

**City of Green River, City Special Council & Workshop Proceedings for August 23, 2016, 6:30 pm, Council Chambers,** Mayor Pete Rust called the meeting to order. The following Council Members were present: Gary Killpack, Brett Stokes, Mark Peterson, and Ted Barney.

The following were present representing the City: Acting City Administrator Chris Steffen, Director of Public Works Mark Westenskow and Parks & Recreation Director Brad Raney.

Council Member Killpack moved to approve the agenda. Council Member Stokes seconded, motion carried. **Consent Agenda:** Council Member Barney moved to approve the following:

Approval of payment of \$4,500 to SW-WRAP for the administration of the summer associate vista program. Council Member Killpack seconded, motion carried. **Adjourn to Workshop:**

Council Member Peterson moved to adjourn to the workshop at 6:33 pm. Council Member Killpack seconded, motion carried. **Presentations:** (1) Discussion on Camping in FMC Park.

Gary Wolf Chairman of the Green River Greenbelt Taskforce said they are asking for council's approval to explore the possibilities of a few small overnight camping areas down at FMC Park.

At this point they would like to explore options and gather information but they would only allow tents and small groups. The Parks & Rec Advisory Board, Sweetwater Mountain Bike Association, and the Green River Greenbelt Taskforce are working together and feel it would be

a great way to capitalize on some of the recreational opportunities in the area. They plan to pursue grants to help with funding. They do not believe that having these camping areas would cause any problems for the local campground businesses. Wade Liedtke from the Sweetwater Mountain Bike Association and the Local Boy Scouts Association Troop 77 said they would use

the area for very minimal camping. They feel it is a great opportunity for small groups to come in and camp in city limits instead of going out of city limits. Council Members Barney, Stokes, and Killpack think it is a great idea. Chief Steffen said currently groups can come in and get

permission to camp there by the Chief of Police and City Administrator. He feels it would be very important to inform the PD if people are camping there so his officers do not go down thinking they are not supposed to be there. Council needs to consider the fire issues and operational issues that may come forward. Council Member Killpack said it could bring people to this area. Council Member Peterson said he is okay with it as long as it remains only open to small groups. The sales tax revenues are down and if we make it open to a large group then we essentially are taking away from local hotels and restaurants and we cannot do that. Mr. Wolf said they are not proposing camping for free. There would be a small fee and some regulations. Council Member Peterson asked Mr. Raney if the Park Department budget could handle an increase for something like this. Mr. Raney said right now they are proposing the idea knowing at a later date it will require the budget be looked at. The Mayor said he thinks it can be done at a minimal cost. Council has given permission to move forward and explore the idea. (2) Deer in City Limits. Resident Burke Reading said he emailed the Mayor and Council last October and he appreciated Council Member Peterson's reply. He has lived in different places in town and at both locations some of his neighbors have fed the deer. He has not turned them in yet hoping they would notice what they are doing isn't right. They have caused the problem to grow even bigger. He wants something done about the deer because they are damaging his yard and he would not want something bad to happen before something is done. Resident Kevin Quitberg suggested the city establish an escrow account where people who enjoy the deer can donate money to it and when someone who does not enjoy the deer, yard is ruined or plants are eaten, then they can pay for it out of the escrow account. Executive Director of the Mulley Fanatic Foundation Josh Coursey said scientifically it is not natural for deer to come to this artificial oasis in the desert while migrating but we have created a food & water source where they can eat

