

COUNCIL WORK SESSION
Tuesday, February 23, 2021 at 4:30 p.m.
City Hall - Council Meeting Room

AGENDA

1. Council Meeting Follow-up
2. Parking on Parkways & Parking Manual
3. Council Goals & Objectives
4. Agenda Review
5. Legislative Review
6. Council Around the Table

Mayor Freel called the meeting to order at 4:36 p.m. with the following Councilmembers present: Knell, Pollock, Cathey, Gamroth, Johnson, Engebretsen, Vice Mayor Pacheco, and Mayor Freel. Councilmember Lutz attended the meeting via conference call.

Vice Mayor Pacheco updated Council on the nicotine ordinance, and explained that he and Councilmember Pollock met with the Mercer Family Resource Center to look at ways to incorporate education into the requirements for individuals under 18 years old who violate the ordinance. They agreed that this provides an incentive for not smoking in the wake of the drastically reduced fines.

Next, City Manager Napier discussed changes to the parking manual and stated that a group of staff members from different departments have been meeting to review changes to processing of and fee changes to parking permits. He also briefly described issues that have arisen regarding parking on the parkways, and explained that parkways are owned by the City but maintained by homeowners. The parkways are considered part of the right-of-way but have been used for parking by residents in certain neighborhoods, especially on streets that are narrow. He stated that Councilmembers asked to discuss this item and said that during that discussion staff would like direction on how Council would like to proceed on the parkway issue.

He then introduced Liz Becher, Community Development Director, to discuss the updated parking manual and parking on parkways. Ms. Becher explained that a new software system for processing permits and licenses prompted the revisions to the parking manual. The new manual and software will streamline these processes and make them more efficient for citizens. She highlighted some of the changes which included expanding the downtown parking district boundary, changes to snow routes, and changing where parking permits originate to the engineering division, with the exception of recreational vehicle (RV) parking which will originate in the City Clerk's office for now and will eventually be moved to the Police Department. Other changes included changes to fees for critical/school parking; for private handicap spaces, which is proposed to reduce to \$50; and RV parking which is proposed to increase to \$500 annually. She explained that the increase for RV parking was market-based and competitive with private storage companies throughout town. Police Chief McPheeters also explained that the fee changes were based on needs accommodations versus want/convenience permits, with handicap parking being deemed a need

that should be charged a lower fee and RV parking being deemed a convenience which should be charged a higher fee. Ms. Becher explained that the proposal for RV parking includes changes to the process for obtaining signatures from neighbors. Staff is proposing that these signatures be collected by community service officers (CSO's) as opposed to the applicant. Staff is also recommending removing construction parking permits and courtesy parking permits, and removing special needs parking permits and consolidating this permit with the private handicap permit.

Councilmember Knell asked about removing the handicap fee altogether and Andrew Beamer (Public Services Director) explained that part of this fee aids in the cost of staff physically putting up a sign. Councilmembers asked questions regarding the different changes, including asking about the revenue and number of parking permits applied for each year. Ms. Becher responded that there are 10-15 RV parking permits applied for each year and all of the parking permits bring in about \$4K per year. Council also discussed enforcement for the RV parking, agreeing that it can cause issues for neighbors but that it is difficult to enforce because currently people are allowed to park their RV's on the street for as long as five days at a time, so as long as they move it every five days they can legally continue to park it on the street without obtaining a permit. Chief McPheeters stated that with the current number of RV parking permits applied for each year he does not see a huge demand on his staff to gather signatures, but that may not be the case if the number of permits increase. He described that the current enforcement processes are complaint-based and that education will be key in getting citizens to comply with the parking restrictions. Mr. Beamer also described the process for handicap parking which requires a doctor's documentation about how long the space is required.

Ms. Becher then discussed parking on the parkways, and explained that current city regulations do prohibit parking on parkways, but per Council's direction in 2017, staff has not enforced this. The Planning and Zoning Commission and Visit Casper have recommended against allowing this type of parking for aesthetic reasons as well as preventing curb erosion, stormwater drainage issues, and to help preserve trees. There are also safety concerns for people pulling out onto the street and for citizens walking on the sidewalks. She stated that staff would take direction from Council on how to move forward with the parkway issue and offered three options including: always allowing parking on the parkways without a permit, never allowing parking on the parkways (which is in the current ordinance), or only allowing parking on the parkways with a permit. She then presented photos of what the parkways currently look like on 12th and 13th streets with various types of vehicles illegally parking on the parkways.

