

## Sustainability and Economic Vitality (SEV)

Council Committee Meeting Minutes  
Virtual and In-Person Meeting in City Council Chambers  
31 East 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
May 17, 2024  
1:00 p.m.

### 1. CALL TO ORDER/ ROLL CALL

*Meeting called to order by Councilmember Chin at 1:01 p.m. with Councilmember Chin and Vice Mayor Adams both attending in person in the Council Chambers.*

### 2. REVIEW MEETING MINUTES

#### A. April 19, 2024 SEV Meeting Minutes

*Approval of the April 19, 2024 SEV Meeting Minutes was moved by Vice Mayor Adams, seconded by Councilmember Chin, and approved unanimously.*

### 3. PUBLIC COMMENTS - The committee welcomes public comment. According to the Arizona Open Meeting Law, the Committee may only discuss matters listed on the agenda. Matters brought up by the public under public appearances that are not listed on the agenda cannot be discussed by the Committee. A 3-minute limit per person will be in effect.

#### A. Comment Cards Submitted

No comment cards were submitted.

### 4. COMMITTEE SESSION ITEMS

#### A. Current Items and Updates

#### 1. **Growing Together: A Tree Stewardship and Workforce Development Program**

*Neighborhood Resilience Coordinator Maddie Mercer from Transportation and Sustainability and urban forester Richard Adkins from Community Services provided the Committee with an introduction to "Growing Together," a new tree stewardship and workforce development program, a joint initiative between Sustainability and Community Services.*

*This program will address several of City Council's performance measures, including 4.11 – Tree and Shade Canopy, 4.18 – Community Carbon Neutrality, 3.31 - Poverty Rate, and 3.34 – Community Health*

*and Well-Being. The development of this program is also being driven by the Climate Action Plan and the Urban Forestry Master Plan that have both been approved by Council.*

*The purpose of this program is to expand Tempe's urban forest on private property located within Tempe to mitigate extreme heat. Tempe only maintains a small portion of land that it is responsible for, and that limits where Tempe can plant trees. This project aims to educate and provide resources to help expand trees on private property, particularly in areas of the city where they are most sparse. Tempe has identified two areas of concentration: Tempe East Neighborhoods in the northeast corner of Tempe, as well as the Town of Guadalupe and some neighborhoods in southwest Tempe.*

*Funding for this program amounts to \$1.6 million and comes in joint from the USDA Forest Service and the AZ Department of Forestry and Fire Management. The timeline of funding for this project is from April 2024 through March of 2027.*

*This joint project will promote equitable cooling and resilience to extreme heat, create workforce development opportunities through on-the-job training programs and professional development scholarships and creating new temporary staff positions, and develop connections between the city's urban forestry, green stormwater infrastructure, and urban agriculture initiatives.*

*This program will pay (and teach) Tempe residents to grow, plant and maintain trees in neighborhoods with low canopy coverage and high heat vulnerability, provide additional capacity for school greening through new staff roles and professional development trainings, and develop two new food forest to provide shade and increase community food access.*

*Over the course of the 3-year program, there will be 5 cohorts, with 10 residents per cohort. Participants will be paid \$20 per hour and work 12 hours per month. They will learn to grow, plant, and care for trees, provide their neighbors with trees, supplies, and information, and explore additional education and career pathways. Three temporary Tempe staff will be hired to support the recruitment and program implementation. They will also be providing additional grounds maintenance support to schools to expand the school districts' capacity to both plant and maintain their trees.*

*This program will also develop two community food forests – one at a public school and one at a city-owned property. It includes funding for site design and assessment, installation, programming, and maintenance.*

*The project kicked off in April of 2024 and the program is being developed through July 2024, including the hiring of 5 new temporary staff positions. In August and September of 2024, cohort participants will be recruited, and capacity-building training will begin at the schools. The first cohort begins in late September 2024, and the food forest design will be completed. Cohort 1 ends in November 2024. Cohort 2 will run from January through March of 2025, and this yearly timeline will repeat through the end of the program.*

## **2. Community Services Department with Downtown Tempe Authority and Tempe Tourism**

### **i. Special Events and Economic Impact**

*The presentation opened with Recreation Deputy Director Shawn Wagner and Special Events Manager Linda Cano from Community Services acknowledging the performance measures being addressed: 3.19 – Value of Special Events and 5.01 – Quality of Business Services.*

*Festivals and events help to make up the social fabric of Tempe by cultivating culture, celebrating community spirit, and strengthening relationships between community members, visitors, tourists, and local businesses.*

*In 2023, 207 special event applications were approved. Approximately 600,000 people attended events in Tempe. Events are held all over the city, but the primary event venues include Kiwanis Park, Downtown Tempe, Rio Salado Parks, the Tempe Community Center Complex, and Diablo Stadium. Some of the largest events include Rock n Roll Arizona, Ironman Arizona, the Kiwanis Club 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration, Tempe Festival of the Arts, The Festival of Lights and Festival of Lights Boat Parade, Innings Fest/Extra Innings Fest, 2<sup>nd</sup> Sundays on Mill, and other community events. The total estimated economic impact to Tempe from special events is \$16 million.*

*Lori Foster from Downtown Tempe went into more details about how events thrown by the Downtown Tempe Authority (2<sup>nd</sup> Sundays, Halloween Stroll, Tempe Blooms, “A” Mountain Challenge, and the annual Menorah Lighting) and Downtown Tempe Foundation (Tempe Festival of the Arts, the Fantasy of Lights parades, and the annual downtown block parties for Pride and Juneteenth) positively economically impact Tempe.*

*Michael Martin from Tempe Tourism then presented on how these special events promote tourism in Tempe. While Tempe Tourism does not produce events themselves, they directly promote them on behalf of the City of Tempe and the Downtown Tempe Authority, and are able to track data on their economic impact on our tourism industry,*

*For instance, in looking at the hotel room data alone for the weekend of the Extra Innings Fest – a new special event in 2024. Over the course of the weekend of Extra Innings Fest, year-over-year data showed an approximate 25% increase in demand for hotel rooms over those three nights, resulting in a revenue increase of 42% per night, on average.*

*Overall, special events bring revenue to the City of Tempe in several ways, via lodging, food and beverage consumption, recreational and retail spending, and the use of transportation. For instance, the last Rock and Roll Arizona event brought in an estimated \$4,220,469 via these numerous pathways, and the direct tax revenue to Tempe was \$212,500. The expenses incurred by Tempe for this event came to \$109, 638, for a total net gain of \$102,862 from one event.*

*Future steps are to convene a Special Event Strategic Planning Initiative with Tempe*

*Community Services, Downtown Tempe, Tempe Tourism, and other key stakeholders to be sure we are focusing on creating and hosting events that are right for Tempe.*

*Vice Mayor Adams commented that she'd like to know if we can get data regarding whether hotel room usage increases because of Arizona Theatre Company performances. She called the presentation a "model presentation."*

*Councilmember Chin requested that the SEV Council Committee receive more periodic economic updates, particularly after certain big events like Spring Training or Boots in the Park, to highlight the return on investment that these "temporary inconveniences" bring to Tempe.*

**B. New Items for Consideration**

- 1. Vice Mayor Adams requested that we have this "Economic Impact of Special Events" presentation come before the committee twice a year.*

**C. Announcements**

- 1. There were no new announcements.*

**5. NEXT MEETING DATE: June 17, 2024**

**6. ADJOURN**

*Meeting was adjourned at 2:08 p.m. by Councilmember Chin.*