and drink. The city has two options: one is to cull the deer and the other is to do nothing. The real question is who is ultimately responsible. We need to educate and know that no matter what is done the deer will never be completely gone. Resident Melinda Owens said some of the deer are sick and if they have chronic wasting disease it can be transferred to people and other animals. The community needs to find a middle ground. She suggested regulating open bow hunting in town to thin the herd. Her concern is that the deer are not even migrating, they are not afraid of people or dogs and some are even aggressive. With all of the people here in the community, we can work together and come up with the best options for the community. Another option is to use birth control. Gary Wolf asked if anyone has thought of trying to enhance the deer habitat around the community to encourage them to stay out of town. They could also try some aversion training where they would use rubber bullets or sacks instead of killing them. Resident Trisha Patterson said she loves seeing the deer. She wonders when people are going to hold themselves responsible. If people keep planting flowers, and bushes the deer are going to eat them. We shouldn't ask people to spend money to fix a problem that some continue to create. She finds it more dangerous to have someone bow hunting in town than having deer eat her tulips. Resident Cora White said she has lived in her house in an ally for 18 years, she does not have a fence, she has flowers, and she has never had any deer in her yard. She has chimes in her yard and the deer do not like them so they don't come in. She does not believe the deer should be killed. Tim Laboria said these deer are God's creatures and if we can do something for them then we should and if they are suffering then we should put them down. Resident Kevin Kinney said if we feed the deer we will kill them. We are better off not feeding them. He has been working on a project, planting trees at his church and most of them have been killed by the deer. He suggests thinning the herd. Having people volunteer to process the meat and handle packaging the meat. He said if the deer are darted and then taken to a central location and processed it would help. He said generally nothing gets done until there is a liability. He has given the Mayor a bill for fencing and other materials because the deer keep coming and damaging them. Resident Jim Gengler said he lives on the corner of Aspen and Riverview and people drive way fast up that road and it is a walkway for the deer during the evening. He is afraid that someone is going to get hurt before something is done. If there is some non-lethal way to get them out of town then that is what should be done. Resident Tom Jacobsen said his yard is being damaged by the deer. He doesn't have a fence in the back yard. He read in the paper that two cases of chronic wasting disease was found in Green River. He would like to cull the deer not chase them away because they will just come back. Barbara Killpack said her granddaughter was charged by a deer on the way to school and that is why she is concerned. She can live with her flowers being eaten but she does not want her grandchildren hurt. Resident Buck Brown said how much money is it worth to invest in this problem; he has a garden and it is thriving so he does not see any issue. Resident Amy Hazlewood said she moved here from Rawlins and they had a beautiful deer population but they only came through town. The deer in Green River are inbreeding and are domesticated so she is worried about the safety of the people. Resident Lisa Coursey asked if there have been reports filed with the police of people being injured by deer. What about the safety of people if you cull the deer at night and what about private property issues? Chief Steffen said this process started in 2014. The city has had several workshops and has conducted a survey where the results were split 50/50. There have been several solutions discussed. He realizes that this is an emotional topic and people need to understand that culling the deer means to killing them. The deer are eating items they normally do not eat in the wild so they are not healthy. Deer feeding is an issue and is prohibited by ordinance. If you see someone

