

Minutes Neighborhood Advisory Commission August 14, 2021



Minutes of the Neighborhood Advisory Commission (NAC) held on Saturday, August 14, 2021, virtual meeting using Microsoft Teams platform

(MEMBERS) Present: Hannah Moulton Belec, Maureen Eastty, Diane Harden, Barb Harris, Matt Heil, Melanie Larimer, Daniel Schugurensky, Joel Stern, Nicholas Weller and Justine Yates.

(MEMBERS) Absent: Jana Lynn Granillo, Christopher McCabe and Michael McLendon

Attendance Note: Two commission member resignations since June 2, 2021/last NAC meeting - Zoe Stein/85281 (August 11, 2021) and Kevin Sweeney/85284 (August 9, 2021).

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

Guests: Councilmember Jennifer Adams

Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:33 a.m. by Chair Moulton Belec

Agenda Item 2 – Attendance Roll Call

Present: Hannah Moulton Belec, Maureen Eastty, Diane Harden, Barb Harris, Matt Heil, Melanie Larimer, Daniel Schugurensky, Joel Stern, Nicholas Weller and Justine Yates.

Absent: Jana Lynn Granillo, Christopher McCabe and Michael McLendon

Agenda Item 3 – Public Comment

None.

Agenda Item 4 – Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes: June 2, 2021

Motion: Commissioner Harris made a motion to approve the June 2 minutes as presented.

Second: Commissioner Yates

Result: Approved by a unanimous vote of those present

Commission Member Ayes: Hannah Moulton Belec, Maureen Eastty, Diane Harden, Barb Harris, Matt Heil, Melanie Larimer, Daniel Schugurensky, Joel Stern, Nicholas Weller and Justine Yates.

Absent: Jana Lynn Granillo, Christopher McCabe and Michael McLendon

Chair Moulton Belec announced the resignation of Commissioners Stein and Sweeney and expressed appreciation for their time, effort and service. She emphasized the attention they gave to the Commission Working Groups. Commissioner Stein helped to create “the hub” a shared area allowing all commission members to access and work on documents and presentations. Commissioner Sweeney hosted a Communications Working Group meeting at his home and helped to leverage his connections to build upon commission momentum on a number of issues. A NAC member alumni group is being formed on Facebook and prior members will be invited to participate and continue connecting.

Commissioner Schugurensky reiterated his prior suggestion of consideration of having alternates for each zip code area who could observe meetings and “wait in the wings” should a member resign or term off. He added that this change to the process of appointments would eliminate any delays in new appointments and help ensure quorum is met. Chair Mouton Belec suggested having an 85281 member from north of the river. Commission appointments are made by Mayor and Council with input from Chair and staff liaisons considered.

Agenda Item 5 – Commissioner Ice Breaker

NAC members took turns introducing themselves to newest NAC member Justine Yates sharing their zip code, neighborhood, feedback about their NAC service and prior experiences with community engagement. Commissioner Yates family members are now sixth generation Tempeans who have been actively engaged in historic preservation and participate in multiple community meetings and activities. She lives in the Riverside Neighborhood Association area (husband Phil is the current association chair) in the 85281 zip code.

Using the chat feature of Microsoft Teams, Chair Moulton Belec led fellow commission members through an ice breaker exercise. Members were asked to type in a response to each of the questions below when they were posed, but to then delay hitting send until given the go ahead creating a waterfall effect in the chat.

Icebreaker questions:

- What’s your favorite one-hit wonder?
- What’s a new habit or skill you’ve picked up in the past year?
- Are you a cat person or a dog person?
- What is the best part about your neighborhood?
- What is a common complaint in your neighborhood?

Members shared appreciation for their neighbors, neighborhoods, local restaurants and bars, parks and Tempe Town Lake. Some of the answers in the chat for the final question about common neighborhood issues could become future agenda items. Responses included:

- traffic
- neighborhood traffic and speeding
- car speeds
- pigeons
- code compliance too harsh
- fraternities
- bike and ped safety

- street racing
- one neighbor's messy yard
- driving issues
- safety issues
- stolen packages

Agenda Item 6 – Overview and discussion of Maryanne Corder Neighborhood Grant Program

Shauna shared a Maryanne Corder Neighborhood Grant Program presentation providing a program overview. Created in 1994, the Neighborhood Grant Program addresses neighborhood needs at a neighborhood level, requiring and emphasizing resident participation and involvement in the selection, coordination and completion of projects. All residents of the community must be notified of the opportunity to apply for a grant, provided a chance to propose and comment on project ideas and be included in the final selection of the project.

