

Minutes Neighborhood Advisory Commission February 3, 2021



Minutes of the Neighborhood Advisory Commission (NAC) held on Wednesday, February 3, 2021, virtual meeting using Microsoft Teams platform

(MEMBERS) Present: Hannah Moulton Belec, Maureen Eastty, Jana Lynn Granillo, Diane Harden, Barb Harris, Matt Heil, Melanie Larimer, Daniel Schugurensky, Zoe Stein, Joel Stern, Kevin Sweeney and Nicholas Weller.

(MEMBERS) Absent: Christopher McCabe, Michael McLendon, Richelle Miller

City Staff: Laura Kajfez, Neighborhood Services Specialist; Elizabeth Thomas, Neighborhood Services Specialist; Shauna Warner, Neighborhood Services Manager; Sam Stevenson, Senior Transportation Planner, sam_stevenson@tempe.gov, 480-858-7765,

Guests: Ron and Judy Tapscott, Tempe Neighborhoods Together (TNT)

Agenda Item 1 - Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:33 p.m. by Chair Belec

Agenda Item 2 - Attendance Roll Call

Present: Hannah Moulton Belec, Maureen Eastty, Jana Lynn Granillo, Diane Harden, Barb Harris, Matt Heil, Melanie Larimer, Daniel Schugurensky, Zoe Stein, Joel Stern, Kevin Sweeney and Nicholas Weller

Absent: Christopher McCabe, Michael McLendon, Richelle Miller

Agenda Item 3 - Public Comment

None.

Agenda Item 4 - Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes: January 6, 2021

Motion: Vice Chair Larimer made a motion to approve the January minutes as presented.

Second: Commissioner Granillo

Result: Approved by a unanimous vote of 12 to 0

Commission Member Ayes: Hannah Moulton Belec, Maureen Eastty, Jana Lynn Granillo, Diane Harden, Barb Harris, Matt Heil, Melanie Larimer, Daniel Schugurensky, Zoe Stein, Joel Stern, Kevin Sweeney and Nicholas Weller

Absent: Christopher McCabe, Michael McLendon, Richelle Miller

**Agenda Item 5 - Review and Approval of NAC and Sustainability Commission
Joint Meeting Minutes: January 6, 2021**

Chair Moulton Belec noted that any references made in the minutes to Commissioner Larimer need to be changed to Vice Chair Larimer to reflect the election that had taken place at the regular NAC meeting, just prior to the joint meeting,

Motion: Vice Chair Larimer made a motion to approve the January 6, joint meeting minutes with edits noted above.

Second: Commissioner Granillo

Result: Approved by a unanimous vote of 12 to 0

Commission Member Ayes: Hannah Moulton Belec, Maureen Eastty, Jana Lynn Granillo, Diane Harden, Barb Harris, Matt Heil, Melanie Larimer, Daniel Schugurensky, Zoe Stein, Joel Stern, Kevin Sweeney and Nicholas Weller

Absent: Christopher McCabe, Michael McLendon, Richelle Miller

**Agenda Item 6 - Transit Fund Balancing and Service Changes, Sam Stevenson,
Senior Transportation Planner**

Tempe's Transit Tax which passed in 1996 encompasses the following elements:

- 14 arterial bus routes
- 6 Orbit routes & FLASH service
- 2 express bus routes
- Paratransit
- 6 miles of Light Rail with nine stations
- Streetcar
- Multi-modal friendly streetscapes
- 38 miles of shared use paths

Sam Stevenson, Senior Transportation Planner, emphasized that Tempe has made a significant investment in transit and boasts the highest utilization per capita in the region. Current trends that are being monitored and are of concern include a reduction in farebox recovery (attributed to the need for enforcement of reduced fare, aging equipment and reduced ridership), increasing transit service costs including security and uncertainties of the economic climate due to Covid-19. Some of our costs are exceeding at a rate that is more than our projected revenue.

A 9.5 million savings reduction target has been established, an amount subject to change, as more information becomes available. The near-term strategy is to reduce transit service expenditures while striving to minimize public impacts and to be equitable in any changes imposed. The long-term strategy is to identify large-scale opportunities to reduce costs and control growth, assess transit service agreements and maintain control of cost drivers. Staff will work closely with Valley Metro and our neighboring cities to determine and propose all necessary service reductions.

Tempe is preparing to present the proposed October 2021 transit service changes to the public for public comment. Staff developed these proposals following an analysis of transit system performance/efficiency data to identify the city's least efficient services based on the cost per passenger boarding metric.