Ms. Becher stated that if Council does decide to move forward with the permitting option, staff would recommend that CSO's obtain signatures from the neighbors. Chief McPheeters then reviewed the safety concerns regarding parking on the parkways, including decreased sight distance and diagonal entry onto busy streets. He stated that there is a low frequency of crashes on 12th and 13th streets considering the amount of traffic that these streets see, arguing that although residents on these streets may perceive the streets to be too dangerous to be parked on, they are relatively very safe roadways. Council discussed the lack of other types of parking on these narrow streets for citizens and other pros and cons of allowing this type of parking, including the

possibility that it may be safer for these vehicles to park on the parkways as opposed to on the street. Council discussed allowing some types of vehicles to park on the parkways and disallowing other types of vehicles, such as trailers and other RV's. Chief McPheeters stated that staff had looked at other types of requirements to allow parkway parking, including requiring homeowners to install a solid surface, only allowing one car, not allowing people to park on the parkway and on the street (side by side), allowing only smaller vehicles, etc. City Manager Napier stated that staff would recommend prohibiting parkway parking for safety reasons, but if Council would like to allow some parkway parking, he would recommend there be these types of requirements to that permitting. Councilmember Pollock asked about safety and accident data related to parking on the parkways, and Chief McPheeters responded that this type of data may be hard to come by because parkway parking data is not currently collected as a contributing factor to an accident and would therefore not be in the data sets.

Council discussed the possibility of sending out postcards to neighbors allowing them to state reasons for not wanting their neighbor to have a parking permit, as opposed to asking CSO's to get signatures from those neighbors. Councilmember Engebretsen suggested allowing any parking-related complaints to be made using the same online app that is being used for potholes, and City Manager Napier stated that staff would look into this option. Council directed staff to do research about what other communities do about parking on parkways and to revise parkway parking to include guidelines such as solid surface requirements, specific high traffic/narrow streets, type of vehicle, prohibit removal of trees, prohibit blocking sidewalks, and prohibit damaging curbs. They asked that this follow-up be added to the agenda for the March 9th work session.

Councilmember Engebretsen also brought up a separate issue regarding people parking multiple vehicles on a street, leaving little to no parking spaces for their neighbors and congesting the street. Chief McPheeters stated that the Police Department has been trying to reduce these types of issues, but these people have found a loophole in the current law. He stated that if Council would like to direct staff to look into ways to address this issue, staff would gladly take that direction.

Next, City Manager Napier led a discussion about Council goals and objectives. He reviewed some suggestions for goals to center on based on his discussions with each of the Councilmembers. These suggestions included: utilizing social media and engaging citizenry; analyzing subsidies and recreational assets; and diversification of the economy.

Councilmembers discussed some of their top priorities including consolidating consultant plans in different areas into a cohesive, comprehensive plan for the City and continually updating the plan; increasing citizen engagement and education through a public relations officer and social media; utilizing advisory committees to delve deeper into issues important to the City; ways to diversify Casper's economy; long-range planning for capital projects and looking into maintenance and repair of facilities and assets, such as the Wastewater Treatment Plant and street repairs; improving technological infrastructure; and budgeting in a climate of declining revenue and resources.

City Manager Napier reviewed his perceived direction on basic priorities discussed, which included infrastructure/capital planning, strategies to improve citizen engagement, basic budget

strategy/business plans, business/technological infrastructure, and asset diversification. Council gave their thumbs up to these priorities and directed staff to work on a fleshed-out agenda of the priorities and bring it back for review to a future Council work session. Council also asked for an analysis on the history of different facilities and assets and funding sources for those facilities/assets that need repairs including stormwater, baseball fields, irrigation, etc.

Next, Council reviewed the agendas for upcoming Council meetings and work sessions. Council asked for the Fort Caspar item to be added to an agenda sometime before the budget is discussed.

Next, City Manager Napier discussed state legislative items that impact the City of Casper. He stated that there would not be a bill coming forward regarding the fire pension issue in this legislative session, but this will be a topic to keep an eye out for the future. There have been discussion surrounding direct distribution funding that may not be favorable to the City of Casper, and will likely result in a 5% reduction in Casper's funding.

Next, Council went around the table to discuss their respective boards and commissions and other matters of public interest. Councilmember Engebretsen asked about the air conditioning for the Senior Center. Councilmember Pacheco stated that he will be making a motion to table to the tobacco ordinance item to a date certain at next week's regular Council meeting in order to allow the City Attorney time to draft an amendment for the educational option that was discussed at the beginning of the work session.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF CASPER, WYOMING
A Municipal Corporation

Fleur Tremel
City Clerk

Steven K. Freel
Mayor