The base budget for the Fiscal Year 2021/2022 grant cycle was \$275,000 with a total of \$350,000 in funding available due to additional small cell revenue. This year marked the first time that a portion of small cell revenue came into play. This amount will vary from year to year. Also, new this year, the maximum grant amount was increased to \$20,000 in keeping with increases to construction materials and costs. Eligible applicants include 82 neighborhood associations, 139 homeowners' associations (# currently voluntarily registered with Neighborhood Services office) and crime-free multi-housing certified properties. Projects must be capital projects (cannot be for maintenance) that benefit the entire neighborhood and are a one-time expenditure. Grantees have just under one year to complete their project. Since 1994, 660 projects have been completed and over \$4.8 million has been invested.

Some of the commission member comments and questions included:

- **Can bonus points or extra consideration be given if the grant project provides an environmental benefit, such as water and/or energy conservation, shade that the city is also emphasizing and working on?**
Grant quality, impact and viability are all criteria elements currently considered by the Grants Review Team. Potentially there could be bonus points or additional consideration attached specific to sustainability.
- **Consider some type of mapping idea for shade – a map layer showing where it is and where it is lacking.** Room to help neighborhood with tree canopy coverage, right tree, right place and trimming instructions.
- **What trends have you seen or are you seeing?**
Hudson Manor NA started trend of additional park investment through grants. This ultimately helped to result in the Tempe Parks Plan. Grant projects need to complement existing elements in established parks as well as planned improvements. ADA access and pathways have to be present or prioritized first over other additions. Grant projects have added trees, bike racks, shade structures, exercise equipment, labyrinths and more in local parks.
- **What about joint projects?**
Collaborations between NAs and HOAs can allow for each association to receive up to \$20,000. for a mutually beneficial project such as lighting, parks improvements or neighborhood traffic calming. Note that grant projects still have to meet the established traffic calming criteria including the specific signature requirements. Depending on the traffic calming determined to be

needed, sometimes a more holistic approach is taken resulting in a CIP project outside of the grant program.

- **What about Federal Government consultation regarding spending? How does this interface if at all with grants?** Mayor/Council just had a discussion at their last meeting. Staff is unsure of restrictions. The grant budget does not carry over from year to year. Anything not spent goes back into the General Fund. This is unlike small cell monies which can carry over.
- Excellent. Good program. Thank you.

Discussion topics provided in advance of the Retreat included the suggestion of placing more emphasis on equity or shade or themes in different years:

- **How can we engage with other commissions? Can themed years engage them to promote the grants more?**
Climate Action Plan was offered as an example of engagement with the Sustainability Commission, emphasizes grants that reduce heat and plant trees. The Arts Commission is engaged with public art grant projects. NAC members can also increase and create greater familiarity with grants on other commissions by visiting them and sharing information.
- **How can the grant applications give indications for Council/staff about where larger-scale improvements are needed?**
Optimist Park neighborhoods identified a gasline easement area connection which ultimately became the El Paso Path Project. More recently, a neighborhood traffic mitigation grant led to a larger CIP project.
- **Equity has been defined as the “just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper and reach their full potential.”**
Issue of inclusivity, what % of Tempe population does not have a HOA or NA? How can we include them? Staff can run and provide some numbers. Areas of denser population are likely those with more variety and more multi-family complexes. Neighborhood associations are typically made up of single family homes. Neighborhoods like Riverside, Alegre and Escalante are all more mixed use and inclusive of multi-family and single-family residences, renters and owners. Commissioner Yates emphasized that Riverside NA is very diverse, all residents are mailed a postcard announcing neighborhood meeting dates and agenda topics.
- **Must you have an association to apply?** Could be looked at.
Jonae Harrison, Equity and Inclusion Manager, will be coming to NAC’s September meeting to discuss equity metrics, framework, policies and public involvement. An equity layer addition to the grant layers map is already in process.
- **Tempe’s estimated canopy coverage, including both City and privately managed trees, is currently 13.4% of the total land area. Tempe’s canopy coverage by census tract ranges from 5% to 25.8%, and coverage by Character Area ranges from 8.5% to 20.5%.**

What about landscape reduction and lower water use – are these eligible grant projects? Yes, xeriscape improvements and new irrigation systems can be. Requires consultation with Water Conservation Team.

