



Minutes City Council Issue Review Session January 18, 2007

Minutes of the Tempe City Council Issue Review Session held on Thursday, January 18, 2007, 6:00 p.m., in the City Council Chambers, Tempe City Hall, 31 E. Fifth Street, Tempe, Arizona.

COUNCIL PRESENT:

Mayor Hugh Hallman

Vice Mayor Hut Hutson

Councilmember P. Ben Arredondo

Councilmember Barbara J. Carter

Councilmember Shana Ellis

Councilmember Mark W. Mitchell

Councilmember Onnie Shekerjian

Mayor Hallman called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

Call to the Audience

Bill Butler, Tempe, re: Item #5. He is concerned where the additional 1,000 cars with this new project will park. There are some concerns, although this appears to be a good project.

2007 Earned Income Tax Credit & Asset Development Initiative

INFORMATIONAL BACKGROUND available in the City Clerk's Office.

DISCUSSION – Presenter: TCC Executive Director Kate Hanley

Kate Hanley provided an update on the 2007 Earned Income Tax Credit program and Asset Development Initiative. The program is in its fifth year of operation and reaches out to hard-working, low-income residents. Since the baseline year, \$8M in refunds has been returned to these families and it has made a tremendous difference in their lives. She thanked Council for their support.

- Sessions will be held from January 27th through April 14th, with the exception of March 17th.
- This year, there will be one super site at Tempe Schools Credit Union (TSCU) at 2800 S. Mill. There have been technology-based problems in the past, and this year TSCU will provide IT support every Saturday.
- Transportation issues will be addressed.
- Translators will be available, including Spanish, Japanese, Filipino, Thai, both forms of Chinese, and

the Arabic languages.

- There will be opportunities for preparation of back taxes.
- Families with an income less than \$55K for 2006, or individuals with an income of less than \$33K for 2006 are eligible.

Ms. Hanley also added that the Money Smarts Program will provide the tools to become financially secure. Information on other programs to assist in homeownership in Tempe will also be available. She invited Council to stop in and meet the volunteers.

Councilmember Carter thanked staff for their efforts.

Councilmember Arredondo added that his committee supports this effort, as well as the super site concept for this year. He suggested having transportation available from the multi-generational centers next year.

Mayor Hallman summarized that the earned income tax credit is money the federal government provides as a tax credit for people in low-income tax brackets. Not enough people know about it and take advantage of it. This program brings back million of dollars into the community.

CONSENSUS

Update only.

Staff was directed to seek shuttle service to the EITC site for next year's program.

Follow-up Responsibility: Kate Hanley

5th and Farmer RFP Update

INFORMATIONAL BACKGROUND available in City Clerk's Office.

DISCUSSION – Presenters: Community Development Manager Chris Salomone; Redevelopment Manager Larry Schmalz

Chris Salomone provided an interim update on negotiations for the project. The project prevailed in an RFP, primarily as a condominium-ownership project with mixed-use elements, but most importantly, includes a branch library and a linear public park. He showed slides of the project.

- The library is a two-story structure on University Drive. In the original proposal, it was a separate structure. By integrating it into a housing project, it conforms better to urban planning standards and creates an iconic beginning of that project. It also becomes a public space and ultimately a trailhead for the park.
- The other change is the workforce housing project. This adds the larger piece of the project to Seventh and Sixth Streets. It also becomes a rental project funded by federal tax credits. This is a positive benefit. It provides workforce housing in an urban area, near mass transit, near amenities, and might become an example of how to do this. There is no burden on the City's or the State's budgets. It would be a very well-managed project because of the conditions of that funding source, one of which is that fulltime students cannot qualify.

Mayor Hallman added that there are a lot of noise complaints regarding the trains, and this project will act as a buffer for the neighborhood to the west.

Mr. Salomone added that there is a “stepping down” effect to acknowledge the neighborhood to the west. It also creates a barrier of the Chase parking garage.

