

## Littleton City Councilmember Carol Fey's comments on refugee resettlement at the Jan. 7 city council meeting.

I think we've established a precedent of reading statements, so I'm going to do that.

I have two major problems with supporting this resettlement request. The first comes from citizens I've heard from who, from both sides of the political spectrum who are saying what is the city doing taking a stance on a national political hot potato? Immigration is often described as the number one issue of difference, of polarization in the country. Do we really want to get involved in that? Another person asked who's going to pay for supporting these people when they're still here after the program ends. And another person from the other end of the spectrum asked why we can find room for these people when we couldn't find room for longtime Littleton residents who were victims of the Windermere apartment fires and had to move to somewhere else because we didn't have housing for them in Littleton.

More important to me than the subject, I'm representing people's point of view by those things, not my own concerns there so much as process. For council and all of government to function well, we need to have an established process and stick to it if we're going to get things done. And the last couple years with Mark leading us through the relentless process of getting the comprehensive plan and transportation master plan approved are good examples of that. We did not let things interrupt that. In this case, we were presented with an emergency federal concern that we have very little information about. Council's normal procedure for something we don't know about always, or for the last two years anyway, would be to get more information. Short term rentals is an example of that, and if we didn't, we weren't able to get more information, and short term rentals is an example of that too, where we didn't feel we had enough information, we did not move forward.

With this one we've been given an urgent date. It has to be done by this date or else. A shortage of time can be very useful. It increases urgency and decreases scrutiny. And so it encourages us to go forward and make a decision, even though as Mark said, we don't have good information and it sounds like we probably, possibly won't. The timing. The president signed the executive order, our packet says, on September 26. The group that brought forward the request to council to consider this waited until December 17 to bring it forward, and then bringing it forward in a rather, instead of bringing it forward as agenda items are normally brought to council through a process, they brought it, two citizens brought that to citizen comment, so the whole topic came to us in a very unusual way. One of the presenters told me before the meeting that she represents, represent, represented for that meeting, the group Immigrant Pathways Colorado. That group is a group the city has given grant money to, and we know that group knows how to work within in the city in a normal process.

The chair of Immigrant Pathways Colorado knows as well as anyone how to properly introduce an issue for council consideration, and also knows how to circumvent normal process. She's a former councilmember and mayor. She founded the Littleton Leadership Academy. That is about how Littleton government works. She teaches classes, and three of our councilmembers attended those for nine months about how Littleton city government works. This example was a major end run to get the agenda item at the last minute because it's urgent. The problem here isn't the topic of refugee immigration, it's whether or not council wants to be manipulated in this way, or if we want to follow our very successful practice for the last two years of following our own calendar and following a process to have exceptions to that.