

GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP SUMMARY
December 13, 2021

Meeting Convened: 5:37 p.m. Meeting held in person at the City Hall Auditorium, 250 North 5th Street, and live streamed via GoToWebinar.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:25 p.m.

City Councilmembers present: Councilmembers Phil Pe’a, Randall Reitz, Dennis Simpson, Rick Taggart, and Mayor Chuck McDaniel. Councilmembers Abe Herman and Anna Stout were absent.

Staff present: City Manager Greg Caton, City Attorney John Shaver, Visit Grand Junction Director Elizabeth Fogarty, Community Development Director Tamra Allen, City Forester Rob Davis, Senior Assistant to the City Manager Greg LeBlanc, City Clerk Wanda Winkelmann, and Deputy City Clerk Selestina Sandoval.

Mayor McDaniel called the meeting to order.

Agenda Topic 1. Discussion Topics

a. City Market Site Proposed Redevelopment - The Junction

Community Development Director Tamra Allen introduced the topic.

Richmark Real Estate Partners, LLC is proposing the redevelopment of the 4.6 acres at 200 Rood Avenue where the shell of the previous 66,000 square foot City Market Grocery store currently exists. The site is in the heart of downtown Grand Junction and within the City’s Downtown Development Authority. The project proposal includes a 256-unit for-rent apartment project. The grocery store closed in 2019 and has become a source of blight and disinvestment in Grand Junction’s downtown.

The City and DDA have long-standing adopted goals supporting and incentivizing housing in the downtown. This redevelopment is an opportunity to capitalize upon the successful work and energy of Main Street and build essential housing in the downtown that has largely been an idea that has languished for the last two decades. The site is easily accessible by bicycle or walking, is situated near both services and employment centers and is across the street from an existing transit stop.

Tyler Richardson with Richmark introduced the company and expressed appreciation for the Grand Junction community, the staff at the Housing Authority, and City staff for meeting with them. Richmark is a family owned company dedicated to providing a quality product.

Adam Fraser, Vice President of Real Estate with Richmark, shared the projects they have been involved with, including the South Maddie apartments and Doubletree Hotel in Greeley, the Exchange in Fort Collins, and Six Canyon in Glenwood Springs. Mr. Fraser discussed the impact study completed by Gruen Gruen and Associates and noted that the construction activity will support 369 jobs. Additionally, there is \$15 million of projected economic output and estimated sales tax revenue of \$206,000 annually. The project has a feasibility gap of \$7.5 million and Richmark is partnering with the City, school district, and the Downtown Development Authority in pursuit of an affordable housing development incentives grant through the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA).

Discussion ensued regarding the amount requested in grants, a market study for this project, the pre-application meeting with DOLA on Thursday, the current blighted condition of the proposed site, the timing of this week's Executive Session, the fee structure used in Greeley, and hiring local contractors.

b. Lodging Tax Resolution Discussion

City Attorney John Shaver provided a brief overview of the topic.

On November 6, 2018, voters approved a 3% increase to the Lodgers Tax (Lodgers Tax Increase). In relevant part, the ballot question allowed for the 1.75 % of the Lodgers Tax Increase to be spent to promote, market, and obtain travel and tourism and tourism related activities. The voters authorized the City to annually budget .75% of the Lodgers Tax Increase to the Greater Grand Junction Sports Commission for marketing, promoting, and sponsoring sporting activities, events, tournaments, competitions and exhibitions and 1.0% of the Lodgers Tax Increase to the Grand Junction Regional Air Service Alliance (GJRASA) for marketing, supporting, and/or arranging for additional direct airline service to and from Grand Junction. Changes in any allocation(s) of the Lodgers Tax Increase are subject to future determinations by the City Council.

Due to staffing challenges, primarily pilot shortages, and other major disruptions in the air service industry, all of which were compounded by COVID, the assumptions under which Resolution No. 45-18 was adopted have materially changed. In light of these significant changes, the Council will be reviewing the Resolution and the goals of the GJRASA. After due consideration, the Council may amend Resolution No. 45-18 regarding the expenditure of the Lodgers Tax Increase revenue in support of the GJRASA's mission.

GJRASA Chairman Jay Seaton discussed the use of the funds and whether retaining airline service could be considered part of marketing and supporting airline service. Airlines have pulled back service due to COVID and the airport would like to preserve the flights they have and stop the leakage of travelers to other airports.

Discussion ensued regarding the allowable use of the funds as outlined in the ballot language and reviewing the Memorandum of Understanding to consider adjusting the cap to GJRASA.

Support was expressed for a new resolution to be brought forward that would clarify the use of funds to preserve flights.

c. Boards and Commission Applicant Interview Process

In September 2020, a memo was provided to City Council about the Board and Commission program. Topics covered in that memo included the Board and Commission structure, recruitment/orientation for applicants, interviews and interview questions, term expirations, and certificates of appointments. Since that time, improvements have been made to the program to include: starting the recruitment process four months prior to term expirations; inviting applicants to attend a board meeting prior to their interview; and eliminating the presentation of certificates at Council meetings (they are now presented at the appointee's first board meeting).

The Agenda Committee has requested a workshop to discuss additional improvements and City Clerk Winkelmann presented options for the composition of the Interview Team, alternates, and interview questions.

A conversation was held about Interview Teams and support was expressed to change them from three members of Council to two members of Council plus a board/commission Chair (or another member if the Chair is being considered for reappointment).

Currently the Planning Commission and Forestry Board have formal alternates. Support was expressed to have the Planning Commission continue with the appointment of alternates and amend the code to change the Forestry Board to a seven-member board without alternates. For all other boards and commissions, the Interview Team can select qualified applicants who could be appointed in the event of a mid-year vacancy.

The Council discussed potential interview questions and support was expressed for the standard questions along the lines of:

- Tell us about yourself and why you are interested in serving on this board.
- How have your past experiences prepared you to serve on this board? Have you attended a board meeting?
- Describe your involvement with issues pertaining to the City of Grand Junction.
- Any questions for the interview team?

It was noted it would be helpful to schedule interviews to last for fifteen minutes and the Interview Team can hold longer interviews as the schedule permits.

Councilmember Simpson serves on the Grand Valley Regional Transportation Commission and stated it would be helpful to have a substitute in the event of his absence. Support was expressed to have City Manager Caton serve as substitute.

Agenda Topic 2. City Council Communication

Graduation ceremonies are being held Friday at Colorado Mesa University and members of Council will be attending one or more of the events.

Councilmember Taggart requested a future discussion about “replying to all” in emails.

Agenda Topic 3. Next Workshop Topics

City Manager Caton stated that the next City Council workshop will be held on January 10, 2022 to discuss cannabis regulations.

Agenda Topic 4. Other Business

There was none.

Adjournment

The workshop adjourned at 7:25 p.m.