

COUNCIL WORK SESSION
Tuesday, August 24, 2021 at 4:30 p.m.
City Hall - Council Chambers

AGENDA

1. Council Meeting Follow-up
2. Missing Persons Legislation
3. Murie Audubon Society Wetland Request
4. Discussion of Restriction for Retail Liquor License #5 – Commissary Mall
5. Agenda Review
6. Legislative Review
7. Council Around the Table

Mayor Freel began the meeting at 4:31 p.m. with the following Councilmembers present: Engebretsen, Gamroth, Pollock, Cathey, Knell, Vice Mayor Pacheco, and Mayor Freel. Councilmember Johnson was absent. City Attorney Henley filled in for City Manager Napier.

There were no Council follow-up items.

City Attorney Henley began by discussing missing persons legislation. He stated that Desirée Tinoco spoke at a Council meeting in December about the difficulty tracking missing persons, and since then has worked with the legislature and police department to establish procedures to improve the process. He stated that Casper has taken the lead in assisting with drafting state legislation and would like Council's support in the direction of that legislation. He then introduced Police Captain Chaney to elaborate on the process. Captain Chaney described efforts to establish a statewide database clearinghouse and hiring a full time DCI state-level employee to manage that database. He also discussed procedures that would require specific benchmarks that would take away some of the rationalization for police officers to delay the process and would require the Police Department to collect information and records at the front end of the process. He also explained how much time the process can take. Ms. Tinoco then described her concerns with the current process and with Wyoming's lack of a public database. Council gave their thumbs up in support of Casper's efforts to develop this legislation.

Next, City Attorney Henley discussed a request from the Murie Audubon Society regarding land that they own and would like to fence off to limit dogs running through the area. The property is located by the Platte River and is adjacent to Morad Park. Fencing this area off will allow the wetland system to thrive. The City also has a parcel of land adjacent to this property and the Audubon Society is requesting to fence that small area as well to allow for a straighter fence line. There will be no transfer of land. City Attorney Henley then introduced Zach Hutchinson from the Audubon Society to discuss the wetland area. Mr. Hutchinson described that the barrier will be made of three-foot-high woven wire with decorative posts. It will still allow small and large animals to pass through and there will be no barbed wire. The barrier will help prevent off-leash dogs from disturbing the area and will allow for the land to be enjoyed as a bird sanctuary. He stated that there are several other pond areas next to the river that will still be available in Morad

Park for dog use and the trail will not be affected by the fence. City Attorney Henley introduced Eagle Scout Wyatt Warner to discuss the building of the fence. Mr. Warner stated that he is organizing the project and explained that the fence will be constructed during two volunteer days in September. He will head up the volunteer recruitment and organization. Councilmembers discussed their support of the project and gave their thumbs up to move the project forward for formal consideration at a regular Council meeting.

Next, City Attorney Henley discussed restrictions on Retail Liquor License #5. Councilmember Pollock recused herself from the agenda item and left the Council Chambers for the discussion. He discussed the background of issues with this liquor license holder and stated that there have been no liquor purchases from this business since December 2020. He explained that the City Council had previously requested that the owner, Travis Taylor, provide a progress report on the use of the license in September 2021. Now, the owners of the Commissary Mall have come to an agreement with Mr. Taylor and are hoping to use the liquor license in the renovated Commissary Mall. He then introduced Bob Moberly and Kyle Ridgeway, part of WERCS (Wyoming Financial Group) that owns the Commissary Mall, to discuss their plans. Mr. Ridgeway passed out architectural renderings for the renovation of the Commissary Mall to Council. Mr. Moberly explained that the plans include a package liquor store, off-track racing machines, and a bar. Mr. Ridgeway stated that WERCS (Wyoming Financial Group) signed a contract to acquire the liquor license this afternoon from Mr. Taylor and are hoping to have a transfer application to the City Council within 30 days. 307 Horse Racing will actually own the liquor license. The building would hopefully be ready to open in a year, so the liquor license would be parked until that time. All of the tenants have been moved out of the Commissary Mall. Mr. Ridgeway explained that there is not a plan to have a full restaurant at the business but finger foods will be offered. Councilmembers discussed that they want to see this license used correctly and are in support of the business plan to utilize the license. Mayor Freel emphasized that this is a direct purchase between two parties and is not a liquor license that the City currently holds and is issuing.

Councilmember Pollock returned to the meeting.

Next, Council reviewed upcoming agendas for work sessions and regular Council meetings.

Next, Council went around the table to discuss their respective board and committee meetings as well as other matters of public interest. Vice Mayor Pacheco stated that the LGBTQ Advisory Committee has decided to pursue a Safe Place program for Casper independent of the one currently in place in Seattle. The Seattle program wanted the City to change some ordinances in order to accommodate that program and staff and the Committee were not comfortable with pursuing those changes. Councilmember Knell spoke about how enlightening it was to attend the LGBTQ Advisory Committee meeting. Mayor Freel asked Council if they would support putting money towards two more teen nights at David Street Station, because the first was very successful and decreased vandalism in the area. The cost would be \$500 per event night. Council gave their thumbs up to support the events.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:27 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF CASPER, WYOMING
A Municipal Corporation

Fleur Tremel
City Clerk

Steven K. Freel
Mayor