Commissioner Heil participated in the FY2021/2022 Grants Review Team meeting with staff. Chair Moulton Belec asked him to share his experience and observations.

His feedback included:

- Great to sit in on the grant allocation decision making process first-hand.
- People from all different offices and departments in the city participated – Planners, Neighborhood Services, Police, Water, Transportation, Parks, etc.
- Lots of discussion about the importance of inclusion and things like water and energy conservation, kind of already existing and happening whether fully articulated or not
- No grantees were turned down this year, that is not at all typical. Some looked into process or submitting a grant and chose not to apply this year.
- Grants are widely available for the entire city for neighborhood associations, homeowners associations and multi-family crime free communities. Only not available to those limited areas without associations.
(Shauna added that when we say equity at the city, we reference those community areas that may be marginalized due to factors like income, race and access).
- Grants enhance aesthetics and impact and benefit neighborhoods and city as a whole as well
- First time applicants are given more leeway and consideration
- It's not just free money, there is criteria that must be met for each project type
- Community involvement is an important, emphasized component.

Some comments and questions posed were:

- What does community involvement look like?
Commissioner Heil shared – consensus between entity seeking funds, checks and balances, intended and designed to benefit neighbors/neighborhood.
- Any recommendations for NAC members for Grant program?
Not really. Lots of in-depth conversation, good discussions, planning and professional expertise.
- How do reach applicants that haven't applied? How do we get more applicants?
Up our communication. Eighty-eight NA and HOA contacts have chosen to opt in on the NAC list. Outreach is ongoing.
- Any surprises?
No, not really.
- What if a neighbor objects to a project? Is 100% required?
Shauna noted that it can vary depending on project type and specific criteria involved. The intent of the community involvement is to show that everyone was invited to participate and given the opportunity to provide feedback. If for example a front yard is involved (i.e. planting a tree), a neighbor can opt to say no.

Agenda Item 7 – Neighborhood Advisory Commission Communication and Grants Working Group Presentations

Grants:

Vice Chair Larimer guided commission members through her Neighborhood Grants Working Group presentation. She shared that it was intended to paint a picture of the current grant program (who participated, who was funded, who submitted but did not get a grant, types of grants funded, repeat recipients), get data and determine next steps. Shared goals include increasing participation, storytelling and connecting with neighborhoods to build awareness and help those who may need assistance with the

application or process. She added that the data shows an increase in funding is not as much needed as originally thought due to the gradual increases in total funding and grant amounts (now up to \$20,000.) that have been implemented over the years.

Commission member questions and feedback included:

- Anecdotally, staff responsiveness can be an issue (each project type has a staff member listed to contact prior to applying). Applicants don't always receive a response. Barrier to people who may want to apply. Elevate, educate or take out this requirement?
- Consider survey to get feedback and gauge familiarity with the grant program.
- How can we build up funding? Ask Mayor and Council.
- How can we emphasize/theme shade or sustainability?
- How can we include other commissions? Attend their meetings and share grant information.
- How is success measured? By how much money is given out? How competitive the process is? Insight gained on where capital improvements can and should be made if not thru a grant?
- Should the Grants Working Group establish priorities list? Maybe boil it down to 2-3 goals. Who is driver and how do we dissect and attack this? Chair Moulton Belec offered that the Grants Working Group will probably define action items. The additional time during the Retreat allows for group discussion. Short term and longer term goals may be identified using the data.
- NAC's main mission is advisory to Mayor/Council. Suggestion to analyze data, see issues and areas of improvement. Identify 3-4 recommendations and share with Mayor and Council for follow up.
- Vice Chair Larimer shared that the goals on the first slide (increase participation, increase funding, storytelling campaign) came from a strategy meeting. She added that now that we have data, we can identify goals that are measurable.
- Chair Moulton Belec suggested/summarized these actions: get members to reach out to some who have not participated; use social media; reach out to other commissions; and come up with ideas for reaching out to areas with no association. Survey to figure out awareness and familiarity of grants?
- Additional map layers that could be helpful include prior grant applicants, Title 1 schools, shade

Chair Moulton Belec again expressed appreciation for the significant time, attention and work put in by all Communication and Grants Working Group members. She shared her screen providing a view of "the hub" which establishes a foundation for NAC communication.

