

AMERICAN FORK CITY COUNCIL  
OCTOBER 5, 2021  
WORK SESSION AGENDA

Members Present:

Bradley J. Frost	Mayor
Staci Carroll	Council Member
Rob Shelton	Council Member
Kevin Barnes	Council Member
Ryan Hunter	Council Member
Clark Taylor	Council Member

Staff Present:

David Bunker	City Administrator
Camden Bird	Community Services Director
Stephanie Finau	Deputy Recorder
Aaron Brems	Fire Chief
Cherylyn Egner	Legal Counsel
Scott Sensenbaugher	Public Works Director

Also present: Police Lieutenant Cameron Paul, Program Coordinator Janelle Paulin (of the CTC), and Eric Hyde

WORK SESSION

*The purpose of City Work Sessions is to prepare the City Council for upcoming agenda items on future City Council Meetings. The Work Session is not an action item meeting. No one attending the meeting should rely on any discussion or any perceived consensus as action or authorization. These come only from the City Council Meeting.*

The American Fork City Council met in a work session on Tuesday, October 5, 2021, in the City Administration Office Conference Room, located at 51 East Main Street, commencing at 4:00 p.m. The agenda was as follows:

1. Presentation on the Communities That Care (CTC) program by Police Lieutenant Cameron Paul & CTC Program Coordinator Janelle Paulin.

Police Lieutenant Paul introduced Janelle Paulin, who was the Program Coordinator for the Communities that Care program. She presented a PowerPoint highlighting the work of that program and the positive outcomes they had achieved so far. They had found that strong interpersonal connection, especially within families, was the best prevention for youth who may be drawn to destructive behaviors. She stated that the program was a planning and implementation strategy for youth and adults community wide. They had been around for over a year and they continued to grow. They had recently been chosen to receive Utah County's e-cigarette and anti-vaping grant of \$100,000, which they had used for several different programs, including those she mentioned in the meeting. She listed various other groups they had worked with, such as the Utah National Guard (on drug take-back days); the Utah Valley Drug Prevention Coalition; the Utah Prevention Coalition; and the Alpine School District Suicide Coalition. She was pleased to describe two of their projects. The first was magnets to give away which had listed on them information on who to call when someone was having suicidal thoughts. The other was work with

the Alpine School District in installing 46 vaping sensors in the high schools and junior high schools. They were still working on that project, which cost \$53,000 of the \$100,000 they had been awarded. All the principals in these schools were very excited about the sensors.

Council Member Taylor asked if the students were deterred by the presence of sensors. Program Coordinator Paulin described the sensors as being silent alarms. They were high-tech sensors. They were alarms that sent data to whomever the school designated to receive it. They also sensed THC, found in marijuana. Some of the schools had other sensors that were not working well, which had been replaced with these new higher-tech sensors.

Program Coordinator Paulin described some other programs the Communities that Care program had adopted. The first was *Guiding Good Choices*, developed by the University of Washington, which helped parents and caregivers of youth ages 9-14 years old. That program promoted healthy development and bonding within families so youth would feel comfortable enough with their parents that they would choose to have hard conversations with them about what was going on in their worlds. She announced that they had a first session scheduled for October 11, partnering with Pleasant Grove City. They would provide a dinner for parents and would have childcare on that night. There would be a total of 5 sessions similarly formatted.

Another program they used was *Product Towards No Drug Abuse*, which had been developed by the University of Southern California. Program Coordinator Paulin stated that all of the school officers had taken this training. In this program, a student that gets caught with a substance was required to take this interactive training. The hope was that the training would help students with their attitudes and beliefs and give them positive ways to cope with the stresses in their lives. School officials were very excited about this.

Another project Program Coordinator Paulin mentioned was a collection of anti-vaping and drug videos which were being developed. Those videos would show students real situations and offer positive strategies for dealing with them. Council Member Hunter asked where someone would be able to view those videos. They would be available on social media and marketed through public service announcements.

