

STUDY SESSION NOTES
CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO
Hybrid - Virtual Meeting
October 2, 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.

All Council Members were present: Scott Ohm, Judy Hutchinson, Korey Stites, Amanda Weaver, Leah Dozeman, Janeece Hoppe, and Rachel Hultin. Valerie Nosler Beck attended virtually.

Also present: City Clerk, Steve Kirkpatrick, City Manager Patrick Goff; Lauren Mikulak, Director of Community Development; Karen O'Donnell, Director of Parks and Recreation; Maria D'Andrea, Director of Public Works; Korey Kolar, Housing Navigator; Neighborhood Engagement Specialist Ashley Holland; other staff and interested residents.

Public's Right to Speak

No one came forward 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. Homeless Navigation Program Update
Issue**

The roles of both the Homeless Navigator and Housing Navigator are part of the city Homeless

Navigation Program which was developed to help people experiencing a housing crisis obtain the services and resources that they need to thrive, up to and including stable housing. While the Navigators cannot increase the availability of affordable housing, they will provide direct support and help identify solutions to the many complex challenges faced by those at risk of homelessness and those seeking a pathway out of homelessness. They also work closely with local business communities, constituents, metro-area non-profit providers and government agencies.

Staff Report

Kory Kolar, Housing Navigator, presented the program update to council which included the client demographics report which contains details that are self-reported by individuals experiencing homelessness during the client intake process in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). During this process, the Homeless Navigator does not verify or validate the information as true or accurate.

The Homeless Navigator serves the cities of Wheat Ridge and Edgewater. This program previously supported Golden as well through October 2021. All data included in this report represents active client demographics. Once a client is housed or the relationship is inactive for 180 days, they are removed from the HMIS database.

The data points were:

- Age Range
- Gender
- Race
- Disability Status
- Physical Disability
- Chronic Health Condition
- HIV/AIDS Status
- Mental Health
- Substance Abuse
- Chronic Homeless Status
- Homelessness Frequency
- Veteran Status
- Hispanic Ethnicity
- Prior Living Situation
- Prior Living Duration
- Individual Income
- Household Income

CM had comments and questions:

Several CM thanked Mr. Kolar and the Navigation team for their informative presentation. They also thanked Mr. Kolar for his hard work with our residents experiencing homelessness.

- CM asked how the new housing at 44th and Wadsworth, developed jointly with Foothills Housing Authority, will be allocated. Mr. Kolar reported that those decisions are pending.
- CM also asked how best to connect community members with others who may have property our clients could use. Mr. Kolar suggested donating to the WR Community Foundation. He also disclosed that staff are working with ARC on a similar effort as well.
- CM Hultin recounted a story about a man experiencing homelessness who has told many folks that the Wheat Ridge Homeless Navigation program staff were the first to provide any genuine support and help.
- CM also asked that staff provide a small brochure-like resource sheet that staff and elected officials can provide to people experiencing homelessness so that they know where and from whom help is available.
- Mayor Starker asked about working with the unhoused population and does staff notice changes in the numbers of people in need, as a result of weather or other factors. Mr. Kolar provided a detailed response. He also asked Mr. Kolar whether he thinks we are making progress and headed in the right direction. Mr. Kolar answered affirmatively and emphatically; he said the model WR is using is by far the best and results in the most positive outcomes.
- CM Ohm asked about the interactions among our staff and municipal courts. Mr. Kolar gave a detailed answer.
- CM Hutchinson asked if we know where the severe weather shelters will be located. Mr. Kolar explained that details are still in the works, after which the staff will publish the list of severe weather shelters.

2. Regulating Uncodified Special Committees

Issue

Staff requests Council direction on the following items:

- Creating a policy to govern uncodified special committees.
- Applying that policy to existing committees.
- Appointing IDEA Committee Members.