Communications:

The NAC List currently has 88 contacts who have opted in. NAC can message these people now. It was noted that the opt in form link needed to be extended. In addition, the general city enews added a neighborhoods box that residents can check to receive neighborhoods related information. The city Communications Division manages and handles the outreach and what is shared. NAC can pitch ideas.

Commissioner Harris created an Editorial Calendar. This calendar will include outward facing news coming out of commissions like NAC every month of the year that we would love to have the city publicize or publicize more - through Tempe Today/City water bill newsletter, social media and smaller, local publications. The "event" is placed in the month that it occurs with publicity working backward from that date or that

month of action. The Editorial Calendar is being shared with Nikki Ripley and the Communications team per their request. Ideas and feedback are welcomed. There was also discussion regarding the City of Tempe Calendar and what can go on there and how to submit neighborhood interest items. The website location for this link needs to be identified.

During the August 12 meeting of the Mayor/Council, they discussed a goal of getting Tempeans vaccinated. Neighborhood level outreach and encouragement was emphasized with multiple, different events planned offering vaccinations and testing. NAC will be asked to help push information out and amplify city messaging. Staff will share updates as available. Members also mentioned helping to push out messaging about Grants and specific Sesquicentennial related celebration activities when available.

Members were also encouraged to check out the story pitch tool template on the hub. It's a form that can be completed to provide a small amount of key information on a potential story idea, pitchable items with bite size bullets for sharing. This will be another tool that Public Information staff can consider. Commissioner Harris is still getting clarification regarding the Communications Team desired process for same and will follow up with NAC members once known.

The letter to Mayor and Council describing what NAC is working on, any barriers or issues is also being revived to allow for more regular communication and updates. The suggestion was made to share the results of the Working Groups efforts including the Grants Analysis presentation information and NAC's Opt In list results.

Agenda Item 8 – Draft 2022 Annual Report

Every year, each commission prepares an Annual Report for adoption by City Clerk and Mayor and Council in December. The draft provided in member's Retreat packets is the first touch for this year's report covering 2021 meetings from January through June and will include Commission goals for 2022 once established.

The template/format is set by City Clerk and Mayor and Council. Additional attendance and meeting information is added after each meeting through December when the final version will be due.

Member feedback included:

Can appendices be included with back up data?

Staff can ask. NAC members may want to consider including an infographic and send other items separately so they can be emphasized more rather than included with all other Annual Reports.

Add specific Working Group related bullets under Accomplishments – could include Grants Analysis, Editorial Calendar, Social Media ideas, NAC's Opt In List, Report out of how many messages sent out, NAC member storytelling ideas shared, commissioner attendance and participation and service on other committees. Staff agreed to create a partial Annual Report document that can be stored on the hub and added to by members.

Maybe a little less detail about State of the Neighborhoods? Maybe add a bullet about inclusion of various Commission Chairs for the video introductions to each award category – a first.

Originally planned to keep same stated goals. Or, they can be changed prior to end of this year.

Under Subcommittee and Subcommittee News, build out a bit more with focus, purpose and expected outcomes of each Working Group added.

Agenda Item 9 - NAC Meeting Location Options

This agenda item was not discussed during the Retreat meeting.

Agenda Item 10 - Proposed Future Agenda Items

Code Enforcement

Human Services Campus related concerns (hold off on this one for now)

Homelessness and what Tempe is doing - how to access services and funds once rental moratorium ends

Urban canopy - maybe partner with Sustainability Commission to help increase

Speeds/Racing - engineering solutions

NAC tabling together for Sesquicentennial related activity or volunteering together with Keep Tempe Beautiful

Agenda Item 11 - Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

Prepared by: Elizabeth Thomas

Reviewed by: Shauna Warner