Sam noted that the scope of service change proposals impact: Local bus routes 30, 45, 56, 61, 62, 65, 66, 72, 77, 81 and 108 as well as Orbit Mercury and Saturn. As requested, Sam's presentation focused more on the neighborhood related service changes.

Prior community outreach efforts conducted during Fall 2020 included a community values survey to inform future transit service reductions. Results of that survey indicated that span, or hours of service for local bus routes in Tempe, are among the lower-impact transit service parameters. Ridership data by time of day was then analyzed to identify periods of lowest ridership. As a result and to lessen community impacts, staff intends to propose a two-hour reduction in evening service at times when ridership is lowest. In addition, staff is proposing an Orbit Mercury reduction in frequency from 10 minute frequency weekday daytime and 15 minute weekday evening frequency to 15 minutes all day. This change would also align Mercury frequency with the remaining four Orbit routes providing service to downtown. The new orbit buses phased in beginning in 2017 further enhanced capacity. Sam also provided an overview of the two different options for Guadalupe Road Service Optimization, adding that the agreement/contract with Valley Metro is being examined for any changes needed. Additional revenue sources such as advertising on buses are being explored and savings are being realized through decreased advertising. Cancellation of events this past year like Tour de Tempe and Bike to Work day due to Covid also resulted in some savings.

Some of the commissioner questions and comments included:

It's important to keep Orbit in South Tempe, newer, need time for ridership to develop. Like that Orbit is free, used to take it regularly prior to Covid, appreciate that you don't need to worry about exact change.

I like keeping Saturn operational to preserve a free option south of US60. I have little experience with riding these routes.

The changes look good, reduces some redundancies in South Tempe with Orbit and Valley Metro and better connectivity to light rail, downtown Tempe, and regional system versus ending at the library, and making it more cost effective with reduction at night.

Hope this aligns with the Broadway Curve and the work done there.

Is feedback by region or by neighborhood?

Neighborhood Services Specialist Laura Kajfez noted about 4300 postcards went out to high ridership areas.

Any thought to keeping longer hours on Friday and Saturday to avoid drunk driving?

We appreciate these comments, that's why it's important to get public comment, need to weigh and consider against utilization of service.

What is the ridership reduction being seen during Covid-19?

Approximately 50% reduction

Why not run fewer buses now and at less frequency to save money now and perhaps ramp up in Fall/when things more back to normal?

Some efficiencies have been implemented but we don't want to have to turn away riders or hurt workers who need the service. Larger Orbit buses allow for necessary social distancing. We will continue to monitor service as ridership returns.

Has Tempe Streetcar been factored in?

Tempe Streetcar has been factored into modeling for some time. It was originally expected to open the second quarter of this year but now will likely be in later Fall due to delays on manufacture of vehicles. This delay has allowed for some savings in operations and maintenance costs.

What about the countywide sales tax?

That's Prop 400 and it is also a half cent sales tax with only a portion dedicated to Tempe. The funds are tied to population. It is due to sunset December 31, 2025. Our local sales tax also dedicates a half cent to service within Tempe and bike/ped and streetscape improvements as well. Tempe's dedicated transit tax does not sunset.

Packet memo mentioned consideration of reduction of path maintenance, any additional information about that?

Sam agreed to follow up with Facilities to get more info. as they proposed that item.

What is % of population that uses all these options regularly?

Sam confirmed that additional data was gathered and he can follow up. Neighborhood Services Specialist Laura Kajfez provided an infographic during meeting in chat - % using transit as a means to work.

What is the estimated cost savings for Option A and Option B?

Option A - \$1.4 Million per year

Option B - \$700,000 per year

Wow. Thought changes would result in more cost savings.

Sam stated that information on public meetings, presentation materials, and link to the survey will be posted at www.tempe.gov/transitchanges

Agenda Item 7 - State of the Neighborhoods and Awards Planning Update and Discussion

Communications Team members, Mayor's office and Neighborhood Services staff met virtually to discuss the 2021 event platform options, logistics and next steps. This year's event will be virtual and open to all members of the public with perhaps a small and safely distanced in-person component limited to award winners, select Commission Chairs (aligned with their award categories), Mayor and Council and integral staff. In this respect it will be similar to the recent Instagrammys. The rest of the program is anticipated to feature some elements that will be pre-prepared via video and some elements that will be live (i.e Mayor's State of the Neighborhoods Address). The event will also be recorded allowing for additional viewings.