Staff Report

Item 1 - Regulating Uncodified Special Committees

Cole Haselip, Management Analyst, spoke about the prior actions where staff presented an uncodified special committee appointment policy to Council at the August 7, 2023, Study Session. Council provided consensus to continue discussion of the policy to a future date. At that meeting, the Council also reached consensus to create the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) Committee.

He spoke also on the background of the issue where the committees were created to support the priorities of the City of Wheat Ridge, thereby empowering community members to enhance quality of life in the City.

Three of the four uncoded special committees were created in recent years. Recognizing the importance of these committees to the City and community members, staff analyzed how to increase their effectiveness. As a result, staff requests that the City Council consider a policy regulating uncoded special committees and how to apply that policy to existing committees.

Leading into discussion also on how to regulate Uncoded Special committees where there are recommendations that City Council adopt the following policy determining if the City Council, City staff, or both should select committee members:

1. Council-Selected Committees: Quasi-judiciary committees and/or advisory committees that have a direct impact on policy development, require broad public participation, or serve as a direct liaison between the community and the Council.
2. Staff-Selected Committees: Technical advisory committees, community liaison committees focused on specific activities or programs, or committees created for specific and limited-term community engagement projects.
3. Hybrid Committees: There may be times when the City creates a committee whose mission would be best accomplished as a hybrid of Council and Staff-Selected Committees. For example, an advisory committee related to a specific public improvement project that requires both specific technical expertise from committee members and a wide representation of community members.

Other topics addressed were:

- Rules; Staff recommends that the boards and commissions rules regarding term limits, term length, unexcused absences, automatic removal and the Boards and Commissions Code of Ethics apply to Council-Selected and Hybrid Committees.
- Accountability; Staff recommends that Council-Selected and Hybrid Committees be accountable to the City Council. Meaning that, by majority vote, the Council may suspend, modify, or dissolve these committees, create or amend committee bylaws, and remove committee members during a public hearing at their discretion or for violating the Boards and Commissions Code of Ethics.
- District Representation; Staff recommends that Council-Selected and Hybrid Committees reserve at least four positions for district representation, one for each district. These committees are intended to represent the different people, perspectives, communities, and neighborhoods in the City.

Clerk's Note: Staff and Council started this discussion intending to consider the five issues staff had identified one by one. It quickly became clear that the issues are interconnected and that the outcomes of the discussion would be combined into a single list of consensuses.

Item 2 - Applying Uncodified Special Committee Regulations to Existing Committees

Mr. Haselip also briefly described the existing uncodified special committees and recommend that they too be classified as Council-Selected, Staff-Selected, or Hybrid Committees.

Changes to those committees possibly included the:

- **Active Adult Center Advisory Committee (AACAC)**; No changes are required as a result of the committee's recommended classification.
- **Wheat Ridge Police Department Community Advisory Group (CAG)**; No changes are required as a result of the committee's recommended classification.
- **Sustainable Wheat Ridge (SWR)**; Recommendation that it be a Hybrid Committee with four seats, reserved for district representation, selected by the City Council and eight at-large positions, reserved for experts in the field, selected by City staff. Two of the staff-selected seats could be occupied by non-residents. The City Council would use the attached form to select SWR appointments (Attachment 1). This is the form that SWR currently uses to select its members. Alternatively, the Council could use the generic Boards and Commissions Form to select applicants.
- **Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) Committee**; No changes are required as a result of the committee's classification because it has not been organized.

Item 3 - Appointing IDEA Committee Members

Mr. Haselip reported that after reviewing similar applications from comparable municipalities, staff developed the attached IDEA Committee application for the Council to consider (Attachment 2). The application is separated into five sections:

1. Contact Information
2. Residency
3. Demographics
4. Committee Application Questions
5. Verification

He requests direction to include contact and demographic information for the City Council to consider during the committee member appointment process. Staff also requests feedback on the committee application questions.

Item 4 - IDEA Committee Application Questions

Staff Report

In the place of standard boards and commissions questions, staff has included a series of committee application questions designed to help Council and staff evaluate applicants. Staff requests feedback on the committee application questions prior to finalizing them.

