

**SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF THE
CITY OF CEDAR HILLS**

Monday, December 5, 2022 – 4:00 p.m.

Community Recreation Center

10640 North Clubhouse Drive, Cedar Hills, Utah

Present: Mayor Denise Andersen, Presiding
Council Member Mike Geddes
Council Member Kelly Smith

Excused: Council Member Laura Ellison
Council Member Alexandra McEwen
Council Member Brian Miller

Staff: Chandler Goodwin, City Manager
Colleen Mulvey, City Recorder

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

1. Call to Order, Pledge, and Invocation.

The City Council Meeting of the City of Cedar Hills, having been properly noticed, was called to order at 4:10 p.m. by Mayor Andersen.

2. Approval of Meeting Agenda.

The Meeting Agenda was not approved as no quorum was present.

3. Public Comment.

Mark Nelson gave his address as 4075 West Eucalyptus Court. He appreciated the talent of the artist, Eric Dowdle, but did not believe the City should consider the business venture being proposed, even if there was the potential to make a profit. That might be a better endeavor for investors or others in the community. Mr. Nelson hoped the City Council would vote against the Dowdle Studios proposal so the funds could be used in a manner that will benefit all residents. He also wanted to see video broadcasts for City Council Meetings. This would allow more residents to be involved and improve clarity. He noted that the audio recordings are not always the best and it is difficult to know who is speaking and what is being referred to.

There were no further public comments. The public comment period was closed.

REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS

4. Presentation – Dowdle Studios Commissioned Artwork for the City of Cedar Hills.

Kirk Nord identified himself as a Sales Consultant for Dawdle Studios. David Halling serves as

Operations Manager for Dowdle Studios and was also present. Mr. Nord reported that what was being proposed for Cedar Hills was also being proposed to several other communities throughout the United States. Information was shared about Eric Dowdle, who is a local Utah artist. He has a tremendous reputation for his artwork and puzzles. His puzzles are available throughout the country. Mr. Dowdle has painted a lot of different communities over the years. The proposal was to do a commissioned art piece that would be part of America's 250. This would celebrate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States of America.

The communities that participate will have a commissioned piece of artwork that represents their city. Additionally, those communities will be a part of America's 250, which will showcase different areas throughout the United States. Mr. Dowdle has an excellent distribution channel as his work can be found in Costco. He also partnered with Disney and other recognized names in the past. Mr. Nord overviewed the proposal. An art piece would be commissioned by the City and the City would provide input on the design. It would be a legacy piece of art for the community and could also be used for marketing.

Mr. Nord shared an informational video about Mr. Dowdle and his work. He stated that puzzles typically take two to three people between three and four hours to put together. This results in hours of bonding and creates a focus on a piece of community-themed artwork. It is a wonderful way to celebrate a city. Cedar Hills has a story and Mr. Dowdle wanted to help tell that story.

Mr. Nord further discussed the details of the proposal. The community would hire Dowdle Studios to create an original piece of artwork. That piece of art would be unveiled to the community. Additionally, there was a puzzle commitment. The City would purchase a certain number of puzzles upfront. As part of the program, the community would have the opportunity to sell the puzzles at retail price exclusively for one year. Cedar Hills would have a perpetual license to the image. He understood that the puzzle commitment was substantial, but he believed it was a useful tool to market the community and showcase the highlights of Cedar Hills. Mr. Nord showed a sample piece to illustrate the size of the commissioned artwork.

Mr. Halling shared information about the puzzle that was done in American Fork. There had been personal touches to make sure the stories of the community were represented. Artwork is a source of pride for different communities. Mr. Nord reiterated that this would be an original piece and the City would own it forever. The City would have the licensing rights to the image in perpetuity. The only thing the artist asked was that if the image is used in future branding, would he be able to come in and look at the colors to ensure that they are accurate. There was discussion regarding the shows Mr. Dowdle participates in. The new program would be called, "The Piece Maker." It would premiere on the Magnolia Network at the end of the year. Cities that participate in the program would be able to take advantage of that marketing and branding.

