



Minutes City Council's Quality of Life Committee September 10, 2009

Minutes of the meeting of the City Council's Quality of Life Committee held on Thursday, September 10, 2009, 4:00 p.m., in the 3rd Floor Conference Room, Tempe City Hall, 31 E. 5th Street, Tempe, Arizona.

Committee Members Present:

Mayor Hugh Hallman
Councilmember Ben Arredondo
Councilmember Mark Mitchell
Councilmember Joel Navarro

City Staff Present:

Angel Carbajal, Asst. Police Chief
Sam Thompson, Dep Mgr – Parks
Mary Anders-Greenwell, PD
Mark Richwine, Parks & Rec Mgr
Shauna Warner, Neighborhood Programs Dir
Jan Hort, City Clerk
Elizabeth Thomas, Neighborhood Svcs
John Osgood, Dep Public Wrks Mgr
Eric Iwersen, Transit

Glenn Kephart, Public Wrks Mgr
Marc Scott, Fire Dept
Bob Pohlit, Parks & Rec
Lisa Collins, Dev Svcs
Judith Morgan, City Atty Office
Chris Salomone, Comm Dev
Shelley Hearn, Comm Relations Mgr
Jeff Tamulevich, Dev Svcs

Guests Present:

Kevin Kaesberg, Neighborhood Advisory Commission
Joe Pospicil, Neighborhood Advisory Commission
Eric Gudino, ASU
Tony Bradley, AZ Multihousing Assoc

Judy Ellison
Greg Ellison
Stephanie Salazar, ASU
Jay Gomez

Mayor Hallman called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances/Call to the Public

None.

Agenda Item 2 – Approval of Minutes of May 28, 2009

Councilmember Navarro made a motion to approve the May 28, 2009 minutes. Second by Councilmember Mitchell. Motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 3 – Interdepartmental Work Group Update

Angel Carbajal explained that the purpose of the interdepartmental work group team is to collaborate on neighborhood issues with staff decision makers throughout the city workforce. The initial goal of this work group was

to identify city-wide resources and compile data in a comprehensive fashion. Because of these efforts, staff has been successful in working strategically on specific neighborhood issues and concerns.

This work group is in the process of studying a north Tempe neighborhood. Topics this team is studying for this region are criminal activity, code enforcement, speeding, transit and other quality of life issues. Representatives from north Tempe neighborhoods were asked to provide feedback regarding their concerns, assisting in this evaluation. A neighborhood survey is being conducted that will provide additional information regarding resident concerns.

Shauna Warner provided maps that illustrated code enforcement activity and nuisance calls for service city wide. Although the primary focus is on a north Tempe neighborhood, staff is also looking at other areas of Tempe that have unusually high calls for service, such as the downtown. Mayor Hallman commended the staff efforts on these neighborhood concerns and encouraged staff to expand their scope to include alleyway improvements.

Mr. Carbajal stated that staff is trying to avoid the public perception of neglecting neighborhoods in Tempe, while juggling focusing on specific regions. Shelley Hearn added that the final aspect of these regional studies/clean up efforts is to educate residents when the study has been completed and problems have been addressed so that it creates an environment of accountability.

Agenda Item 4 – Pathway Signage

Mark Richwine stated that staff has been exploring ways of integrating 'way finding' for bicycle/pedestrian facilities within neighborhood parks. This signage assists individuals on how to get from one location to another. Councilmember Navarro asked where the enhanced signage is going to be placed. Mr. Richwine responded that canal banks, downtown, neighborhood park pathways, and collector/distributor streets. Mayor Hallman concluded by saying that this signage will allow individuals to get from point "a" to point "b" in an interesting and intuitive way.

Agenda Item 5 – Status of Parks Rehabilitation Program

Mark Richwine gave an overview of a five year Parks and Recreation capital improvement program. Three projects are in queue at all times. Meyer Park is in their final draft conceptual stage. Neighborhood input has greatly assisted in the progress of this program in terms of reflecting the desires of residents.

Councilmember Arredondo voiced concern about schools locking their school yards during afternoon and early evening hours, which prohibits the use of those grounds to groups that would otherwise enjoy recreational activities. If the City is in partnership with schools, then the school grounds should be accessible for the citizenry to utilize during these hours. Councilmember Arredondo suggested that the City Manager meet with school representatives to discuss this system disparity and to question the premise of the partnership. Mayor Hallman voiced his support for maximizing the use of these public amenities. Mark Richwine and the City Manager were directed to meet with school district representatives to discuss keeping athletic fields open for use during afternoons and early evenings. It was noted that the City has contributed to school ground improvements such as shade structures for playground equipment in the spirit of partnership, and that reciprocity in utilization of these amenities is appropriate.

Councilmember Arredondo commended staff on their effective approach to working with neighborhoods on these improvement projects.

Shauna Warner was asked to schedule a joint dinner meeting with school board officials and the Tempe City Council.