1. Consensus to use demographic information to ensure that IDEA Committee appointments reflect the diversity of lived experience in Wheat Ridge.

2. Consensus to conceal some of the demographic information from the City Council during the appointment process.
3. Consensus to conceal all of the demographic information from the City Council during the appointment process.
4. Consensus to not collect demographic information in the IDEA Committee application.

Item 5 - IDEA Committee application questions

Staff report

Staff is looking for feedback on the application questions as presented.

CM had comments and questions:

The following list of CM comments and questions includes their feedback on all five of the items staff presented.

- Will appointments the staff makes be subject to Council approval?
- Is the Forfeiture Committee subject to these regulations?
- Please, explain the theory behind having staff appoint a majority of the IDEA and other committees. CM Dozeman opined that Council should select a majority of the people serving on all committees. Mr. Kolar responded that many of these are technical committees, so staff should ensure their technical qualifications.
- CM Hultin supported the proposed appointment process recommended by staff because many of those positions will actually support staff efforts to engage with highly technical content.
- MPT Stites agreed with CM Hultin's comments. He supports the appointment of at least one member of the Police Advisory Board from each district. He also supports having Council ratify the staff's recommendations for appointments.
- CM Weaver opined that staff look at not only expertise but also interest in serving and passion for the work. Be more inclusive of people who are passionate about an issue but would not necessarily appear to be qualified experts.
- CM Hoppe asked about serving only two, one-year terms as a liaison to a committee. She thinks that CM should also vote. CM Hultin opined that CM voting on the committees would give CM liaisons undue sway during committee deliberations.
- CM Hutchinson opined that demographic questions on committee member applications are inappropriate and may be illegal. She wants more information about applicants' expertise, connections to Wheat Ridge and passion for the work of the committee.
- The Mayor asked why staff are recommending that the CM appointed by the Mayor is not a voting member of the committee, board or commission. Mr. Haselip gave a detailed response, addressing the impact of having CM attend most meetings but not necessarily every meeting.

CM Hoppe proposed consensuses:

- A. Use the staff recommended framework for uncoded committees, except that membership on hybrid committees will be ratified by Council. Ratification means Council can override staff recommendations for any proposed member. Council will provide a list of recommended committee appointments before the slate is put onto Council packets.
- B. Apply the uncoded regulations as recommend by staff, with the following changes:
 - a. Change the Council liaisons terms to one, two-year term.
 - b. Change the community advisory committee to the WRPD to a hybrid committee.
 - c. Applicants will be considered based on expertise and interest.
- C. Keep the contact information in the application.
- D. We do not collect demographic information in the application process.
- E. We continue to collect IDEA committee's application except the demographics.

Consensuses attained.

3. Let's Talk Resident Engagement Program Update – North I-70 and Lutheran/Crown Hill

Issue

Lauren Mikulak, Director of Community Development presented the work plan summarizing the action items the City has presented to Let's Talk neighborhoods in response to resident feedback from 2020 to present. It includes a brief description of the item, identifies which neighborhoods have weighed in on the action item and their ranking and level of support¹, notes alignment with any City Council-adopted policies or current strategic priorities, and includes the current status of each item. Work plan items appear in the order in which they were added.

She noted that the Engagement Blitz Reports for each neighborhood more detailed summaries of the respective action items and resident input, and they can be found at www.whatsupwheatridge.com/lets-talk.

Some of the broad topics included in the work plan were:

- Increase Resources for Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP)
- Address Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)
- Adopt Tree Preservation Rules Expand Dumpster and Cleanup Days to Address Property Maintenance and Code Enforcement Issues
- Expand Bulk Plane
- Broaden Housing Options
- Improve Clear Creek North of 44th Avenue to Reduce Flood Impacts on Property

¹

Item 1 – Lutheran/Crown Hill

Staff Report

Ms. Mikulak spoke on the background of the item Let's talk program where on this item from March to September 2023, we heard from 182 individual Lutheran/Crown Hill residents about what's most important to them and what the City should do to respond as part of the Let's Talk Resident Engagement Program. This report summarizes what Lutheran/Crown Hill residents said during this engagement blitz.