Council Member Geddes noted that the America's 250 celebration is still three years away. He wondered how many cities had chosen to participate so far. Mr. Nord explained that three cities have signed on at the current time. Other communities in Wyoming and Oregon were being considered as well. Mr. Halling reported that Dowdle Studios initially spoke to 30 cities. The intention was to look at cities that are the heartbeat of America. That was the reason Dowdle Studios was approaching cities of a smaller size.

Mayor Andersen explained that the City Council is responsible for how money is spent. She appreciated the Dowdle Studios representatives coming to share information but noted that the Council had a lot of questions about the proposal. The idea of the puzzle was fun, and she liked that it would represent Cedar Hills and bring the community together. There was a lot of history in Cedar Hills that people do not know about. That history could be incorporated into the puzzle. Although she liked the concept, there were concerns about the overall costs.

Mayor Andersen asked about the cost of the proposal when compared to other cities. There seemed to be some discrepancy between the amount Cedar Hills was being asked to pay versus what cities like Pleasant Grove and Orem had been asked for. For instance, Pleasant Grove was charged \$40,000 but Cedar Hills was asked to pay \$70,000. She was also concerned about the number of puzzles the City would need to commit to. Mr. Halling clarified that Pleasant Grove commissioned their artwork in 2019, which was before the COVID-19 pandemic. A lot of different prices had been floated around at that time to see how the program would work.

Mr. Nord understood that there were concerns about the prices, but Pleasant Grove had been one of the launch points to determine how the process would work. Once it became clear that this was a viable project that could be duplicated in other communities across the United States, a price point that made sense was determined. Mr. Dowdle did not want to do the work and lose money or barely break even. The artist needs to make money as well. That was the reason the price point for Cedar Hills and other communities had been determined. Mr. Nord explained that it was a four or five-month process. There was a design process and Mr. Dowdle also needed to hand-paint the piece. It all takes a while, and it was important to compensate him for his time and expertise. He understood the concerns, but the price point had been set and was not negotiable. The price that had been set would be the same for every community in every state moving forward.

As far as the puzzles, Dowdle Studios understood that there were concerns about the number of puzzles that would be ordered. Mr. Nord explained that there had been discussions with City Manager, Chandler Goodwin, about reducing the commitment to 3,000 puzzles and seeing what the City wanted to do from there. The community could always order more if the first 3,000 are sold. However, due to the time, it would take to print the puzzles, this could create a delay with the second batch. As far as a puzzle commitment went, he felt confident with the numbers proposed, especially when the City has one full year of exclusivity in which to sell the puzzles. The puzzle would also appear on the Dowdle Studios' website, which would assist with sales.

Mayor Andersen pointed out that Pleasant Grove had a two-year exclusivity for their puzzle. Mr. Halling explained that the exclusivity could also be two years for Cedar Hills if that was desired by the Council. As far as Pleasant Grove, 3,000 puzzles had been sold in six weeks. Once the initial run of puzzles is sold, there was a 4 ½ month wait for the additional puzzles to be ordered, printed, and become available. Some momentum was lost during that wait. Mayor Andersen felt that the proposed number of puzzles was a lot.

Council Member Geddes stated that he has some Dowdle puzzles and was someone who would happily purchase a Cedar Hills-themed puzzle. It was reported that the puzzles will retail for \$24.99. Mayor Andersen believed that after the exclusivity period, the Cedar Hills design would

go out into the marketplace and would be less expensive. Mr. Halling clarified that the puzzles purchased by Cedar Hills would still be set at the negotiated price. Those puzzles could still be sold in the City. That being said, there would likely be a limited run of the Cedar Hills puzzles for Costco after that time. It would be a seasonal item.

