



CITY OF STAR, IDAHO
CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

City Hall - 10769 W State Street, Star, Idaho
Tuesday, January 30, 2024 at 6:30 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Chadwick called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. ROLL CALL

ELECTED OFFICIALS – Mayor Trevor Chadwick, Council Member Jennifer Salmonsens, Council Member Kevin Nielsen, and Council Member Kevan Wheelock were present. Council President Hershey was absent/excused.

STAFF PRESENT – City Clerk / Treasurer Jacob Qualls, Public Information Officer Dana Partridge, Star Police Chief Zach Hessing, MidStar Deputy Fire Chief Victor Islas, City Planner / Zoning Administrator Shawn Nickel, Assistant City Planner / Code Enforcement Official Ryan Field, and City Engineer Ryan Morgan were present.

3. PRESENTATIONS:

A. **Workshop Presentation:** Discussion on Commercial Improvement Districts & Local Improvement Districts

The first workshop presentation of the evening focused on the two types of Improvement Districts, Commercial Improvement Districts (CIDs) and Local Improvement Districts (LIDs).

Presenter Pam Gyss from Launch Development Finance Advisors explained she works on special districts and financing for developments across the United States. She stated she was present this evening with Inspirado. Gyss said Randy Clarno of Pinnacle Development and Elizabeth Koeckeritz of Givens Purseley, Attorneys-at-Law were also in attendance. Mayor Chadwick affirmed the Council was here for educational purposes, to learn more about LIDs and CIDs.

Presentation summary:

Ms. Gyss summarized the current problem developers are trying to figure out is how to make projects work in rapid-growth regions. Gyss noted a common question people have is why is the developer not paying for public infrastructure; she asserted developers do not pay for such infrastructure. Determining how to get the project paid for and a source of income is the problem. Ms. Gyss explained all homebuilding costs, including infrastructure, were ultimately paid by the homebuyer unless a city or county agreed to contribute in some way.

Gyss provided an overview of three primary sources of revenue for Master-Planned Communities: private equity, traditional bank loans, and publicly financed districts such as Local Improvement Districts (LID) and Community Infrastructure Districts (CID). Her points included: developers are trying

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to get private equity off their books due to the expense resulting from rate increases, traditional bank loans are difficult to get for land development, expensive at 15-20% and tend to be shorter-term.

For districts, Ms. Gyss discussed CID and LID Special Assessment Bonds, which are one-time assessments on each property (lot or acre) imposed by a special taxing jurisdiction. In such cases, the special taxing jurisdiction would be created by another taxing jurisdiction like a city. Rates for special assessment bonds currently run 5.5 to 6%, making them much less expensive debt. Basically, a Local Improvement District is formed in accordance with Idaho State Statutes and a CID is a geographic boundary within a city, county, highway district, or water/sewer district in which the governing body of the entity creating the district is granted the power to acquire or construct improvements to be paid for through the imposition of special assessment liens on the benefiting property and the issuance of special assessment bonds. The presenter clarified bond obligations are not the obligation of existing city residents, but only of residents within the geographic boundary of the LID.

Gyss explained one thing that a CID can do that an LID cannot do is issue a General Obligation Bond (GO Bond), which is a special municipal bond that is backed by the credit and taxing power of the issuing municipality.

Gyss said a project like Willowbrook would be a potential candidate for a CID given its size. She noted Eagle has two CID projects, Spring Valley and Avimor, which require a larger project. Attorneys, accountants, and an annual audit are required for CIDs.

Mayor Chadwick asked if there are any LIDs in the Treasure Valley area; Gyss replied there are several, but they are older. She said she thinks cities may see more requests for LID's in the future because they are versatile.

Elizabeth Koeckeritz of Givens Pursley said for other local examples, she believes Gateway East in Nampa may have an LID and both Nampa and Caldwell have set up LIDs to help with things like frontage improvements in front of residential homes.

