way to address issues like affordable housing, homelessness and other needs is to cooperate on a regional level with other municipalities. The packet for this meeting was confusing, even for her, so she understands why people were concerned, even outraged.

CM Nosler Beck asked that someone explain what the first step in the process would be when the public would have a chance to comment and participate if there are any proposed projects with these Regional Housing Authority funds. Mr. Goff provided a detailed answer. Ms. Rosendahl added that the funds under consideration here would never be enough funding from this source alone to fund a project. That level of funding would have to come from several municipalities/jurisdictions.

CM Hoppe thanked the RHA for their work and will support approving the allocation proposed.

CM Hultin commented on the City's efforts to keep our residents informed about City business on many levels through many media. She encouraged residents to avail themselves of these communication channels. She proposed a consensus to allocate the funds as proposed.

Consensus achieved.

Staff Report(s)

Mr. Goff asked about dates in April for a joint, one-hour meeting with Jefferson County School Board members and staff.

He announced that the 2021 budget looks very strong, with double digit increases on several revenue lines. Expenditures are on par with 2020. He will come to Council soon with a Study Session on how we can use the available funds for strategic priorities.

Elected Officials' Report(s)

Nothing further, as this session immediately followed a Regular Council Meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The Special Study Session adjourned at 9:22 pm.

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL ON February 14, 2022.



Steve Kirkpatrick, City Clerk



Rachel Hultin, Mayor Pro Tem