
DRAFT Minutes

Neighborhood Advisory Commission Retreat

June 22, 2013

Minutes of the Neighborhood Advisory Commission (NAC) held on June 22, 2013, 8:30 a.m. – Noon, Eisendrath Community Room, 1400 N. College, Tempe, Arizona 85281.

(MEMBERS) Present: Karen Adams, Nancy Buell, Kiyomi Kurooka, Nancy Lesko, Josephine McNamara, Robert Miller, Bill Munch, Jon Mulford, Russ Plieseis, Scott Smas, Bill Wagner, Christopher Ware.

(MEMBERS) Excused Absences: John Chester, John Sanborn

(MEMBERS) Unexcused Absences: Mary Robinson

City Staff Present: Elizabeth Thomas, Neighborhood Services Specialist; Jeff Tamulevich, Code Enforcement Manager, jeff_tamulevich@tempe.gov, Bill Kersbergen, Community Development and Planning, william_kersbergen@tempe.gov, Nancy Ryan, Community Development, nancy_ryan@tempe.gov, Aaron Peterson, Tempe Learning Center, aaron_peterson@tempe.gov.

Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:33 a.m.

Agenda Item 2 – Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Agenda Item 3 – Consideration of Minutes: May 1, 2013

Commissioner Ware made a motion to approve the May 1, 2013 minutes and Commissioner Wagner seconded the motion. The motion passed with ten yeas and two abstentions due to absence from the May meeting.

Agenda Item 4 – Overview of the Neighborhood Code Enforcement Residential Survey

Jeff Tamulevich briefly described the reasoning behind conducting the Neighborhood Code Enforcement Residential Survey. Current staffing levels for Residential Code Enforcement allow for **reactive** enforcement only, sufficient staff is not available to provide Code Enforcement for the city on a **proactive** basis. Additionally, in the 2012 Community Attitude Survey, Code enforcement ranked second highest importance on the survey, right behind “efforts to prevent crime.” Less than half of the residents surveyed (46%) described being “Very Satisfied” or “Satisfied” with City

Enforcement of Property Codes.

A survey of the existing conditions was completed. With approximately 31,620 single family residences in the City of Tempe, for a valid survey, a 2% sample was taken resulting in 640 homes throughout the city being surveyed. The following six most cited violations were used as evaluation criteria:

1. Weeds growing on property
2. Dead vegetation
3. Un-registered vehicle
4. Vehicles parked in landscape areas
5. Lack of building maintenance/peeling paint
6. Debris and clutter visible to the public street

Surveyed properties were scored from 1 to 5 on each applicable criteria with 1 being properties exhibiting the worst conditions and 5 representing no noted problem. Of 640 residences surveyed, 409 (or 64%) displayed at least one of the code violations evaluated. Zip codes 85281 and 85281 had significantly more violations and more severe violations noted.

Based on survey results, the following goals were established:

- To increase the Average Score to at least 28.25 out of 30 in every zip code. (This represents a 2 point scoring improvement for 85281 and 85282.)
- Establish a Yearly Inspection/Scoring To Evaluate Progress.

To work towards reaching these goals, Code Compliance requested the budget to add three new residential code inspectors specifically for areas north of Baseline Road. In addition, adjustments to the enforcement boundaries to better balance workloads will be made and an effort to proactively search out code violations in “hotspots” rather than wait for complaints will be implemented.

Some commissioners inquired if any of the inspectors would be working week-ends. Each part time temporary inspector will be working alongside a full time inspector. There is currently no funding to cover the additional expense of weekend work. Jeff indicated his understanding that some conditions happen more on week-ends and added weekend staffing might be a possibility in the future. A commissioner shared concerns regarding connecting disabled and senior residents who struggle to stay in and maintain their properties to non-profits like Tempe Neighbors Helping Neighbors. Code Compliance is currently working with the Diversity Department to identify a means with an identified point person to help distribute information regarding potential available resources.

Other questions centered on “slumlords” and commercial properties with violations that repeatedly are sold prior to the violation being corrected. Concern was also expressed regarding the recidivism rate and whether current penalties were sufficient. Fines do increase and if unpaid can even result in jail time. Abatement remains the preferred route for the city as criminal violations are slow to occur. Commercial code violations are attached to the property rather than the individual and some properties have multiple liens on them. A similar survey specific to commercial code enforcement will be conducted.

Agenda Item 5 – General Plan 2040 Overview and Group Activity

Nancy Ryan explained that the General Plan 2040 contains the community's vision for the future, helps to guide how the community will grow and change and is required by Arizona law that a comprehensive and long term plan be adopted every ten years. The first draft of the plan is anticipated to be ready in the coming weeks with public meetings for review scheduled on August 1 and August 3 at the Tempe History Museum.

Tempe's vision of itself in the year 2040 is one of livability. The following five guiding principles have been identified:

- Balanced Land Use
- Enhanced Quality of Life/Preservation of Neighborhood Character
- Increased Economic Vitality
- Sustained Mobility/Greater Accessibility
- Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship

Nancy noted the key recommendations from General Plan 2030 and highlighted what is new and key aspects of various chapters in General Plan 2040. Tempe's vision of itself in the year 2040 is one of livability with movement to create a "20 minute city" where frequently used amenities from cafes to drycleaners to childcare can be reached in a 20 minute walk, bike or bus ride. The population in 2040 is anticipated to reach 217,000 with employment expected for 244,000.

