

## COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Tuesday, March 8, 2016, 4:30 p.m.  
Casper City Hall  
Council Meeting Room

### AGENDA

1. 21st & Wyoming Boulevard Property Discussion (Memo from VH)
2. Platte River Trails (Angela Emery)
3. Amendments to 2015-2016 CDBG Plans (Liz Becher)
4. City Manager Report
5. Future Agenda Review
6. Council Around the Table

Mayor Sandoval called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m. with the following Councilmembers present: Councilman Powell, Miller, Hopkins, Heili, Johnson, Cathey, Pacheco, Schlager, and Sandoval.

City Manager McDonald introduced the following homeowners with homes near the City-owned property at 21<sup>st</sup> Street and Wyoming Boulevard to discuss their concerns: Debby Schnell, Cindy Chopping, Stephanie Paris, Doug Gibson, Rob Schnook, and Joe Maguire. The homeowners each discussed some of their concerns with how the land is currently being used. The issues addressed included the zoning of the land as park historic and how the land is currently being used as a snow removal dump site. Several of the homeowners stated that they are concerned about water from the melting snow causing foundation issues for their homes. They also complained that the noise from the snow removal equipment can be very disrupting. The homeowners requested that the City put up signs indicating that the land is a park and put up some type of barrier to prevent traffic from entering the land. They also requested that the land no longer be used as a snow removal dump site.

Councilman Hopkins stated that the City could look into correcting drainage issues if they exist. Councilman Pacheco stated that he supports the homeowners and feels that the City needs to find another location for the snow. Councilman Miller asked if there are other places we could store the snow. Mayor Sandoval responded that we currently have a large dump site off of Brian Stock Trail. He stated that the City previously used another location off of Poplar and Wyoming Boulevard but that land is now being developed, so it can no longer be used for snow dumping purposes.

Councilman Powell addressed the issue of putting a park sign up for the land. He stated that doing so would mean designating the land as a park which would tie the land up forever. It would never be able to be used for anything else. Mayor Sandoval added that the “parks historic” designation was an agreement with the developer and that this is no longer enforceable. Councilman Heili stated that he does not think that the land is in a good location for a park, because it is located on Wyoming Boulevard. Mayor Sandoval agreed with Councilman Heili and stated that he feels there

would be some major safety concerns with making the land a park. Councilman Cathey agreed, and stated that there is already a park one and a half blocks away from that location.

Councilman Cathey asked the homeowners why this issue is only being brought forth after the potential land swap deal if it has caused so many problems. The homeowners stated that they did not know they could do anything about it until now, and that before 21<sup>st</sup> Street was developed, the snow was dumped further away from their homes. Councilman Cathey stated that there are foundation issues with many houses in Casper due to the type of soil, and that these are not necessarily related to the snow dumping. He also added that the snow removal process may be changing due to budget constraints and the City may start to plow the snow to the sides of the street. Councilman Powell agreed and stated that Casper uses a very expensive snow removal process and that most other communities are not provided with the same type of service.

Councilman Heili requested that City Staff provide Council with an analysis of the City's obligations in relation to this land and of snow piling alternatives. Council agreed to wait until after Staff provides an analysis to make a decision about the land. City Manager McDonald stated Staff could provide a report for Council on this issue by the Work Session on April 26, 2016.

Next, Mayor Sandoval introduced Angela Emery, Executive Director of Platte River Trails Trust, to update Council on the status of the Platte River Trails. Ms. Emery began by giving a brief summary of the recent accomplishments of the organization over the last year, including the construction of the Fort Casper underpass and the Bart Rea Learning Circle. She then discussed a Wyoming House Bill that was passed that will create a task force that will compile a report on the benefits that trails provide to Wyoming. She then discussed some of the projects the organization is focusing on in the upcoming year, including Amoco Park construction, the Rotary Park trail, bathrooms by the Tate Pumphouse, and a new outdoor fitness center. Some of these projects will be grant-funded, and the organization is continually applying for grants for different projects.

Councilman Powell asked how Cheyenne funded their extensive trail system. Ms. Emery replied that Cheyenne sets aside a portion of its budget for trails every year. They also use a part of their 6<sup>th</sup> cent tax for trails, which was part of their 6<sup>th</sup> cent campaign. Councilman Hopkins suggested looking into how other municipalities have added the 6<sup>th</sup> cent tax for projects like this. Councilman Powell agreed that this is something the City should consider investigating.

Councilman Powell then asked if there is anything the City can do for the organization apart from funding, because funding may not be available due to the recent financial downturn. Ms. Emery responded that the trail system is aging and needs to be maintained. She stated she would like it if the City would consider adding this maintenance to their list of capital projects, and for there to be a more defined maintenance agreement with the City.

Next, Mayor Sandoval introduced Liz Becher, Community Development Director, to discuss amendments to the 2015-2016 CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) Plans for the LifeSteps Campus. She began by explaining that each year HUD (US Department of Housing and Urban Development) allocates money to the City, and the proposals for using that allocation are presented to the City Council in April. Over the past several years, there has been an accumulation of unexpended funds that HUD is now requiring the City to use. Staff is requesting that these funds

be reallocated for a new heating system for the LifeSteps Campus. This project is sizeable enough to use up a large portion of the unexpended funds. The project is estimated to cost around \$379,000 and will be completed by June 30, 2016. The second change is an amendment to the Citizen Participation Plan. The protocol for HUD requires that the public comment period be moved to 15 days. With Council's approval both of these changes will be part of a Public Hearing at next week's Regular Council Meeting.

Councilman Powell asked what shape the current boiler is in and if Staff has considered using these funds to help low income citizens with the dead tree issue. Ms. Becher responded that the boiler is no longer working. She stated that the City had to choose a project one year ago to spend the unexpended funds on and that is why the heating system was chosen as opposed to helping residents with the dead trees. She added that Staff has been working on a plan for dealing with the tree situation and has been in contact with HUD. The tree issue is currently being vetted at the regional HUD Office to see what funding may be available to help low income residents who cannot afford to cut down their dying trees.

Mayor Sandoval asked for a thumbs up vote to bring forward the resolutions for the amendments to the CDBG Plans at next week's Regular Council Meeting. Council voted to bring the resolutions forward.

Next, City Manager McDonald presented Council with the City Manager's report. He discussed the state of the City's budget. The sales tax revenue for March was down 40% from expected. The City is using reserve funds to help offset costs, and Staff are working on making further cuts for next year's budget. He added that retail sales have stayed somewhat steady, but this may change as the downturn continues.

City Manager McDonald stated that the City is working on an Infrastructure Contingency Agreement with the Parkway Plaza. Council has been sent invitations to tour the hotel. If they have not already set up a time, Councilmembers should contact the City Manager's Office to schedule their tours. He also reminded Council that the groundbreaking for Fire Station Number 6 has been scheduled for 2:00 p.m. on March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016.

City Manager McDonald presented Council with a review of the future agenda for the Regular Council Meeting on March 15, 2016.

Next, Councilmembers reported updates for each of their respective board meetings.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF CASPER, WYOMING  
A Municipal Corporation

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Tracey L. Belser  
City Clerk

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Daniel Sandoval  
Mayor