

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSION
September 6, 2022

City Commission Work Session
Civic Center, Gibson Room 212

Mayor Pro Tempore Wolff presiding

CALL TO ORDER: 5:30 PM

CITY COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Susan Wolff, Joe McKenney, Eric Hinebauch and Rick Tryon. Mayor Bob Kelly appeared telephonically.

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Greg Doyon and Deputy City Manager Chuck Anderson; City Attorney Jeff Hindoiem; Finance Director Melissa Kinzler, Deputy Director Kirsten Myre and Grant Administrator Tom Hazen; Planning and Community Development Deputy Director Tom Micuda; Park and Recreation Director Steve Herrig; Municipal Court Judge Steve Bolstad; Fire Chief Jeremy Jones; Police Chief Jeff Newton; and, City Clerk Lisa Kunz.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ben Forsyth, City resident, expressed concern with allowing recreational marijuana activities into the community. Based on his 10 years of research, Mr. Forsyth discussed statistics about increasing the availability and potency of recreational marijuana in other states. There is an increase in crime activity, and assault and murder rates have gone up due to 16 drug cartels operating in Colorado. Adolescent marijuana users are much more likely than non-users to interact with the criminal system. Mr. Forsyth read a prepared statement pertaining to a relationship of cannabis use to violent crimes and assaults.

Kevin Westie, 602 35th Street North, commented that marijuana and opioids are life destroyers. He requested that the City stop utilizing the Tax Increment Financing Tax Industrial District (TIFTID).

Stephanie Martino, Manhattan, MT, owner of 710 Montana, commented that she cares for many city and county residents who rely on medical marijuana for treatment of health issues. Access to medical marijuana is important and needs to be available for patients. She opined that additional revenue from medical marijuana sales could help the city.

Name inaudible, City resident, expressed concern about the harmful effects that marijuana has on the city, youth, health, safety and well-being of citizens. Marijuana use reduces the educational capabilities of children, lowers living standards, causes depression, confusion and ruins families. He hopes that the Commission will make the right decision.

Beth Morrison, City resident, commented that she would continue to be a voice for youth with regard to marijuana dispensaries coming into the city limits. With regard to distributing ARPA funds, Ms. Morrison requested that the Commission consider investing in physical and human infrastructure. She added that prevention is cheaper than being reactive.

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Steven Vinnedge, County resident, read a prepared statement to address the harmful effects that marijuana has on adolescents. He commented that the purpose of local government is to protect the citizens.

1. ARPA APPLICATION SCORING AND EVALUATION

Finance Grant Administrator Tom Hazen reported that eight of the thirty-four applications were removed and the Review Committee will meet on September 12, 2022 to discuss the evaluation for the remaining applications. The committee will provide a list of recommendations to City Manager Greg Doyon and he will provide a final recommendation for Commission consideration. One committee member and Grant Administrator Hazen have recused themselves from reviewing one application each. He added that the scoring matrix is a blind scoring method for applications for the City ARPA Sub-Awards. Grant Administrator Hazen provided ARPA presentation on Review Committee and ARPA Scoring Sheet for Review Committee handouts.

Commissioner Tryon received clarification that the eight applications were removed primarily because the proposals did not meet the minimum programmatic eligibility requirements that were established. The eight applicants have not been notified yet; however, they will be notified soon. He further received clarification that if there was an appeal process, the appeal would be considered by the Commission and not the Review Committee.

Commissioner McKenney received clarification that the goal of the Review Committee would be to fund the remaining applications in harmony with the priorities that the Commission identified and that counter proposals from the award recipients could be a possibility.

2. MARIJUANA BUSINESS REGULATIONS

City Attorney Jeff Hindoien explained that the alternative regulatory framework would only become operative in the event the voters decide to choose or a judge orders the City to allow commercial marijuana activities within the City limits. City Attorney Hindoien provided and discussed a general process for possible amendments to the current framework handout.

Commissioner McKenney received clarification that currently there are approximately 33 retail businesses established in I-1 and 12 retail businesses in I-2.

Commissioner Tryon received clarification that state law does not take precedence over federal law with regard to cultivating or selling marijuana. He added that having an efficient parliamentary procedure is important with regard to a proposal for possible amendments.

Mayor Pro Tempore Wolff stated that the Commission needs to make the best decision for the community as a whole.

Commissioner McKenney added that the Commission had a fair chance to make its point prior to the vote.

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DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL UPCOMING WORK SESSION TOPICS

City Manager Greg Doyon reported that the September 20, 2022 work session would consist of updates on lead and copper requirements, quarterly TIF application, as well as the District Court decision pertaining to the City/County Health Department (CCHD).

Commissioner Tryon requested that a Crime Task Force update be added to an upcoming work session.

Mayor Pro Tempore Wolff requested that a Public Safety Levy be added to an upcoming work session.

City Manager Doyon responded that a decision about a Public Safety Levy would be after the election.

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, Mayor Pro Tempore Wolff adjourned the informal work session of September 6, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.