feeding the deer you need to say something to the Police Department. From 2011 to 2016 there have been 56 crashes due to deer but they have declined over the years. From 2000 to 2016 there have not been any accidents involving deer that caused injury or airbag deployment. There are ordinances in place that prohibits bow hunting in city limits, hunting in town or discharging a weapon in town unless in authorized areas. The city can go forward as they have without doing anything or they can cull the deer. Shooting a bow in town is not safe and some people will not allow people to go on their property to shoot deer so that will be an issue. He has contacted the Police Chief in Helena, Montana and they too have a deer problem and have developed a program to cull the deer and have been successful in doing so for a few years. They bait and live trap the animals and then kill them. As far as the police department goes they are under staffed at this time and they are using overtime just to keep patrolling the city. He does not have any funds available in his budget. He does not know if the city has the budget available in any department to cover the costs of a culling program. He contacted Cody, Wyoming and they have completed a deer survey and their results were the same as ours. Now the deer have increased to around 300 and it is a major problem so they are conducting an additional survey. The Mayor said there are a number of different communities that are dealing with the deer as well. He has spoken with Sheridan, Wyoming and Dubois, Wyoming. Patrick Burke from the Game and Fish said they would be opposed to transporting the deer for many reasons such as; disease transmission. Five years ago they did detect deer with chronic wasting disease. He stated deer fawn learn most of what they should eat and their migration paths within the first year, so if you transplant them into the wild they will starve to death. Resident Segra Ramera suggested basing the decision on data that has been collected and educate people. Chief Steffen said he is not aware of any calls on deer being aggressive but it does not mean it hasn't happened and just has not been reported. He said they are not trying to suggest culling all of the deer it would be based on thinning the herd. It would be very expensive if we went with birth control. In speaking with other communities in Wyoming to manage the deer is not just a one year thing, it is multiple years. Resident Melinda Owens said she had called 911 for assistance because a momma deer was showing aggression toward kids and she was told an officer would be by but no one came. After an hour she talked to someone at the police department and she said that the PD doesn't handle those types of calls the Game and Fish handles them. The Game and Fish said they do not do anything about the deer. Chief said they do respond to these calls and they do help the Game and Fish with calls but unfortunately there are higher priority calls that come first. Mr. Quickburg asked if there is a city ordinance that wouldn't allow an electric fence around your property. Chief Steffen said there is not an ordinance or a building code but it is important to post that the fence is electric so people in the neighborhood are aware. There is a building code that states the fence in a front yard cannot be higher than 4 feet and line of site issues will have to be looked at. The Mayor said even though the survey was only done two years ago, he would suggest sending a new one out in the city utility bills. The Mayor asked for a show of hands to see who would like to see another survey. There are budget constraints so it will be difficult to do anything else but the survey. Kevin Kenny said he would like to see the survey on social media outlets and on the city's website. Council Member Killpack thanked everyone for coming. He said people need to turn their neighbors in if they are feeding the deer. Budget will have to be considered. He also purchased an item at Ace Hardware that makes noise when the deer come in and it seems to be working. The Mayor said the city has a column in the Green River Star and they will put information in there as well and after the survey is complete they will have another workshop to discuss the findings. Josh Coursey said make sure the survey has questions on what the priorities

are and define what culling means just so it's clear. Council Member Stokes said staff should look into it and create a survey that will have questions that make it black and white so the decision is clear on what people want. Council Member Peterson said there are two different testimonies on deer being aggressive. He does not want something to happen before something is done. He is in favor of the live traps that Helena Montana does. He is also in favor of darting or tranquilizing the deer. Chief Steffen made clear that the deer are not trapped then let go they are trapped and then killed. In 2008 the cost of 12 traps was around \$11,000. Council Member Barney said he is opposed to anyone hunting in the city. His father planted over 1,000 trees on the way to Rock Springs and many of them were killed by many different things. Wrecks happen no matter what animal is in the way. We need to educate children on the danger of animals. If you are not calling the police when you see something being done illegally then you are creating a problem for the community. The city is larger and he has always seen the deer in town. The city needs to consider all of the facts, figures, options, and solutions before a decision is made. Council Member Killpack asked everyone to talk with their neighbors, friends and family and ask them to watch for the survey and fill it out. The Mayor said hunting in the city isn't really a possibility but moving the herd is. Patrick Burke with the Game and Fish said if you dart an animal the meat is not eatable. Casey Jensen said he would like an ordinance allowing OHV on city streets without being plated. The state does allow this per statute 31-5-1601 A (I): An off road recreational vehicle may be operated upon any public road rights-of-way, streets, road or highway designated open by state, local or federal agency with jurisdiction over the trail pursuant to W.S. 31-2-701 through 31-2-707 by the department of state parks and cultural resources. He has spoken with the Police Chief in Richfield, Utah where they allow this by ordinance and he says it is working really well. He said they do allow kids to drive the OHV's as long as they have a parent supervising. The Mayor said they will get him on the agenda at the next workshop where council can look at everything the group presents and discuss if this is something they would like to move forward with. He said population is an issue because of safety. Dubois, Wyoming does not have a very large population so it could make a difference because of safety. Council Member Stokes said this is not on the agenda. He would recommend having it on a workshop agenda because he has a lot of questions. Council Member Killpack said he is not for this but is open for more information. Council Member Barney said he supports it and would like to see it on a workshop agenda. **ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting adjourned at 8:54 pm.

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Pete Rust, Mayor

**ATTEST:**

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Chris Meats, City Clerk