Elizabeth and Shauna referenced the January 6 joint meeting with Sustainability where a collaborative workshop session tying in with the Climate Action Plan was briefly discussed by the respective commission members. Elizabeth noted that a number of creative and diverse workshop offering suggestions from NAC member outreach efforts

were shared at the December meeting. Staff then requested clarification regarding how NAC wants to proceed adding that there are some existing resources that may readily align with the event such as the planned Climate Action Plan Storytelling Walks or the recent taped Tree Workshop hosted by Councilmember Garlid.

Commissioners discussed whether to host workshops as part of the State of the Neighborhoods event as in prior years or not. Timing, logistics and covid-19 related factors and limitations were acknowledged. After additional discussion, there was general agreement to keep the focus and energy on the awards. Chair Moulton Belec suggested NAC members and staff curate a list of the current workshop and class offerings from the city, ASU and other organizations that have already been done or are being planned and then make the list available to attendees.

Motion: Commissioner Harden made a motion that workshops attached to the State of the Neighborhoods event be tabled and that they be reconsidered in Fall, perhaps in collaboration with Sustainability Commission.

Second: Commissioner Weller

Result: Approved by a unanimous vote of 12 to 0

Commission Member Ayes: Hannah Moulton Belec, Maureen Eastty, Jana Lynn Granillo, Diane Harden, Barb Harris, Matt Heil, Melanie Larimer, Daniel Schugurensky, Zoe Stein, Joel Stern, Kevin Sweeney and Nicholas Weller

Absent: Christopher McCabe, Michael McLendon, Richelle Miller

Agenda Item 8 – NAC 2021 goals and strategies/tasks identification

Chair Moulton Belec thanked members for their participation in the recent working group meetings. The working groups are intending to meet every two weeks, one time during the regular NAC meeting and an additional time outside of the NAC meeting.

Vice Chair Larimer shared her Neighborhood Grant Working Group powerpoint. She reviewed map segments she created showing specific areas of the city and noting the NA and HOA participation (over last five years) in the Maryanne Corder Neighborhood Grant program. Some inaccuracies in total grant funding amounts were noted, staff will work with Vice Chair Larimer to clarify and correct that information.

The Neighborhood Grant Working Group has identified three goals: Increasing participation with initial focus on HOAs, increasing total grant funding available (and helping to raise awareness of the \$20,000 grant amount this grant cycle) and creating a storytelling campaign.

Chair Moulton Belec reviewed the activities listed below (discussed at the Communications Working Group meeting and included in their provided meeting notes), then called for volunteers/assignments:

Identification of Social Media Groups and monitoring/social listening of neighborhood related issues (Commissioners Eastty, Larimer and Granillo)

Updating neighborhood and HOA contact list
(Commissioners Sweeney, Stein, Granillo and Harden)

Outreach for those neighborhoods that haven't previously received grants

Promoting sustainability more/developing some suggested language for neighborhood grants website (Commissioner Weller)

Help with areas that don't have associations (Commissioner Stern)

Talking with city staff about how they connect to public (Chair Moulton Belec and Commissioner Harris)

Creation of a NAC alumni list serve

Creating a place to house all data and resources (Commissioner Harden and Chair Moulton Belec)

Engage in Council Communicator process, provide context (Commissioner Stein and Chair Moulton Belec)

Chair Moulton Belec will send out next working group meeting dates and time through staff. She reminded members of the need to RSVP to avoid breaching NAC quorum.

Agenda Item 9 - Neighborhood Award nominations rating process (process overview in advance of March meeting voting and discussion)

Elizabeth referenced the memo found in the meeting packet. She provided a quick overview of what to expect at the March meeting when 2021 Neighborhood Awards nominations will be considered for the categories of Alley Upkeep, Property Beautification and Neighbor of the Year. Members were reminded to come to the meeting with their rater forms completed and ready for sharing. .

Agenda Item 10 - Proposed Future Agenda Items

Depending on how many neighborhood award nominations are received for NAC review, (categories of Neighbor of the Year, Beautification and Alley Upkeep), there may be limited meeting time available during the March meeting to allow for unrelated agenda items. Members suggested the following future agenda items:

- Update regarding Tempe Police Department federal grant to help curb speeding/street racing in Tempe (April or May meeting)
- AZ Corporation Commission's work to create rules about utility cutoffs during extreme heat events (Commissioner Weller will provide draft summary of what he wishes to share as it relates to Neighborhood Advisory Commission (March))
- Vaccine roll out - how can we help?

Agenda Item 11 - Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Prepared by: Elizabeth Thomas