

CLEARFIELD CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
6:00 PM WORK SESSION
August 13, 2024

City Building
55 South State Street
Clearfield City, Utah

PRESIDING: Mayor Mark Shepherd

PRESENT: Councilmember Nike Peterson, Councilmember Megan Ratchford, Councilmember Tim Roper, Councilmember Karece Thompson, Mayor Mark Shepherd, Councilmember Dakota Wurth

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager JJ Allen, Community & Economic Development Director Spencer Brimley, Community Services Director Eric Howes, City Attorney Stuart Williams, Police Chief Kelly Bennett, Community Relations Director Shaundra Rushton, Public Works Director Adam Favero, City Recorder Nancy Dean, Deputy City Recorder Chersty Titensor

VISITORS: David Newman

DISCUSSION REGARDING THE UTAH AVALANCHE SOCCER CLUB AND THE OLD SCHOOL PROPERTY

Spencer Brimley, Community Development & Economic Director, explained that the City had been approached by the Utah Avalanche Soccer Club (UASC) who was interested in partnering with the City to develop a property for soccer fields for tournaments. The exact terms of any partnership were not known, but UASC was interested in knowing whether the City would be interested in such a partnership. Mr. Brimley did not know what information was used to support the financial impact analysis provided by UASC. He asked the Council to think about whether the City would be interested in a partnership of this type.

Mayor Shepherd recalled a different interested party several years ago who had wanted to purchase property for an outdoor facility, but the City was not interested in the use for the property selected because the City had a future plan for park development. He pointed out that in this case, it would be a partnership and not used exclusively by the applicant. They would develop the property for shared use with the City.

Mr. Brimley showed the conceptual idea for the property which included possible pickleball courts, playground, fields, and restroom facility. Mayor Shepherd acknowledged there was an issue with the natural water source that was present on the property. He thought finding a mutual agreement would be a way to develop a park on the east side of the City due to the lower population on that side and the fact that many of the apartment complexes had their own amenities and spaces. Councilmember Thompson asked what the liability was for the City and expressed his support of the concept because it would encourage community. Mayor Shepherd said there were two hotels coming into the City in the area that would benefit from the development. Councilmember Wurth thought if it was on a trial basis to support the hotels and some of the restaurants. Mayor Shepherd said it was dependent on how much the developers

were willing to invest. David Newman, UASC arrived at 6:08 p.m.

Mr. Newman offered his perspective of the project. He reported that the club was 24 years old and had merged with a club in South Davis County. He said there were 2,000 players that played recreation soccer and another 2,000 kids that played competitively along the Wasatch Front. He pointed out that a lack of greenspace was a problem as growth continued. He said their non-profit organization was solid financially, had a couple million dollars on hand to start the project, and interested partners to invest. They wanted to do something with a community and were willing to coordinate for a shared space. He pointed out that their organization ran the largest special needs soccer program – Top Soccer - in the whole State.

Councilmember Ratchford asked who set the schedule for the competition play. Mr. Newman envisioned the City and his organization would coordinate scheduling together and was willing to manage if needed. He said there were currently three different buildings they maintained and would help with the management, maintenance and upkeep of the fields. He said they were looking at property in Herriman. Councilmember Ratchford asked where participants were coming from. He said their club teams participated in the Elite Club National League which encompassed Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, and the girls played in a conference that took in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington, as well and was scheduled over 18 weekends. He said last year at the annual tournament there had been 380 teams at the regional athletic complex. He estimated there were 62 teams from out of state coming for the tournament this year. He spoke of the potential economic impact in the surrounding areas when the teams played and then frequented local restaurants.

Councilmember Wurth said he supported this partnership. He said he was interested in what the partnership would look like – for instance, maintaining the liability insurance, etc. He thought it was important for the community, but was also an economic driver to nearby restaurants and hotels. Mr. Newman answered saying UASC was required to carry the liability insurance policy. Councilmember Peterson asked for Eric Howes' input.

Eric Howes, Community Services Director, said he was looking at the proposal from the programming and maintenance side. He said it was difficult to remove potential park space from the inventory. Not knowing the terms of any actual agreement could change his perspective. He pointed out that the weekend tournaments and evening practices were the same time the City ran its programs, which was a challenge. He acknowledged the need for athletic facilities. He said there was a national standard for provisions of acreage of parkland. He said the City had 100 acres for 34k residents which was 2.9 acres/1000 residents which put the City at the bottom half of the lower third of the lowest third. He said the average of lowest third was 6.2 acres/1000 residents. He was conflicted because he was supportive of more park space for the underserved population, but he also had a hard time turning maintenance over to another party. He acknowledged that he did not have a great answer, but had a difficult time letting go of park acreage. He pointed out that there were no parks on the east side of the freeway.