Finally, Program Coordinator Paulin mentioned Family Week as something they wanted to implement in the city. They would do different activities around the community, then end the week with a special speaker at an event. She mentioned that Family Week would be a good time to market the *Guiding Good Choices* program. She mentioned that Lehi City had sponsored a Family Week and had had positive results. Mayor Frost asked if the videos she had mentioned earlier were a series of videos. He had understood there was a video about bonding that could be shown during a Family Week final event. Council Member Taylor asked where the final event of a Family Week would be held, suggesting it could be held at the high school. Paulin replied that the venue was yet to be determined. The type of speaker that would be asked was discussed. Mayor Frost suggested a man named Chad Hymas as a resource for contacting a speaker. His background was as a business owner, he knew a lot of good speakers, and he'd been on the PARC committee. He could get a lead on who would be a good speaker for such an event.

Program Coordinator Paulin stated they hadn't started additional programs and research, but they knew other programs had worked well for other coalitions. She mentioned a positive action program that was written into the grant which promoted healthy choices and behaviors. That program pointed out that one cannot always control situations but can react to them well. Pleasant

Grove had done a pilot program on this, and it was successful. There was also free suicide training for adults and youth. The Cook Center for human connections had recently come out with an animated movie titled “My Life is Worth Living,” that could help youth get help working through suicidal thoughts. Eventually, the hope was to provide links to all resources on the American Fork City website.

Mayor Frost suggested the coalition use Miss American Fork in some way, as suicide was part of her platform. He praised Miss American Fork for her willingness and ability to connect. He stated he would pass her contact information along, and Program Coordinator Paulin was excited to contact her and felt there were several work groups she could be involved with. She also pointed out that the coalition can bring youth in to help other youth about choosing positive behaviors and help them to feel safe.

Council Member Carroll asked what community groups were involved with the coalition. Program Coordinator Paulin answered that COVID had slowed community groups down, but the coalition has had what they needed for data and public relations. Carroll asked if they were looking for anyone in particular in the School District or the City. Paulin responded that anyone could join. She mentioned current participants had been coming from the School District, the Police Department, the hospital, and the County.

Council Member Shelton praised the availability of resources. He wanted to hear from other Cities on what they were doing, then see if they were doing it in American Fork. He wondered what percentage of available resources American Fork was participating in. Program Coordinator Paulin suggested there were still gaps to fill. She pointed out that they had worked with the County and the University of Washington, and they had helped a great deal. She stated they were in a good place, but not up to 100%. The coalition looked at data and that’s what helped them target American Fork, but the most recent data was not in yet. Council Member Shelton asked what they could do to get up to 100%. He wanted to know who in American Fork was taking the reins.

Police Lieutenant Paul spoke up, stating that the Police Department was working with Program Coordinator Paulin. Furthermore, they had committed to hiring a part-time assistant coordinator to help. Funding for that position had been written into the grant. Council Member Shelton asked if Paulin was a regional coordinator, or just for American Fork. Paulin replied that she was just for American Fork. Her position was full-time and was funded by the County and the American Fork Police Department. Council Member Shelton expressed eagerness to put into place a strategic plan to become fully operational in all that the coalition offered.

Council Member Barnes felt the County had all the resources that could benefit the CTC. Program Coordinator Paulin stated the County was indeed a huge resource and had provided a lot of guidance. Mayor Frost praised the County for always being present at coalition meetings.

Council Member Carroll was happy and impressed with Program Coordinator Paulin and what she had been doing to get these programs going. The programs seemed very beneficial. Paulin expressed excitement to be working with the city. Mayor Frost felt that people wanted to know how to volunteer and get involved. Carroll mentioned she knew of a person who was interested, and she wanted to know where she could send that person so they could learn more. Paulin said Carroll could send the person directly to her. Paulin also re-iterated that they had programs that benefited adults as well as youth. Council Member Hunter stated that there was a strong connection

between adult suicides and youth suicides. Paulin agreed and used as an example post-partum depression that often affects new mothers. That had a huge affect on children.

Mayor Frost asked Program Coordinator Paulin to send out an e-mail to the City Council about the coalition and all of its programs, so as people inquired, they could give information. Paulin expressed hope that as they built the CTC website, it would be easy to link to from American Fork's website. Council Member Taylor pointed out that social media had been great for the city as they had looked for volunteers. He lamented a poor turnout at a recent suicide walk. He suggested that staff could do bi-weekly posts on social media regarding the programs and events. Council Member Carroll felt it would really help to have all of that linked on the City's website. Paulin agreed and stated that it would really help for the public to see the Police Department's support. Mayor Frost also mentioned it was valuable to show the School District was supportive.