Gyss summarized the goal of creating such a district is to set up an entity which can tax and spend, with the outcome of creating infrastructure that benefits residents of a certain community rather than the general public at large. She said the special districts are a tool for "growth to pay for growth." Gyss noted the bond obligations do not belong to current residents, and it is not the City's responsibility but rather the property owners of the specific neighborhoods.

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Gyss listed several types of public infrastructure projects which could be paid for using improvement districts, including parks, trails, streets, bridges, alleys, sidewalks, and signalization. She noted, however, one cannot finance dry utilities or private sewer/water using these mechanisms.

Per Gyss, the overall benefits of LIDs include growth paying for growth; allowing for the comprehensive planning and development of large land areas at one time and in advance of growth; providing a lower cost of infrastructure financing; and providing the district with an additional financing tool for public improvements. She said a major benefit is accomplishing all this off the balance sheets and it does not harm a city, county, or district.

Mayor Chadwick called a brief recess at 7:45 p.m. The City Council reconvened at 7:55 p.m.

B. Code Updates Discussion: Discussion about Code Updates

Ryan Field referred City Council Members to the Municipal Code Updates packet (on file), noting since this was a continued topic, for them to reference the last 7-8 pages of the document. He explained the task at hand is considering the creation of Section E of Building Code 7.1.5. to require heat detectors in garages.

Field explained that Staff worked with Deputy Chief Victor Islas of Star Fire on this update. He said the Fire Department has tracked many fires originating in the garage area of house and noted garages have become so tight in modern structures, the fires now move too fast and can be so far along that the entire home will become engulfed. Field noted the common presence of lithium-ion batteries in garages adds to the problem. Field said it is efficient to place heat detectors into the garage and plug into the house so that the building's smoke detector would be triggered in the event of a garage fire starting to take hold. He finished by mentioning Mountain Home, Idaho has recently proposed an ordinance on this same topic and said Staff's proposed text is similar to this proposal.

Council Member Nielsen said he believed the City Council could all agree on this, so in terms of being able to move along to the next topics at hand, recommended just saying yes and moving on.

Council Member Wheelock inquired about false alarms. Deputy Fire Chief Islas replied there are not currently many false alarms. Islas said the Fire Department is seeing fast-rising temperatures of 175 degrees and up in garage fires. Islas reiterated Field's point that the common presence of lithium-ion batteries combined with tightly built new construction was a root cause of the rapid-movement garage fires. Islas added that citizens commonly use garages as shops, so rags and other combustibles tend to be present.

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Field pointed to Section 7.1.6. and explained the current code with respect to wiring. Field recommended striking the current wording: "wiring: commercial educational, institutional, and industrial electrical shall be wired as follows: wiring to be in raceway, armored cable or approved by Inspection Department." He said this was put into the code many years ago. The proposal to strike wording would allow the current Electrical Code and Building Code to allow when raceways and armored cables be used. The policy was enacted by Ordinance 261, so Mr. Field explained the ordinance would need to be updated as well.

Field noted the next change, adopting the International Fire Code, was proposed and needed to be added. Council members discussed they thought it might have already been addressed under a prior Council, but Field noted it had not been followed through on yet and pursuing this to completion will allow the Council to vote and adopt a revised 7.1.8. and new Section 7.1.9. and allow the Fire Department to have these standards to rely on.

Council Member Nielsen asked about some items he had requested the Council to review; Mayor Chadwick explained there would be at least one more meeting so the additional items can still be considered.

With respect to the Animals section of the City Code, the Council discussed citizen interest in raising chickens and pigs. Field explained the City recently distributed a survey which received over 40 citizen responses and Staff researched how other cities are handling the topic. Many of the responses were from citizens who wanted to have chickens; Field noted about 90-95% of the homes in the city were restricted from having chickens. He said the proposal would be to change the farm animal restriction on chickens to be re-worded as not having roosters. From a City perspective, he recommended allowing laying hens, but acknowledging that Homeowners Associations (HOA's) will likely have their own restrictions. Field said this would also take the responsibility for responding to citizen complaints about chickens off of Star Police and place the responsibility with the Idaho Humane Society, which the City contracts with.