Agenda Item 6 – El Paso Gas Line Easement

Eric Iwersen updated the committee on the variety of improvements that have been made along the El Paso gas line easement corridor, which is segmented into three distinct sections.

Price Road frontage to McClintock Drive – A six-foot sidewalk with landscaping and bollard lighting was installed along the length of this segment. Mature landscaping integrates Fuller School, Optimist/Gaiki parks and single family residential. Landscaping, parks path maintenance and lighting are maintained by city staff.

McClintock Drive to Rural Road – mature landscaping, seating, dog waste bags and sod are maintained by homeowners associations.

Rural Road to Kiwanis Park – This ½ mile segment remains unimproved and has generated complaints from resident about graffiti and trash. These problems extend from Rural Road south of Cornell Drive.

Councilmember Mitchell asked if the Rural Road to Kiwanis Park segment might be a candidate for federal transportation funding. Glen Kephart stated that this project could be put in the cue for federal funding.

Councilmember Mitchell mentioned that the area along Hardy Drive is also in need of improvement. Mark Richwine commented that this location is bordered by a county island; however staff will look into improvement options for this location.

Staff was directed to present this item at an issue review session to pursue capital improvement funds for this project.

Agenda Item 7 – Review of Solid Waste Code Revisions

John Osgood stated that staff is in the process of bringing the solid waste portion of the city code into alignment with code compliance, citations, fines, and habitual offenders. The outcome is to make processes easier to understand and consistent in administration. Neighborhood input has been incorporated into the proposed code revisions. Mayor Hallman stated that alley standards should be included in these code revisions and asked staff to explore whether it would make sense to incorporate aspects of the Solid Waste Code into the Nuisance and Property Enhancement Code instead of having two separate codes with the same language.

Agenda Item 8 – Status of Zoning and Development Code Occupancy Standards

Lisa Collins stated that consanguinity relates to the number of unrelated occupants permitted to reside in single family homes. Currently, no more than three unrelated individuals are allowed to reside within one residential unit. Development Services staff has met with the prosecutors and Tax and License staff to discuss ways to criminally charge landlords that violate consanguinity standards. Proving that there is a consanguinity violation is one of the biggest challenges to Code Enforcement personnel. One option would be to include verbiage on the landlord rental privilege sales tax form making landlords responsible for knowingly allowing violations of consanguinity laws.

Last year there were approximately 50 complaints, where voluntary compliance was the outcome. Staff will be bringing this issue back to the committee after further study. Mayor Hallman asked that staff look into the possibility of charging violators with RICO penalties.

Dr. Ellison was called upon to address the committee on this agenda item and read a letter concerning a consanguinity ASU fraternity situation in his neighborhood. Deteriorating neighborhoods is the result of consanguinity situations. Prosecuting the offenders is onerous and commonly fruitless. Dr. Ellison proposed that the City of Tempe work with the ASU administration to include Tempe neighborhoods in their sustainability programs and strategize to help Tempe restore and maintain its family friendly neighborhoods. Dr. Ellison commented that the only time ASU has engaged with the neighborhood on this issue has been when they were ordered to by the Board of Regents, as a direct result of neighborhood representatives attending a Board of Regents meeting regarding this topic.

Mayor Hallman stated that city representatives have been working with ASU to increase their student housing stock. There has been a notable influx of rental houses going back on the market for sale because the demand for rental

housing has diminished. Another aspect of Tempe's involvement on this issue has been to encourage ASU to institute a student code of conduct, so that there would be clear and concise guidelines for student behaviors.

Councilmember Arredondo stated that ASU has incorporated student housing information in their orientation process.

Ms. Ellison gave the following suggestions and comments:

- Distribute the city's residential parking permits to landlords and have them distribute the parking passes to their tenants; this places the responsibility on homeowners, not tenants
- ASU should provide students with information about city codes and consequences for violating those codes; students should be required to sign this document, confirming they understand the laws
- Students that violate city codes should be put on school probation the first time and suspended the second time – this includes fraternities

Ms. Ellison echoed Dr. Ellison's frustration regarding the lack of communication between the City, ASU and residents regarding this pervasive neighborhood nuisance. Mayor Hallman stated that staff will be updating the City Council on student housing issues and the progress that is being made with ASU. Councilmember Mitchell commented that communicating progress on this issue to Tempe residents in the vicinity of the university would be meaningful. Mayor Hallman added that success must also be measured in conjunction with unresolved issues.

Joe Pospicil stated that the County keeps track of home ownership information, including rental homes.

Mayor Hallman requested that a representative from the Tax and License Division attend the next meeting to discuss rental housing licensing processes.

Agenda Item 9 – Future Agenda Items

None.

Agenda Item 10 – Announcements

None.

Meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Prepared by: Kay Savard

Reviewed by: Shauna Warner

Jan Hort, City Clerk