Speaking of the CTC website and linking it with American Fork's website, Program Coordinator Paulin reported they were looking for someone to build that for them. Council Member Carroll felt it was important to show the public that this coalition was active in American Fork.

Police Lieutenant Paul stated this was a noble and honorable cause and he commended Program Coordinator Paulin for her work. Council Member Carroll asked if they had advertised at the library, as people often go there to learn of resources. Paulin stated they had advertised at the library as well as the Recreation Center.

## 2. Discussion on the City's tree policy.

Community Services Director Bird began this discussion by giving a synopsis of the problem. The city owned the trees in the park strips, and it was the City's responsibility to trim them and remove them when necessary. With that responsibility, the City had to accept liability for damages incurred as a result of trees that hadn't been removed or trimmed when they should have been. He stated that the current policy had not been enforced and things had gotten out of control. He stated that American Fork City needed a revision of the tree policy. Some property owners were planting what they wanted and doing their own trimming and removal. Others, who understood that it was the City's responsibility, or who couldn't afford to do the work themselves, were doing nothing. Where nothing was being done, cars and people (and sidewalks) were being damaged. He stated they do have a list of trees that were approved, but it needed to be revised. A big component in any changes made would be to educate residents.

Council Member Carroll asked if the City had been paying for the damages Community Services Director Bird had referred to. He replied that the City was responsible by the current code. He added that residents often waited for something catastrophic to happen, and then they called the City.

Community Services Director Bird mentioned the modest budget that existed for tree care, most of which was not intended for use on park strips, but three-fourths of it was being spent there. He stated they lacked a resource commitment for the park strips. He added that Legal Counsel Egner had drafted a revised code that would allow the City to work with residents to share costs and improve compliance, and he turned the time over to her to describe what she proposed

Legal Counsel Egner stated that she had researched what other Cities were doing about their tree issues. She felt the problem in American Fork was with old trees, and that they should draw a line

to determine how to fix the old issues. The new ordinance would shift some of the responsibility to the residents, and off the City. Though the ordinance was not a perfect solution, it was a good start and they could refine it as they went along. She felt the goal should be to stop future problems and fix the old problems. To do so, they would make residents be responsible for the park strips that abutted their property, which admittedly didn't cover all park strips, but it would cover most of them—and would limit the amount of money the City had to invest to get the problem under control.

Residents would be responsible for basic trimming, though not removal. Legal Counsel Egner suggested creating a City position of “forester” to create an inventory of trees, handle monitoring of the inventory and contact with residents. She felt it was important to educate residents that this was a “park strip maintenance” issue for them, and included all things (such as bushes) not just trees. All plants on the park strip needed to be trimmed so that vehicles and pedestrians would not be negatively affected by overgrowth. Also, the ordinance would require a permit for any planting of trees. The City had a list of approved species. There were a lot of unapproved species planted out there. If a resident had an unapproved species of tree, they would have to remove it. She then listed several highlights of the proposed ordinance.

City Administrator Bunker stated they needed help from a certified tree specialist, a forester (as they would like to call the position), to help with that. Council Member Taylor seemed to recall that the City had at one time had an arborist. Though it was true that there had been an arborist, the proposed position would be much different. The forester would be responsible to do an inventory and to help educate residents.

Legal Counsel Egner went on to say that with a tree inventory, they would need to develop a maintenance plan. She broke the process down into several steps, which included:

- Do a tree inventory of all trees and whether they were of an approved species.
- Prioritize tree maintenance and get that written into the budget.
- Focus on trees believed to be unhealthy.
- Next, focus on trees that were impacting sidewalks.
- Finally, remove trees that were of an unapproved species.

Legal Counsel Egner acknowledged that people got upset when the City wanted to take out an unapproved, though healthy tree. The problem happened when the City had not stuck to enforcing the type of species that were planted, or which were allowed to remain planted. Even though an unapproved tree might be fine right now, in years to come it would impact a sidewalk, causing the City to spend money in repairs that it would not have otherwise spent. City Administrator Bunker agreed with this stating that if they repaired a sidewalk that had been impacted by an unapproved tree, and they didn't remove the tree in the process, the sidewalk would have to be repaired again in time, for the same problem.

