

# City Council Minutes

CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO  
7500 WEST 29<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE, MUNICIPAL BUILDING

September 26, 2022

**Note:** This meeting was held virtually, using Zoom video-teleconferencing technology. As duly announced and publicly noticed, Council previously approved this format in order to continue with normal business and respond to the CoVid-19 Pandemic and the related public emergency orders promulgated by the President of the United States, the Governor of Colorado, and the Wheat Ridge City Council. Before calling the meeting to order, Mayor Starker stated the rules and procedures necessitated by this meeting format.

Mayor Starker called the Regular City Council Meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

## **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS:** All eight councilmembers were present.

Janeece Hoppe      Judy Hutchinson      Scott Ohm      Rachel Hultin  
Amanda Weaver      Korey Stites      Leah Dozeman      Valerie Nosler Beck

Also present: City Clerk, Steve Kirkpatrick; City Treasurer, Chris Miller; City Attorney, Gerald Dahl; City Manager, Patrick Goff; Police Chief Christopher Murtha; Administrative Services Director, Allison Scheck; other staff, guests and interested citizens.

## **Proclamations and Ceremonies**

### **2022 Breast Cancer Awareness Month**

The Mayor read a proclamation describing the fight against breast cancer and the essential nature of early detection as a result of self-breast examinations.

### **2022 Domestic Violence Awareness Month**

Because domestic violence impacts so many people everywhere, the City supports this annual event to show support for the victims and ,more important, efforts to stem the tide and alleviate the causes and impacts. The Mayor declared that domestic violence will not be tolerated in our City.

Det. Sherry Els, Wheat Ridge Police Department, accepted the proclamation on behalf of those in law enforcement and social services who work to prevent domestic violence and assist its survivors.

### **2022 National Pedestrian Safety Month**

Officer Molly Stark, WRPD, accepted this proclamation. The Mayor read the proclamation, which emphasized the value of walking for physical and mental health. Walking supports local businesses. In

2020 more than 6,500 pedestrians were killed in vehicle collisions, and ten times that many were injured, it is incumbent upon drivers to attend to their surroundings and drive safely.

### **Wheat Ridge Softball League Champions**

The Wheat Ridge High School Softball Team with their coaches attended to receive the proclamation and celebrate their recent victory – their third overall, and sixth in the past ten years. The team has also appeared in the playoffs for state championships for the last 25 years, including many state championships!

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Without objection, the Agenda was approved as published.

### **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 (WRS) 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).

For this meeting there were general comments entered in WRS, which are transcribed below in Citizens' Right to Speak.

### **Public's Right to Speak**

Joseph Crows, IV, 3720 Yukon Ct. – A Colorado native came to discuss Caine's Chicken Fingers located adjacent to his residence. The business has several loudspeakers that broadcast loudly and create an annoyance for the residents of his apartment complex. The speakers are blasting sound at our building in the wee hours of the morning. Staff from the restaurant stay in the parking lot after closing to party, ride skateboards and otherwise disturb the peace.

Alanna Ritchie 3905 Zephyr Street came to decry the closure of three elementary schools in Wheat Ridge. The Jeffco School Board and administration has conducted a process in private without adequate community input. The School Board ignores the health and safety of children who will in the future attend a different school, taking serious risks as they walk further and cross busy thoroughfares. They have ignored after school activities. She moved to Wheat Ridge to allow her child to walk to their legacy elementary school, which is not on the list for closing (Wilmore-Davis). These schools on the list of closures must not be closed, and she urged Council to convey our opposition to the School Board.

Josie Mares, 4385 Ammons St. came to oppose the closure of 3 of the 6 elementary schools in the City of Wheat Ridge. If these schools are closed, that will have several major, unpleasant, and unsafe impacts. Combining schools will negatively impact the quality of our children's education. She urged Council to oppose the plan.

Suzette Velasquez 3675 Quay St. She has three small children who attend one of the schools on the closure list. When the public meeting was held, we had a lot of questions and the Jeffco Schools had no answers. Consider how the current list of closures planned compares to the list from 5 years ago; everything on the list changed. Please, see the value of our community school and oppose the

Destiny Farr, 1465 S. Eaton St., Lakewood came to oppose the school closure plans. She has deep roots in the community and this proposed action will change the community for the worse. She has two special needs kids whose needs are not considered adequately in this plan to close half of the elementary school in our City. A coalition of community members and parents have come together to oppose this plan. They should never balance the budget on the backs and futures of our children.

Meghan Schlaider, 10315 W. 33<sup>rd</sup> Ave. - Came to ask Council and anyone listening to oppose the plans to close our elementary schools. The district has acknowledged that the current plan may have to be reversed as the City grows, especially with the coming of Clear Creek Crossing. The district's closure plan should not be approved. This plan not only impacts our children but our entire community and its quality of life. Please, as a Council, submit commentary to the Jeffco School board via any avenue available.

Jessica Tibbett, 3929 Simms St. came to oppose the school closing plans. She has three small children. The budget is a reality. However, the Jeffco Schools have used flawed or slanted methodologies to justify their recommendations for closing three of our elementary schools. Based on the data presented at recent school meeting did not justify the recommendations to close our schools.

Christine Rhome, 3870 Allison St. – came to oppose the school closing. Several community members who have no children have come forth to oppose the district's plan because of the impact it will have on our quality of life. Listen to the people and oppose this plan. There are tons of data on the website to help oppose this plan.

Kim St. Martin, 3435 Vivian Ct. – as president of the PTA at Kullerstrand she came to oppose this plan on behalf of our parents, children, and neighbors. Many new residents are young couples who will have children to attend in the future. If this plan is implemented the Jeffco Schools has no idea what the consequences of these plans would be for our kids.

CM Stites announced that a constituent has submitted a comment into the record.