The Mayor and Council appointed a 23 member community working group which has been meeting regularly to offer input on the development of the plan since December 2013. Commissioner Julie Ramsey represents NAC. The first draft of the plan is anticipated to be ready in the coming weeks with public meetings for review scheduled on August 1 and August 3 at the Tempe History Museum. Once ready, the draft plan will also be available on the website Tempe.gov/GP2040. From there, the plan will go through Development Review Commission Hearings and City Council Review and Hearings. Ultimately the voters will decide whether to ratify the plan in May 2014.

For the retreat activity, Commission members were divided into three small groups focused for 10-15 minute periods on Land Use, Growth Areas and the Neighborhood Preservation and Revitalization Elements of the plan. They reviewed the provided maps and materials and identified the most important concepts to their group, also noting if anything was missing or needing to be eliminated. Each commissioner was then given three dots to place on their top priorities specific to that element.

After each commissioner group had visited all three plan areas, Nancy reviewed the common themes. Several commissioners were most concerned regarding the projected increase in population wondering where the new housing units will go and whether most will be apartments and will there be sufficient jobs paying a living wage to sustain the new, projected population, Quality of life (versus quantity growth) was expressed as more livable and desirable for current Tempe residents. Concern regarding the quality of neighborhood parks and schools was also expressed and the impacts both have on neighborhoods and home values.

The desire for greater notification of projects in the planning stages was also noted. The suggestion was made that new development or redevelopment should have a radius of notification greater than 300'. Why not 400' or 500' or tie into the "20 minute city concept" and

notify all residents who can reach the new development within a one mile or 20-minute walk in that timeframe? Commissioners inquired what was accomplished from General Plan 2030 and what is viable, achievable and realistic for General Plan 2040? The need for more affordable options for housing and caring for our increasing senior population was also mentioned.

Agenda Item 6 – Recap of Past Year’s Commission Meetings

Chair McNamara noted this information was contained in the packet.

Agenda Item 7 – Discussion and Prioritization of Neighborhood Advisory Commission Goals for the coming year

Commissioners commented that changes to various processes seem to be made with little or insufficient resident input. The feeling is that too often commissioners only hear about the plans after they are made. They also expressed concern that the Mayor’s Community Roundtable group may be making NAC a redundancy of volunteers.

Aaron Peterson helped lead the group in an exercise to begin to identify, categorize and prioritize commission priorities and goals. He noted that with only ten regular meetings and one retreat per year, there is a limit to what can be successfully addressed and accomplished. Elizabeth added that the Neighborhood Workshop and Awards is a given in terms of commission priorities. Aaron suggested that the group endeavor to identify maybe three additional areas of focus.

Overarching theme of discussion: Create a process, ideally during the planning phases, to know what is going on sooner with the goal of better providing feedback and recommendations to Council and City Staff when appropriate to do so.

In addition to the Neighborhood Workshop and Awards, three broad focus areas were identified with specific commissioner comments and suggestions (in their own words) provided under each:

Neighborhood Workshop and Awards

- Increase participation from neighborhoods that do not participate

Education and Awareness

- Continue to support neighborhood organizations with communication and training
- Open up the level of communication with the school districts

Planning and Sustainability

- Water use, recycling, etc.
- Historic Preservation and Council unwillingness to support preservation/conservation of open spaces and cultural resource areas
- Become a player/partner in developing historic neighborhoods with other city and community groups
- City needs to be proactive in encouraging historical status in old neighborhoods and provide easy to follow procedures
- General Plan 2040 – revisit density and population issues, quality vs. quantity
- Walkable and safe pedestrian options
- Advise and comment on planning and development issues that the City Council will address
- Focus on how development and re-development impacts neighborhoods

- Drive the General Plan's impacts on neighborhoods through advocacy with the City Council
- Promote sustainable community – walkable, shade – zoning change, street design, mixed use, adapt IGCC as mandatory code change
- Parameters for city's notification on use and reuse of land to most closely impacted and affected residents
- Notification to homeowners about use and reuse of land in their communities

Code Compliance and Solid Waste

- Neighborhood quality, upkeep and maintenance
- Follow up on impact of bulk trash changes
- Encourage more participation, subsidize tree removal
- Bust slum lords
- More city code enforcement
- Code compliance – follow up and provide feedback on new hires impact metrics, existing metric updates, feedback on processes or impacts seen
- Support the Code Enforcement Dept., maintain communication with elected leaders, require reporting to us
- Sustained enforcement and maintenance of quality neighborhoods and parks
- Have city strengthen codes regarding neighborhood appearance – e.g. re-establish codes on storage of trash containers, enforcement of fire burning on no-burn days

Commissioners expressed appreciation for Aaron's assistance with goal setting and requested he come to the August meeting to help finish the exercise. Aaron agreed to come in August. He emphasized that flexibility will be built in to address issues that come up quickly but having the goals and priorities noted for the coming year will be helpful for staff and commissioners.

Agenda Item 8 – Update regarding proposed Zoning and Development Code Changes

Elizabeth shared that the amendment specific to fraternities and sororities has been placed on the back burner and is not moving forward at this time. The amendment specific to loud parties and nuisance gatherings to be enforced by the Police Department was approved by City Council and is in the City Clerk's office for final editing before going into effect in the next 30 days. Staff should have an update at the August meeting.

Agenda Item 9 – Proposed Agenda Items for August 7, 2013 Meeting

- Continue goal setting and prioritization with Aaron Peterson
- Update regarding loud parties/nuisance code
- General Plan 2040 Update
- Code Compliance Update (Future meeting after new staff and changes have been in effect)

Agenda Item 10 - Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at Noon.

Prepared by: Elizabeth Thomas, Neighborhood Services Specialist