

2026-4-20

Aurora to discuss statement of 'mourning' for police shooting victims

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The Denver Gazette · 20 Apr 2026 · A7 · BY KYLA PEARCE The Denver Gazette

In Monday night's Aurora City Council study session, councilmembers will discuss a resolution that (if) passed at a future regular meeting, would state that the City Council "stands in mourning" with people who have lost loved ones to officer-involved shootings.



The resolution comes to a study session just over a week after an officer shot and killed a man who stabbed him and a police dog.

Last week, members of the Public Safety, Courts and Civil Service Committee agreed to move forward with the resolution, co-created by Councilmember Rob Andrews and the City Attorney's Office, without much discussion.

The resolution comes forward after almost two years of protesters attending every City Council meeting to criticize the Aurora Police Department and talk about lives lost to officer-involved shootings in the city.

Notably, family members and supporters of Kilyn Lewis have advocated for charges to be filed against, and for the firing of, the APD officer who shot Lewis.

Lewis, 37, was shot by SWAT Ofc. Michael Dieck on May 23, 2024, while officers were attempting to arrest him on an attempted murder warrant. He was not armed.

Dieck's use of deadly force was deemed justified by a Critical Incident Response Team, the 18th Judicial District Attorney, and an internal APD investigation.

"This is just a part of us moving forward in support of the folks who this has happened to," Andrews said about the resolution in Thursday's committee meeting.

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The resolution states that the APD has “been involved in several officer-involved shootings in recent years” and “some incidents have resulted in lost lives, leaving families with profound loss and grief.” It then states that the “City Council stands in mourning with those who are grieving the loss of a child, parent, family member or friend.”

The resolution also clarifies that the council cannot publicly comment on ongoing legal cases. It also comes to study session just over a week after an Aurora police officer shot and killed a man who stabbed the officer and a K-9.

On April 9, officers responded to a call about 23-year-old Amare James Garlington threatening to kill himself and others.

After officers arrived, Garlington allegedly charged at a K-9 officer and police dog, stabbing both of them with a butcher knife. Garlington was shot and killed and the officer and K-9 are expected to recover.

Andrews told The Denver Gazette Friday that his “resolution is not about this,” referring to last week’s stabbing and shooting.

“This was a very tragic incident in which the individual suffered mental health issues and, unfortunately, the cop was a victim of it,” Andrews said. “The statement is not about that, but about acknowledging past incidents.”

Also Monday night, councilmembers will return to a vote on a memorandum of understanding that outlines guidelines for Aurora police officers responding to the GEO Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility.

In the last meeting, the council decided to delay a vote on the MOU, with Councilmember Gianina Horton saying she wanted the public to have more time to go over it and understand it before a vote.

“It is very vital that we treat this with the utmost scrutiny and have as much public input into what this looks like,” Horton said.

Since the facility is in Aurora, the APD is the responding party for detainees who escape the facility, Chief Todd Chamberlain told council members.

The APD and ICE facility have a current MOU outlining how officers respond to those emergencies, but the new one would lay out more “clear, lawful, organized” guidelines for police responses to the facility. The full MOU can be read in council documents on the city’s website.

Monday’s study session starts at 4 p.m. and the regular meeting will follow at 6 p.m. The regular meeting will take place in the Paul Tauer Aurora City Council Chamber, 15151 E. Alameda Parkway, and the study session will be livestreamed in the chamber.

Both meetings are available to watch online at AuroraTV.org and YouTube.com/TheAuroraChannel and on cable channels eight and 880 in Aurora.

Littleton officials are continuing negotiations on a proposed development, First Street Farms, pitched as a long-term community gathering place and restaurant.

Developers said there is currently a \$5.5 million funding gap and discussed potential partnerships with the city during an April 14 City Council study session.

“At the end of the day, the impact that I think this is going to have can far extend the walls of First Street Farms and we would love to figure out a way to make it happen here,” Peter Newlin, partner at Gastamo Group, said.

The proposal would create a farm-style destination along the South Platte River corridor, with preliminary concepts including a restaurant, event space, community park with a football field, and five acres of landscaped paths.

The project is backed by the Gastamo Group, a restaurant and hospitality operator, and former Denver Broncos quarterback Peyton Manning who is an equity partner in the project. The project includes a storytelling component tied to Manning.

“This is meant to be a community hub,” Newlin said, describing plans for farmers markets, school performances, nonprofit events, youth sports activities and seasonal festivals.

The long-term vision, he added, is a privately owned but publicly accessible space designed to last 50 to 100 years. City staff said the level of public access exceeds what is typically offered, even in non-profit-led projects.

To cover the funding gap, developers requested a partnership in which the city would provide a \$4 million loan for improvements including trail connectivity and the turf field. In return, the city would receive an increased share of sales tax revenue and a community benefit agreement outlining public use of the site.

Council members expressed broad enthusiasm for the project but raised concerns about upfront cash commitments, financial risk and precedent. Several questioned using funds that might otherwise be allocated to public infrastructure such as sidewalks and roads.

Ultimately, the council directed staff to draft an agreement and continue negotiations with the developers, including a reduced loan amount of \$2 million and an increased tax revenue share from the project. Staff said additional legal and financial analysis is needed before a revised agreement is brought back to council.

Developers closed by thanking the council for its feedback and reiterating their commitment to making First Street Farms work in Littleton.

“We believe the impact of this project goes far beyond the site itself,” the developers said. “We’re committed to finding a solution that works for the city.”