## **Consent Agenda**

Nothing tonight.

## **Public Hearings and Ordinances on Second Reading**

Nothing tonight.

## **Ordinances on First Reading**

Nothing tonight.

## Decisions, Resolutions and Motions

### 1. Motion to cancel the October 24, 2022, Regular business meeting.

#### Issue

The Jeffco School Board will hold a public hearing on this date that many Council members will attend, and we will not have a quorum.

Public Comments – no one came forward to speak.

CM asked that any other CM not otherwise engaged, please, attend the Jeffco Schools public hearing.

Motion by CM Hultin to cancel the October 24, 2022, regular meeting of City Council. Seconded by CM Hoppe; motion passed 7-0.

### 2. A resolution supporting an application to the Colorado Parks and Wildlife's Non-motorized Trails Grant Program for the proposed Tabor Lake Trail Construction.

CM Nosler Beck introduced this item.

#### Issue

CM Weaver asked about feedback obtained since we last discussed this item. Ms. O'Donnell responded in detail.

CM Ohm asked about the history of this project and why Colorado School of Mines students were chosen to implement this project. Who oversees their work? What liability risk does the City run when students are involved in the project? Ms. O'Donnell again gave a detailed answer to the questions.

CM Hultin supports this project and our collaboration with the neighborhood schools. She opposes this plan because 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue is too dangerous for cyclists and pedestrians. The plan needs to provide better access to 44<sup>th</sup> Ave for walkers and cyclists as this moves forward.

Motion by CM Nosler Beck to approve A resolution supporting an application to the Colorado Parks and Wildlife's Non-motorized Trails Grant Program for the proposed Tabor Lake Trail Construction.

Seconded by CM Stites. Motion passed 7-0.

## City Manager's Matters

Mr. Goff announced upcoming events. There is a joint open house tomorrow, Sept. 27, at the WRRRC to discuss the 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue Subarea Plan and our Open Space Management Plan with residents.

DRCOG awarded the City three transportation grants in the past week:

- \$ 890,000 for bike and pedestrian safety at 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave. and I-70
- \$6,500,000 for a shared use path, West Side of Wadsworth between 32<sup>nd</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> Avenues
- \$8,300,000 for multi-modal access improvements at the Wheat Ridge Ward Road Station.

Last week the City received a check from the Metropolitan Football Stadium district for \$500,000 as a result of the change of ownership of the Broncos. The funds are only for youth activities.

## City Attorney's Matters

Nothing tonight.

## Elected Officials Matters

City Clerk Kirkpatrick noticed that throughout the past 30 months the City staff have demonstrated their expertise, their commitment to their service and kept the City operating despite a global pandemic and a ransomware attack. Kirkpatrick thanked them all profusely, noting that this kind of highly performing organization starts with the leadership at the top levels.

CM CM Nosler Beck asked when the designated date for trick or treat is scheduled? October 22<sup>nd</sup> is the designated date. She noted all the comments this evening about school closures and commended those who stepped forward to lend their voices to the opposition to the closing plans. Our community has done a great job of coming together to advocate for our community, our children, and our quality of life, and creates a lot of uncertainty among teachers and school staff and administrators. She also thanked the staff for their hard work during the ransomware attack to connect to the school district.

CM Stites attended the Art on the Farm event last Saturday. His children fully enjoyed it! He thanked his neighbors for holding block parties and Local Works for supporting these events. The business awards breakfast is this Thursday. He asked that staff prepare a letter to the Jeffco School Board in the name of the Council and the City, and a Resolution of Council opposing the planned school closing. Wheat Ridge has been hit much harder.

**Consensus proposed** to compose a letter to Jeffco School Board opposing the school closing.

**Consensus attained.**

**Consensus proposed** to present a resolution of Council at the October 10<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting and discuss the wording at Study Session on October 3.

**Consensus attained.**

CM Ohm recounted discussions he has had with the Jeffco School Superintendent and Board President. He fully supports a letter and resolution. Last Saturday he and his wife, and 650 other volunteers, did a clean-up of litter in Clear Creek Canyon. They collected more than 20 tons of garbage that will now not flow down into our community.

CM Weaver will follow-up with Mr. Goff regarding the Raising Caine's noise problem. It's getting darker earlier, so be careful as you drive at dusk and after dark, especially where there are no sidewalks.

CM Hoppe expressed her gratitude for the domestic violence proclamation this evening. The Porchlight Family Justice Center is having a fund raiser soon.

CM Hultin recalled that her son was hit by a vehicle in a crosswalk last year. As drivers we need to pay strict attention to crosswalks, rights of way and the safety of cyclists and pedestrians. She cannot believe that elementary school children will have to cross Wadsworth to attend school if the closure plan passes. This Saturday CDOT will hold a tour of all the projects funded by these agencies in Wheat Ridge. She recognized these investments in our City. At Happiness Gardens at 10 am this Saturday she and CM Ohm will hold a district meeting.

Mayor Starker thanked all of those who came to speak tonight and ensures them that their voices are heard. He thanked the WR High School Softball Team for coming tonight. He thanked Detective Els for coming tonight to accept our resolution on domestic violence. Take care as you drive. He also thanked the staff who are conducting neighborhood input sessions because we need a robust discussion on these issues.

The City Council Meeting adjourned at 9:08 pm.

  
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Steve Kirkpatrick, City Clerk

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL ON Nov. 14, 2022

  
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Rachel Hultin, Mayor Pro Tem

The preceding Minutes were prepared according to §47 of Robert's Rules of Order, i.e. they contain a record of what was *done* at the meeting, not what was *said* by the members. Recordings and DVD's of the meetings are available for listening or viewing in the City Clerk's Office, as well as copies of Ordinances and Resolutions.