She reported that they spoke with the residents of Lutheran/Crown Hill area, who have a broad and extensive range of issues that are important to them. Three issues that rose to the top based on the number of times that residents raised the topics during the Prime the Pump Survey were:

- Bike and Pedestrian Access and Safety
- Private Development Impacts on Neighborhood Character
- Traffic and Speeding

Ms. Mikulak spoke directly to the residents responses to the round 1 survey in many instances at their open house in August 2023 where most of the residents who commented on this action item voiced support. Some mentioned specific intersections where they would like to see crossings, including Dudley Street, Garrison Street, North Lutheran Parkway, Estes Street, Allison Street, and Holland Street. Other residents expressed a desire for more improvements to this section of W 32nd Avenue like a sidewalk on the north side of the street or a protected bike lane.

CM had comments and questions:

- CM thanked staff for their hard work in efforts to engage our residents, and for their presentation tonight.
- CM Ohm asked whether there is a place where What's Up Wheat Ridge brochures are stored online? Ms. Holland gave a detailed answer. Then he asked how often we will cycle back to reconnect with the neighborhoods to continue the flow of information in both directions. Again, Ms. Holland gave a detailed answer.
- MPT Stites recognized staff for their ability to take the incoming communication and transform it into useable intelligence and policy recommendations.
- CM Hultin echoed MPT Stites' comments, and underscored how important this work has been to Council, staff and our residents. The program has been really successful.
- The Mayor further recognized the impact this program has had on our communities.

On Wednesday, October 4, WR will receive an award from DRCOG for our community outreach program.

Item 2 – North I-70

Staff Report

Ms. Mikulak presented on both Round 1 and Round 2 of the engagement outreach and summarized them in detail. Round 1 was to find out what was most important to residents where round 2 was to prioritize action items.

During Round 1 of the engagement blitz, most resident spoke about three topics:

- Bike and Pedestrian Access and Safety
- Neighborhood Business Vitality
- Parks

She spoke on those items where they generally asked for more sidewalks and bike lanes. Others noted specific areas that need improvement like along Ridge Road and Ward Road. Several commenters requested better access to existing amenities nearby like the Clear Creek Trail and the Van Bibber Creek Trail.

On the business vitality item, she noted that many spoke on the lack of coffee shops, restaurants, and retail establishments in the area. Others mentioned the desire of a grocery store nearby. Where a few respondents voiced frustration that the amount of new residential units in the area is not translating into new commercial development.

Lastly, she reported that some North I -70 residents would like to see more parks and usable open space in their neighborhood. Several mentioned that the neighborhood feels industrial, and the addition of parks and greenspace would help it feel more like a neighborhood. Lastly others requested that the city improve access to existing parks and trails in the area.

CM had comments and questions:

CM thanked the staff for their hard work and for their excellent presentation.

4. Staff Report(s)

Nothing tonight.

5. Elected Officials' Report(s)

CM Hultin reported that this is National Week Without Driving. The organizers challenge elected officials to reduce their driving this week, or eliminate driving entirely for the week. We need volunteers this weekend to help with the dumpster recycling program this coming weekend. She reported that Happiness Gardens is going dormant soon.

CM Hutchinson lauded the electronic waste drop off this past weekend.

MPT Stites also was grateful for the electronic recycling. He cut the ribbons on two new business openings this past week. Saturday, October 14, at Louise Turner Park, there will be a District III meeting to discuss ballot proposition 2J.

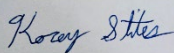
ADJOURNMENT

The Study Session adjourned at 8:28pm.

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL ON October 9, 2023.



Steve Kirkpatrick, City Clerk



Korey Stites, Mayor Pro Tem