Councilmember Shekerjian stated that this is a good transition project between the downtown and the neighborhoods.

Mayor Hallman added that this project is a result of an intensive community process.

Councilmember Carter clarified that this is the first phase of the project. She suggested the possibility of adding to the top of the library building to include some other kinds of public use, such as meeting rooms, child care, etc.

Mr. Salomone responded that this is still being actively discussed. The library will include meeting rooms, however.

Mayor Hallman added that the goal is for this project to pay for the public amenities for the community in the downtown and that included the library and the public park. The park is all along the east side of the project that provides the pedestrian access for the community from the south side of downtown all the way to the Lake. We need to make sure we don't outstrip our budget. Those are the project pieces we are buying in the project by using the money that is raised out of the sale of the property underlying the private portions of the project that will then pay for those public amenities.

Councilmember Carter added that she was suggesting bringing in a public piece to stack on top of the library piece.

Councilmember Mitchell asked for clarification that it was the developer's intention to have view corridors on Sixth and Seventh Street.

Mr. Salomone clarified that was the intention.

Vice Mayor Hutson asked that if staff looks at other expansion over the top of the library, he would be interested in the cost to the City, not only in the building of the project, but in the operation of the project.

Mayor Hallman clarified that we need to look at the capital costs of constructing the public elements, as well as the O&M.

Councilmember Arredondo agreed, but he felt it was important to go back to the neighborhood if the height of that facility is changed.

Mayor Hallman clarified that Councilmember Carter meant that it was within the envelope of the building currently existing, but that more of that space on University would be public, to the extent public use would be added.

Councilmember Carter agreed, but not necessarily have the public pay for it.

Mayor Hallman stated, concerning traffic, that this project is to be fully parked on its site. For the four-story residential element, it would be like any other neighborhood, with street parking available. The Fifth and Farmer intersection still needs to be dealt with. We have already spent \$2M along Fifth Street, and he felt staff should look at options to encourage people to continue down Farmer into Ash and around the Rio Salado if they are getting out of downtown to the north and using University to the west as their main means so this neighborhood doesn't feel increased cut-through traffic. We need to reduce the amount of traffic going into that neighborhood and we don't want to wait on this.

CONSENSUS

Staff was directed to develop options for the Fifth and Farmer intersection and explore adding a second floor above the proposed library for additional public uses.

Follow-up Responsibility: Chris Salomone

Education & Technology Advancement Committee Work Plan Amendment

INFORMATIONAL BACKGROUND

This is a request to formally add the City's website design to the work plan for the Education and Technology Advancement Council Committee.

Councilmember Shekerjian stated that this is an addition to the work plan to review the updated website. It didn't get included in the original plan.

Councilmember Ellis added that when a citizen fills out a form on the website, they don't always get a response back that the form is received. She requested that the committee look at a response that will be generated on each individual case what the status is, that it has been received and what the next step would be.

CONSENSUS

Approved as requested.

Committee was asked to develop a response to be generated when forms are accessed on the website.

Follow-up Responsibility: Shelley Hearn

Formal Council Agenda Items

No agenda items were discussed.

Future Agenda Items

- Councilmember Arredondo suggested a future discussion on the school district re-districting proposal and Mayor Hallman added the possibility of referral to the ballot of an alternative to the proposal merger of the three school districts.

Mayor's Announcements/Manager's Announcements

Mayor Hallman announced the Town Hall Meeting on Saturday, January 20th, in the Tempe Public Library Community Room, beginning at 9:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. The topic is visioning of the significant Tempe-owned areas along the Rio Salado Project, in particular, the property to the west of the Center for the Arts. This is an opportunity for the entire community to talk about the vision for that property, as well as for the property on the west side of Priest, north of Rio Salado. The goal is to have a community conversation to discuss what those properties should be used for and to create a new community consensus.

Meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Connie Krosschell
Acting City Clerk