Fire Chief Brems felt that they should address trees that pose a safety hazard first, even if they were approved, healthy trees. The City crews that drive large vehicles were often forced to cross over the center line of the street to avoid contact with an overgrown tree on the park strip. Community Services Director Bird agreed with this philosophy stating that sometimes this also happened to residents who had larger trucks and trailers.

Legal Counsel Egner agreed with the principle but stated that much of what was out there causing these kinds of problems was more than a resident could handle on their own. She stated they were

trying to push it back so they could start fresh and move forward. She knew the City would have to take care of the bigger issues. Discussions with residents would be critical, especially for the bigger trees.

Council Member Barnes asked if the current code mandated having trees. Council Member Shelton thought that the landscaping ordinance required a certain percentage of the landscaping be in trees. Legal Counsel Egner clarified, stating that the mandates in place were for new commercial developments. She felt residents typically were not faced with tree mandates. Council Member Shelton asserted that new residential developments do mandate trees. Legal Counsel Egner acknowledged that he was right, but it was the developers who were to plant them. Often, they did not. Mayor Frost stated that contractors need to learn the requirement and follow the code. Often, the resident planted the trees and there was no enforcement if they had done so without consulting the approved species list. Lack of enforcement had been a key contributing factor to the problems they were now facing. Legal Counsel Egner felt that by doing an inventory on what was currently out there, they could figure out what to do in each situation and start limiting liability. This would show they were handling bigger issues first and making a best effort to solve problems.

Legal Counsel Egner stated that the park strips were City property and currently the City bore all the liability. That needed to change, and enforcement and education were the key pieces to that change. Community Services Director Bird agreed, stating they would have to be willing to knock on doors to make it happen. City Administrator Bunker suggested that an inspector could leave a reminder for developers of what permits were needed for trees, and there might need to be fines affixed for non-compliance. Council Member Hunter agreed and suggested that the City could do it right from the beginning, and collect fees that would help fund changes. Bunker said they could do that on the front end, but on the back end, they needed a forester who could potentially target different sections of the City each quarter.

A discussion followed, in which several people present gave ideas on how to work and fund a new tree ordinance. One suggestion was to create HOA's on new developments, just for the park strips. Another idea was a special services district, which would allow tree trimming to go on property tax bills. Everyone agreed they needed a new code so they could have teeth for enforcement. A suggestion was made to turn it all over to the residents, though that would be a problem since there were buried utilities on the front park strip, and there were times when roadways needed to expand and the City needed that right-of-way. Ideas went back and forth about both park strips and sidewalks.

Legal Counsel Egner pushed to make a recommendation for a clearly-stated clean-up ordinance that would put something in effect right away. Mayor Frost liked that idea and termed it as "stopping the bleeding and re-assessing the wound as soon as we can." A sensible way to do this would be to partner with residents on costs.

Council Member Carroll asked what the costs were. Savings on partnering on tree maintenance costs would be money saved that could be used to repair more sidewalks. Insurance rates would go up if they didn't fix the sidewalks. Council Member Taylor suggested starting small, evaluating it along the way, then creating a more detailed plan including the management of out-of-compliance trees. A forester could focus on that. Community Services Director Bird noted a major cost as being the need for a truck in the first year, which would cost about \$59,000. Council Member Barnes had serious concerns about how they would fund all that. He was very serious about long-term effect on the budget. He wondered if this should be part of a budget meeting.

Council Member Shelton pointed out that they had had discussions about trees in the past. The hard decisions kept being put off and the problem continued to escalate. They had to act now and figure out how to fund it. Legal Counsel Egner suggested that saving money overall could help fund the proposal. She felt there was a lot of potential for lawsuits if something wasn't done. It was alarming, but they needed a decision.

Council Member Barnes suggesting re-visiting the subject in another meeting. Community Services Director Bird asked for a vision from Legal Counsel Egner. She stated her proposal would "stop the bleeding." Mayor Frost stated as his opinion that this could be refined for presentation at a meeting in February. Council Member Hunter had a big concern that they couldn't afford it and they needed to pin down the funding before they acted. Legal Counsel Egner suggested starting with the developers. If they passed the code right away, the developers could be held to making sure approved trees were planted. She admitted it wasn't much, but it was a start. In conclusion, Legal Counsel Egner invited contact from anyone with other input or questions.

3. Adjourn.

The work session ended at 5:45 p.m.



Stephanie Finau, Deputy Recorder