Council Member Geddes asked about the canvas prints. Mr. Nord explained that those would be available for wholesale pricing. They could be used as auction pieces in future years. Mayor Andersen asked about other products that were not listed on the product list. She wondered if the City was able to use the image on holiday cards, t-shirts, or something else. Mr. Nord clarified that Cedar Hills could do anything with the image in perpetuity as long as Mr. Dowdle confirmed that the colors were correct. Mayor Andersen believed that the City could theoretically continue to recoup costs on the expense indefinitely. It was a project that could pay for itself over time. Council Member Geddes asked when other puzzles were released. Mr. Halling reported that Spanish Fork had its unveiling in August 2022. Out of the 6,000 puzzles purchased, American Fork had sold 4,500 so far. Council Member Geddes wanted to understand how many puzzles Cedar Hills would need to sell. Mayor Andersen explained that the breakeven amount was 6,000 puzzles. Selling 3,000 puzzles would cover approximately half of the costs.

Council Member Geddes did not necessarily believe the City needed to make money off of the puzzle. It was important to support the arts and create a strong sense of community. There would be a benefit to the residents of Cedar Hills, and this would also support a local artist. Mr. Halling pointed out that a lot of communities spent money on various art projects and programs. What made this particular proposal different was the fact that the cities had the opportunity to receive that money back over time. Dowdle Studios was interested in a partnership with Cedar Hills. As a result, it may be possible to have a two-year exclusivity period rather than one year.

Council Member Geddes liked the idea of the two-year exclusivity period. He did not necessarily believe it was important that the full amount be paid back to the City. This was not a fundraiser, but the intention was to promote the arts and bond the community. Council Member Smith agreed that cities should spend money on arts as it is important. She loved the concept of the artwork and puzzle but was still wondering whether it was right for Cedar Hills. She felt it was crucial to hear what residents had to say about the proposal. There had been a small survey conducted and a lot of residents were unsure why the City would consider spending that kind of money on a puzzle. That being said, Council Member Smith believed it would be possible to recoup the costs.

Mayor Andersen thought this was an interesting and fun opportunity but felt it was important that the costs can be recovered. She had received emails and phone calls from residents about the Dowdle Studios proposal. The response was mixed. She explained that the product was great but there was uncertainty about whether or not this was suitable for Cedar Hills.

Mr. Halling explained that in the future if the City wants to hold a special event, it would be possible to digitally enhance the image in a specific area. There could be different versions of the puzzles that were a shorter run and focused on one particular section. Only the cost of the puzzle would be charged to do that. Council Member Geddes liked that this was possible.

Mr. Nord discussed the current timeline for the proposal. He explained that Mr. Dowdle would need to visit the community and start to create a conceptual drawing. There would also be discussions about wish list items in the City. Once the concept is finalized, it takes approximately two to three months to paint. The process would be five to six months.

It was noted that other communities are also participating. The limit was six to 10 communities in each state for the commissioned program. Council Member Smith asked how long Cedar Hills had to make a decision. She wondered if the program would still be available in four years when Cedar Hills would celebrate its 50th anniversary. Mr. Nord explained that when a certain number of communities were locked in within Utah, the focus would shift to the other 49 states. Outreach efforts had already started elsewhere. He was not sure whether it would be possible for Cedar Hills to participate in four years or not. It would depend on the workload Mr. Dowdle had and the other commitments he had in place. Mr. Halling believed that the America's 250 program would be filled for Utah within the next few months.

Mayor Andersen noted that the contract mentioned a 32x40 size. However, a smaller size was commissioned for Pleasant Grove. She wondered if that was an option for Cedar Hills as well. Mr. Halling believed that was possible. He explained that the impact of the original piece was lost with the smaller size. That was the reason the larger size had been suggested. Mayor Andersen did not believe the consumer would be impacted in the same way by the smaller size. Council Member Smith wondered how many cities the size of Cedar Hills had worked with Dowdle Studios. Mr. Halling reported that it was approximately half a dozen.

Council Member Geddes noted that the next step was for the City Council to vote on the proposal. It would be discussed at the next City Council Meeting, scheduled for December 6, 2022.

ADJOURNMENT

5. Adjourn.

The City Council Meeting adjourned at 5:07 p.m.

Approved by Council:
January 10, 2023

/s/ Colleen A. Mulvey, MMC
City Recorder