

Minutes Neighborhood Advisory Commission June 11, 2011

Minutes of the Neighborhood Advisory Commission (NAC) held on June 11, 2011, 8:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m., at Tempe History Museum, 809 E. Southern Avenue, Tempe, Arizona.

(MEMBERS) Present: Nancy Buell, Pete DeMott, Ann Lynn Dominico, Gary Johnson, Britney Scott Kaufmann, Joochul Kim, Josephine McNamara, Leonard Montenegro, Joe Pospicil, Lisa Roach, John Sanborn, Scott Smas, Michael Wasko

(MEMBERS) Excused Absences: Karen Adams, Maureen Decindis, Ira King, Angela Lopez, Robert Miller, Michael Pickett, Bill Wagner

(MEMBERS) Unexcused Absences:

Guests Present:

None.

City Staff Present: Shauna Warner, Neighborhood Services Manager; Elizabeth Thomas, Neighborhood Services Specialist

Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order

Chair Wasko called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

Agenda Item 2 – Public Comment

None.

Agenda Item 3 – Consideration of Minutes: May 4, 2011

Vice Chair McNamara moved that the May 4, 2011 minutes be approved as written. Commissioner Sanborn seconded the motion. The motion passed with three abstentions due to absences from the May meeting.

Agenda Item 4 – Neighbor of the Year Application and Process Discussion and Revisions

There was general agreement that commission members are not fully satisfied with the current application and process. The following questions and comments were noted during the discussion:

- It's difficult to discern (by the application alone) about the nominee.
- What else is known beyond the information provided in the application and should this type of information be shared and considered or not?
- Should there be a limit to the number of award winners?
- Harsh attitudes and critical comments are not appreciated. We should not rely so much on the nominator's writing style or abilities. Each of these neighbors took the time to submit a nomination and to show appreciation for another neighbor.

- If we are fortunate enough to get many more nominations in, we can look at capping the number of winners.
- If you limit number of applicants, apathy can set in, best to encourage and engage on a broad level.
- We should encourage as many applications and as much recognition as possible.
- Despite considerable outreach including mass emails, Tempe Today (water bill newsletter), multiple press releases, postcard mailings to all neighborhood contacts, event posters and brochures at various locations all over the city, etc., there were less than ten nominations received.
- NAC members need to help get the word out to neighborhoods and to individual neighbors inviting them to nominate deserving neighbors and to plan to attend the awards and workshops.
- Consider having commission members staff tables with Neighbor of the Year info. at community meetings and events.
- Noted criteria is very subjective, we need to establish a more standard method of ranking.
- Existing nomination form is not encouraging.
- Seems like we are getting more into a competition mode than a recognition mode.
- Ask residents - Do you have a neighbor in your neighborhood who you would like to recognize?
- Should we continue to award just one Chuck Malpede? What if there are two or three neighbors who invest significant time and effort in their neighborhoods?
- For the Chuck Malpede Award, maybe add the criteria of if you have been a previous Neighbor of the Year nominee, if you have received any city, state or national award or if you have served your neighborhood for ten plus years.
- Ten years is a very long time.
- What if you have been heavily involved for 4 or 5 years?
- Don't overly restrict the Chuck Malpede Award, simply note that it is for length of service and ask how long the nominee has served the neighborhood.
- It feels like we are judging the nominator rather than the nominee, we don't want to diminish the nominee.
- Impact should come into play, you can make a tremendous impact in a short period of time.
- Maybe points can be assigned to years of service.
- The neighborhood stability component is a vital one.
- There are lots of renters in Tempe, they need encouragement too.
- Organizing vibrant social gatherings and functions serves an important role to bring neighbors together and build community and should not be dismissed or taken lightly.

After continued discussion, there was group agreement to work on the application to help make nominators more aware of the Chuck Malpede Award noting that length of service be added as a determining criteria for internal usage among other noted criteria such as impact, improving and maintaining the highest quality of life in Tempe's neighborhoods, positive problem solving, conflict resolution, promotion of participatory governance and respect and egalitarian approach to neighbors. The nomination form wording will be refined to reflect principles that Chuck Malpede exemplified while using more familiar and commonly understood wording. Commissioner Buell suggested renaming the Neighbor of the Year Awards the Neighborhood Awards to better reflect the numerous awards and to better encompass the Residential Beautification Awards. The names change was agreed to by the commission members at the June retreat.

To this end, the application will include some specific questions such as length of service to the neighborhood that will be taken into account and considered as part of the Chuck Malpede and Neighbor of the Year Award decision making process. Commissioner McNamara volunteered to take the many provided suggestions and work on creating a first draft of both the application and an

accompanying score sheet which will better correlate to the nomination and noted criteria. Commissioner Scott-Kaufman offered her assistance as well.

