

## **Arvada City Council Workshop, July 28, 2014**

### *City Council and the Seven Dwarf (Goats)*

Notes taken by Susan Shirley

Monday night's workshop covered the subjects of parking in Olde Town during this period of heavy construction, and the proposed Citizens' Capital Improvement Projects Committee. Updates touched on the potential inclusion in future workshops of E-cigarettes, dwarf goats, and Jake brakes.

In attendance were Mayor Marc Williams, Mayor Pro Tem Mark McGoff, and Councilmembers Don Allard, Bob Fifer, Jerry Marks, and John Marriott. Councilmember Bob Dyer was absent. Public attendance amounted to six people.

### Parking

Arvada's Sustainability Coordinator Jessica Prosser spoke to council about the current parking situation. Enforcement of parking regulations began in March of this year, and to date, 278 citations have been written. The Grandview lot will be closed July 24, for a loss of 22 spaces, and the Tiller lot closes September 14, for a loss of 117 spaces.

Offsetting those losses are the overflow lot at the park and ride, for a gain of 65 spaces, and an agreement for weekday parking at the Vineyard Church lot, for a gain of 72 spaces. So we have lost 134 spaces and gained 137, though the new spaces are located at a greater distance from Olde Town.

Construction of the parking garage is set for September 14, and it's estimated that there will be fifty to one hundred construction workers onsite every day for fifteen months. However, City Manager Mark Deven noted that Kiewit, the contractor, is sensitive to the problem and actually spoke with the merchants in Olde Town; there is the possibility of having some or all of the workers park offsite and be shuttled in.

Portions of Vance Street and Olde Wadsworth will be closed at various times this fall, although not at the same time.

Councilmember Don Allard asked if it is possible to park in the theater lot during the day without being towed. Prosser said she has not heard of anyone being towed.

Some options Prosser and others are exploring:

Incentives for Olde Town employees to park farther away, and walk in; conveniently dovetails with the Healthy Places Initiative, as does added bike parking and a bike sharing program;

A circulator shuttle, including possible use of a low speed electric vehicle;

Possibly getting RTD to make the area an EcoPass district, which would allow much lower bus fare;

Designating van and carpool parking;

Carshare/Car 2 Go.

Prosser and others are communicating and coordinating with HOTA, AURA, the larger Olde Town employers, and the owners of leased parking.

Councilmember John Marriott asked about parking on the north side of Ralston Road, such as near Gunther Toody's. Prosser said if the demand is there that may be something to be looked at as needed.

Mayor Williams said, "This is the classic situation; we are victims of our success." He said that the City will deal with the situation appropriately, and thanked Prosser for her work with businesses and residents. Williams said that he envisions the parking spreading out into the residential areas, and that he thinks HOTA has done a great job of reaching out to the neighborhoods.

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#### Citizens' Capital Improvement Projects Committee

For background, the June 9 workshop of the City Council can be found at this link:

<http://earthside.typepad.com/files/arvada-council-meeting-6-9-14.pdf>

At hand is a dilemma involving about \$70 million available for capital improvements over ten years, while at the same time having identified needs that exceed the anticipated money to pay for those improvements. City Manager Mark Deven proposed repeating a strategy the city found successful in 2007-2008, which is to convene a panel of citizens to assist in prioritizing projects.

In the 2007-2008 effort, 67 people applied online, council preselected six members and the remaining 27 were selected via interview with council members, for a total of 33 panelists. There were twenty meetings projected and a target completion date of May of 2008; in practice, it actually ran until about August or September, but finished in time for inclusion in the budget. It was generally regarded as successful, but there were major downsides, notably a significant drain on staff time.

If a similar group is empaneled now, it would be made clear from the outset that the role of the committee is to recommend projects in order of priority, from the perspective of the citizens. Deven also recommends bringing in an outside facilitator from the beginning, as opposed to the staff facilitator used in the earlier committee.

Deven brought up for discussion some of the various processes which could be used to select committee members. He said that a similar application process could be used, and said that if that were the route taken it would behoove Councilmembers to form a screening committee. Selections could be based on such criteria as professional, personal, or volunteer backgrounds, previous civic activities, and knowledge and/or involvement in the community.

An alternate method would be for councilmembers to simply appoint two or three people apiece, with or without an application process.

Regarding the panel size, Deven said that of the 33 members in the 2007-08 committee, between 28 and 31 attended each meeting and stuck it out to the end. But, he said, it can be challenging to manage a group that large, and suggested a 20 or 25-member panel to begin with.

Once empaneled, Deven said there would ideally be review of the process used in 2007-08, as well as the City Council Strategic Plan, the plans for the Justice Center, streets and roads, the Comp Plan, and the City departments' Strategic Plans. He would like to also involve the Parks Advisory Board, the Planning Commission, and other boards and commissions as needed.

Deven envisions the final product as a priority list to be finalized in about June or July of 2015. He would also like the meetings of the committee to be public meetings from the very beginning, to be held in an appropriate venue to allow that, and with a provision for public comment. He added that, given the tremendous commitment of resources expected for the projects, it makes sense to spend some money up front to make sure the funds are allocated properly.

Councilmember Don Allard suggested also familiarizing panelists with the Citizens' Survey the city conducts every few years, in order to better understand citizens' viewpoints on a number of subjects.