Councilmember Peterson asked Mr. Howes, if the City wanted to move forward, proceeding on the assumption to increase park space, what would be some details that would be most critical for him to support it. Mr. Howes thought anything that took a use and put it maintenance

somewhere else relieved a little bit of pressure. He said most of the pressure was from comp leagues. He pointed out that other than a Tiny Tots soccer program, the City did not offer soccer programs because it was provided by the AYSO organization. He said the City fields were always being used. Councilmember Thompson thought it was a regional draw and asked Mr. Howes if he was concerned about the competitiveness that would be created with outside teams coming in. Mr. Howes said it did not help the City with availability. Councilmember Thompson asked Mr. Newman why they were looking at Clearfield City. Mr. Newman recognized there was not a lot of opportunities for available land, in addition to the location close to the freeway, restaurants, etc. He said there were approximately 700 kids in the surrounding area playing. Councilmember Thompson said this was an important project to him because Clearfield City was the 8th most diverse city in Utah. He thought this use was missing in Clearfield City. He told Mr. Newman he needed to be prepared for the City's demographics. He expressed his support for the possibility because he recognized the use as a regional draw to bring people together to play sports. He also pointed out the importance of ensuring it was a sustainable partnership.

Councilmember Peterson said any potential agreement needed to ensure that City residents benefited from the development and had access to use the parks and field and was not using public lands to create areas for other organizations to exclusively use. Mr. Newman emphasized that UASC were looking at using the fields for 18 weeks and the community aspect was important to them. He said they would love to be part of developing programs for the community. He said soccer was a street game in other countries and was only in this country where there was a pay-to-play model. He said he would love to be able to be involved with kids that could not afford it. He said their operating budget was \$5M and that the organization designated \$250k for scholarships to allow kids that could not pay-to-play to participate. He said that 62% of membership was a Latino membership and most would not be playing without those scholarships. Councilmember Thompson appreciated understanding UASC's perspective of community. Mr. Howes acknowledged that park space was scarce and to take 10 acres out was difficult. Councilmember Ratchford said she had never seen a soccer organization go into a community and not make the community better. She supported the possibility. Councilmember Wurth did not think there would be many chances of an amenable partnership like this to benefit the east side of the community.

Mr. Brimley wanted to clarify that this was not a done deal and pointed out that the land was soaking wet. He said even if it was viable, dirt work was some of the most expensive work to be completed. He said he did not want to get ahead of what was possible. Councilmember Thompson said the City was facing oncoming decertification and asked if the parcel was drying out. JJ Allen, City Manager, said the City was not sure where the water was coming from and to drain it would need to have permanent drainage of some kind. Mr. Brimley said it would be part of the process to figure out these details. Mr. Howes said that in the two most recent driest years, the property was still wet.

The Council was interested in pursuing the possibility of creating a partnership for this use. Mr. Brimley said it would move forward with UASC and the Community Services Department. Mr. Allen pointed out that Staff previously had thought of having a nature park with boardwalk trails for the property and said it would be an opportunity cost if the proposed project was completed. Mr. Brimley said this was very preliminary and wanted to verify Council's support before

moving forward. Mr. Howes acknowledged that a restroom on the trail would be beneficial and didn't want to come across so negatively. He said the right agreement would make all the difference, but had a hard time taking land away from inventory. Mr. Newman said there was not a lot of pressure to complete immediately, but that it was more important to do it right.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

This item was moved to be addressed at the upcoming Council retreat.

Chair Thompson moved to adjourn at 6:42 p.m., seconded by Councilmember Wurth.

RESULT: Passed [5 TO 0]

YES: Chair Thompson, Director Peterson, Director Roper, Director Ratchford, Councilmember Wurth

NO: None

**APPROVED AND ADOPTED
This 24th day of August 2024**

/s/ Mark R. Shepherd, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/ Nancy R. Dean, City Recorder

I hereby certify that the forgoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Clearfield City Council meeting held Tuesday, August 13, 2024.

/s/ Nancy R. Dean, City Recorder