Agenda Item 5 – Recap of Past Year’s Commission Meetings

Chair Wasko noted that some months there was no action taken and no recommendations provided to Mayor and City Council. Staff commented that the Commission as a whole typically meets 11 times per year so it is unlikely that there will be action taken at every meeting as some meetings will need to be devoted to hearing and sharing of information prior to considering action and determining when and if it is necessary or appropriate. Chair Wasko expressed a personal goal of showing how we are making a difference.

Some commissioners noted that the Sixth Street Park had been adopted by the group and inquired how often the park clean ups are supposed to occur. Staff noted that the program requests that clean ups be scheduled quarterly.

Agenda Item 6 – Zip Teams Discussion

Staff provided some clarification from the City Clerk’s office regarding the Zip Teams concept. Individual members can explore their neighborhoods and record observations and/or concerns to share with the entire commission at a future meeting. If teams are formed, they will be held to the same Open Meeting Laws that require posting of all meeting agendas, identification of a meeting place, date and time as well as a path of travel for any walking and meeting minutes preparation by one of the Zip Team commission members. Approaching this idea as a formalized team concept is not recommended by City Clerk or Neighborhood Services staff as it would need to be very structured and would entail considerable additional effort and coordination by both commissioners and staff.

Zip code reports can be identified as a standing agenda item allowing time for commission members who have taken a walk around their neighborhood alone or in a pair since the previous meeting to share and discuss what they found.

Commissioner Roach explained that when she was Chair of her neighborhood, she went with a neighbor partner and walked door to door while conducting a simple neighborhood survey. This exercise helped to start conversations and learn more about what neighbors in her area were thinking.

Staff offered to email NAC members a copy of the neighborhood association survey which is administered when a new group forms to take a snapshot of the neighborhood at that time. If NAC members wish to complete this survey and return it to staff, the results might help commissioners to identify and prioritize some shared goals. This same survey could also be tailored by commission members and used for them to gather information and to encourage further neighbor communication during their neighborhood walks if desired.

Agenda Item 7 – Discussion and Benchmarking of Neighborhood Advisory Commission

Purpose and Goals

Chair Wasko noted that a couple of years ago the Commission sought to identify and follow up on 4-5 action items. Some questions that came up included the following: We gather a lot of information but how do we turn that information into action or goals? How many of the goals identified last year did we actually accomplish? Do any of the remaining ones still capture the interest of those now on the Commission one year later? What is the purpose and business of the Commission? What are some of the items that consistently rank high on the Citizen Satisfaction surveys that the Commission might share as concerns and wish to pursue further?

Staff agreed to provide information from the Citizen Satisfaction Survey for commissioner review, specifically the top 10 areas of concern. Even if an item is identified as a priority in the survey, the commission will need to determine if it is something they wish to learn more about and want to pursue further and/or if they believe it is already being addressed the best it can be with available staff resources.

Chair Wasko commented that when discussing and determining future agenda items, not all commissioners agree on which of the noted concerns should be looked into. Other commission members emphasized the need for a broader and more holistic perspective, emphasizing that just because something does not impact every commissioner's specific neighborhood, all members should have concerns about impacts to other neighborhoods and should be open to hearing more and participating in identifying some solutions.

Agenda Item 8 – Review of Committee Structure, Membership and Goals

There was discussion regarding whether to keep the existing committees, form new committees, better mirror the City Council committees, distill committees from three to two or focus on establishing the commission goals and priorities first and then revisit the whole topic of committees.

It was acknowledged that the commission as a whole has had some challenges reaching a quorum (11 members out of 21 must be present) as have some of the committees (3 members out of 5) in the past. It was acknowledged that this could very well be symptomatic of commissioner confusion and/or frustration about what is or is not being accomplished as well as unfilled vacancies. More recently none of the established committees have been meeting with the exception of the Quality of Life/Neighborhood Enhancement and Codes Committee. This committee established a regular meeting schedule at their March 22 meeting but have not met since. Commission members were reminded that their primary responsibility is to attend and participate in the monthly commission meetings and to advise staff when they are unable to do so, all committee meetings are optional.

After continued discussion, Chair Wasko indicated he would like to meet individually with the Chair of each of the current committees to discuss their ideas for committee priorities and goals and then have further shared discussion at the August Commission meeting. Commissioner Roach noted that she had resigned some time ago from the Budget/Finance committee, staff will remove her name from the membership list.

Agenda Item 9 – Proposed Agenda Items for August 3, 2011 Meeting

- **Solid Waste Code Revisions**
- **Graffiti**
- **Zoning Code Amendment – Parking Requirements in Downtown and Transportation Overlay District**
- **Further Review of Committee Structure, Membership and Goals**
- **Zip Reports**

Agenda Item 10 – Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at Noon.

Prepared by: Elizabeth Thomas, Neighborhood Services Specialist
Reviewed by: Shauna Warner, Neighborhood Services Manager