Councilmember John Marriott said that he is very much in favor of a citizens' committee, and that he remembers a lot of good thinking coming out of the 2007-08 effort. He said it should be emphasized that the committee's role is advisory, and that Council will make the final decisions. He agreed that a panel of 33 members is a little large, but warned against too small of a panel as well. He suggested each member appoint three people, for a total of 21, which should also be representative of each district and valuable for that reason. He added that he agrees the meetings need to be public, and that he would like to attend some of them.

Councilmember Jerry Marks voiced concerns with the size of the committee, saying that 7 to 12 people seemed better, and recommended selecting some or all from HOTA, the Chamber of Commerce, City Council, and other similar groups; "That way we get the cream of the crop," he alleged.

Mayor Marc Williams responded that, as applications are solicited, those groups can be encouraged to get seats at the table, but if groups such as CLRC or SAN have someone they'd like to send that is good, too. He continued, "I don't care who the groups are, and even if I don't like who they're picking, if it's someone I think ought to be at the table, I'm gonna use one of my picks to put them there."

Mayor Pro Tem Mark McGoff said he likes the idea of a screening committee better than appointing members. He said people will come forward from the community who are not currently known to the organizers; inviting people from throughout the community strikes him as a better way to go than to appoint people already known to Council. He said he would like to see a screening committee made up of City Council and staff members. He wants to make sure the citizens' panel is made up of a wide spectrum of thought and background.

Williams, speaking to the question of a hired facilitator guiding the meetings, said that that approach may help with the finished product not looking like a staff-driven, preconceived notion making sure the Council gets the result they want. He said that Council really wants this to be an open process, which committee members can feel they own, resulting in a truer, better, result.

Councilmember Bob Fifer said that he agrees with Marriott's points. He also warned against a facilitator stifling collaborative discussions, that it would be counterproductive to have a facilitator so driven that they cut off citizens from healthy discussion, and that staff should maintain oversight for that reason.

Williams said that he thinks the committee concept is great, and that one of the true assets of Arvada is the many citizens who care deeply and are willing to give input. He said he agrees with Councilmember Allard that officials are elected to make decisions, but added that citizen input is invaluable to that process. He emphasized that the committee will not be just for "window dressing or rubberstamping" of Council's wishes. In reference to the selection process, Williams noted that the usual type of interviews lasting 7 or 8 minutes resembles speed dating, and is a tough way to select people. He added that he is intrigued by the idea of each Councilmember picking three people from a pool.

Marriott added that Councilmembers can interview their own choices, especially those from their districts.

McGoff spoke in favor of a screening committee, and outlining the factors and criteria involved in choosing panelists. He said he likes the collective judgment of the Council better than the individual judgment of its members.

Marriott said one thing that is important is to make sure the panel is as broadly based as possible, adding that "us seven look very similar," and that choosing as a group could end up with a panel more similar than different. He said that if each Councilmember chooses individually, he believes it would give a broader spectrum of panelists.

McGoff took the exact opposite position.

Williams said he tends to go with Marriott's point of view on that, saying that Marriott might have some "totally off-the-wall" pick the rest of the members may not have considered.

Fifer agreed and added that if each Councilmember has three picks it will diversify and broaden the base.

Allard said, "We could talk about this for four days."

Williams replied, "Yes, but the night is young."

Allard said, "I'm not!"

Deven noted that one of the most important things for the committee members to understand is the substantial time commitment. Councilmember Marks asked if it might make sense to have some alternates, but Marriott said he thinks it doesn't make sense to ask people to be alternates, because they would have to put in the time without having any say. Marriott said with a 21-person committee there should be plenty of people to last to the end. Williams suggested, that if a vacancy needed to be filled, it could be done with people who had already regularly attended meetings and so were up to speed.

Allard said, "I don't see why it would take a year to do this anyway; if they meet once a week I think they could get it done in three to four months, max."

Williams and Deven agreed that, especially with the skills of a facilitator, the time frame could be significantly shortened.

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Updates:

City Manager Mark Deven asked if Council would want a workshop on the subject of E-Cigarettes, and the regulation of them similar to public smoking bans.

Two members brought up a recent Denver Post editorial on the subject. Williams, Fifer, McGoff, and Marks are in favor of a workshop; Marriott and Allard are not.

Next was the question of a workshop on allowing dwarf goats to be kept within Arvada by amending the agriculture regulations.

Marriott said he is all for freedom, including dwarf goats. McGoff said there was only one request so far and to have a workshop it seems there should be more public interest. He added that he is skeptical about dwarf goats, but is willing to have a workshop. Allard did not want a workshop. Fifer agreed that he would like to see more requests from citizens on the subject. Deven said there was mention of it about a year ago, but not enough info for a discussion. Marks and Williams thought a workshop would be OK if done on a night when there wasn't a lot going on.

Jake Brakes were the final topic of discussion. Engine brakes, also known as Jake Brakes (after their manufacturer) reduce brake failure in big rigs by using the engine itself to slow the truck down. Unfortunately, they are noisy and their use is banned in many areas, as noted by Councilmember Bob Fifer, who said on a recent trip to the mountains, he saw about twelve signs prohibiting their use. A topic for a future workshop might be the restriction on the brakes or else utilizing the police department to enforce safety equipment rules, including mufflers on brakes.

Following mention of some vacancies on the Board of Adjustment and the Human Services Advisory Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30.