Field showed a sample of a possible chicken permit application so laying hens could be kept in a residential yard. Recommendations included a minimum yard size of 5,000 square feet (no town homes or apartments would qualify), structures intended to house chickens could only be in the back yard, at least ten feet from fencing, fees to be collected by City Clerk / Treasurer, and lay out standards for cleanliness.

Council Member Nielsen asked about the language on fencing versus being able to properly keep them contained. Council discussion ensued on potential wording for containing the chickens and how to properly note that the chickens were for personal use rather than agribusiness.

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Deputy Fire Chief Islas expressed concern about heat lamps and chicken coops designed to be housed under a deck/patio area in terms of potential fire. He asked for specific wording to be developed on how close to residential structures the coops could be built.

Council Member Salmonsens asked if prior Homeowners Association approval needed to be addressed on the permit; Mayor Chadwick noted the permit would not override an HOA rule, but the form could include a disclaimer for citizens to acknowledge they understand they need to verify their HOA rules first.

For the issue of residents wishing to raise swine, City Planner / Zoning Administrator Nickel recommended looking at the City as a whole entity rather than as individual subdivisions. Nickel said the City could possibly examine the designation of R.2. or R.2.A to create a zone for two units per acre or allow for an exemption for youth projects (FFA, 4H, etc.). Field noted Staff was trying to get in front of this issue, as the State Legislature was starting to consider it.

Council discussion ensued on subdivision lot size and zoning classification for the ability to raise agricultural animals. Nickel suggested the Planning Staff come back with more information and possible wording, now that they have received Council input.

C. UDC & Municipal Code Workshop Documents

City Planner / Zoning Administrator Nickel provided an overview of the proposed changes to Article C of the Unified Development Code (UDC) and Municipal Code documents with respect to the Central Business District and Riverfront Center area. In summary, "big box commercial" was proposed to be generally a single story, single use building over 50,000 square feet and anything of this size or greater would require a Council Approval Process. He recommended commercial buildings and centers/shopping centers which are adjacent to State Street and Star Road would have the buildings fronting the roadway with parking in back and limitations on access points. Single buildings could have side street parking if approved, and existing alleyways would be utilized. In summary, overall discussion focused on how to support what the Business District would look like and keeping it positive for the public.

Council discussion ensued on handling of drainage ditches / irrigation canals. Proposed wording was irrigation and drainage ditches shall not be covered, tiled, or re-routed as part of any new commercial development unless specifically approved by the City Council and applicable irrigation and/or drainage district.

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Other proposed changes to the code listed in the overview discussion by the City Council included the following: a proposed policy for building permits to not be issued on any property which does not have an address assigned; prohibiting chain link fencing in residential areas; the grading of a property should take into consideration the grading of adjacent properties; various proposed improvements to shelters/lighting/car access/foot access to mailbox clusters; time and location limits on Fireworks and Christmas Tree Lots; and the requirement for a Conditional Use Permit, stacking lanes, lighting mitigation, and noise mitigation to be necessary for drive-through establishments; wording for a definition for "Mixed Use Development"; wording for a definition for "Live/Work Unit"; wireless antennas for public safety to require a Certificate of Zoning Compliance; changes in wording to Article B with respect to Common/Shared Driveways; and a prohibition on Flag Lots in residential areas greater than R-1.

Public Comment:

Ron Irish, 16176 Ansonia, said the Council spent more time talking about chickens than fire alarms. Mr. Irish expressed the opinion that heat detectors are not life saving devices and one has to be careful putting them in garages. He said there are different types and there have to be a certain number per bay or size structure.

Deputy Fire Chief Islas thanked Mr. Irish and replied this evening was just an introduction the topic. Islas said there would be more information and recommendation forthcoming.

As next steps, Mayor Chadwick suggested having another review meeting in either February or March, with the goal of bringing forward a vote on recommended changes in April.

4. ACTION ITEMS

No actions were taken.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Chadwick adjourned the meeting at 9:40 p.m.

Trevor A Chadwick, Mayor

ATTEST: _____
Jacob M Qualls, City Clerk / Treasurer