

**DRAFT** Minutes  
Neighborhood Advisory Commission  
May 1, 2024



Minutes of the Neighborhood Advisory Commission (NAC) Meeting held on Wednesday, May 1, 2024, hybrid meeting with in-person attendance option along with virtual component option via Microsoft Teams platform

**(MEMBERS) Present:** Lane Carraway, Martha Carter, Gabe Hagen, John Kozel, Kriste Melcher, Stacy Novis, Nancy Puffer, Joel Stern, Suri Wall, Duane Washkowiak, Brittney Wong

**(MEMBERS) Absent:** Brandon Abrahams, Jan Doughty, Annette Fields, Jana Lynn Granillo

**City Staff:** Elizabeth Thomas, Neighborhood Services Specialist; Shauna Warner, Neighborhood Services Manager; Keith Burke, Deputy City Manager; Richard Adkins, Urban Forester; Madeline Mercer, Sustainability & Resilience Program Coordinator; Maegan Pardue, Public Information Officer, Communication/Marketing Office

**Guests:** None

**Agenda Item 1 - Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Chair Stern

**Agenda Item 2 - Public Comment**

None

**Agenda Item 3 - Review and approval of meeting minutes: April 3, 2024 NAC Meeting**

**Motion:** Vice Chair Hagen made a motion to approve the April 3, 2024 minutes as presented.

**Second:** Commissioner Carraway seconded the motion

**Result:** Minutes were approved by a unanimous vote of those in attendance, 11 - 0

**Commission Member Ayes:** Lane Carraway, Martha Carter, Gabe Hagen, John Kozel, Kriste Melcher, Stacy Novis, Nancy Puffer, Joel Stern, Suri Wall, Duane Washkowiak, Brittney Wong

**Absent:** Brandon Abrahams, Jan Doughty, Annette Fields, Jana Lynn Granillo

**Agenda Item 4 - Growing Together - A Tree Stewardship and Workforce Development Program**

Maddie Mercer with the Sustainability and Resilience Office of the Transportation and Sustainability Department co-presented with Richard Adkins, Urban Forester-Community Services Department, providing an overview of the Growing Together program.

This program will contribute to achieving the following Council priorities and city performance measures:

- ✓ Tree and shade canopy
- ✓ Community carbon neutrality
- ✓ Poverty rate

This neighborhood based program will work to advance goals found in Climate Justice and Neighborhood Agendas by promoting equitable urban cooling, resilient landscape and community connectivity.

Growing Together will focus on expanding Tempe's urban forest to mitigate extreme heat with identified project areas lacking shade and being underserved per climate and economic justice indicators. (Locations are in northeast Tempe and the Town of Guadalupe/Southwest Tempe area.) Through U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service and AZ Department of Forestry & Fire Management (DFFM) funding sources, \$1.6 million has been allocated over a three year period extending from April 2024 through March 2027.

Richard emphasized that of 40 square miles of Tempe, a little over 2% of the land is managed by Tempe with the remainder being on private property. Improvements to private property will benefit the whole community offering better standard of living for all. Program goals are to:

- Expand (and maintain) Tempe's urban **tree canopy**.
- Promote **equitable urban cooling** and **resilience** to extreme heat.
- Create **workforce development** opportunities through on-the-job training programs and professional development scholarships.
- Expand **capacity** for green infrastructure installation and maintenance by creating new temporary staff positions.
- Develop **connections** between the city's urban forestry, green stormwater infrastructure, and urban agriculture initiatives.

A number of program partners will collaborate and contribute to these efforts and work to develop a sustainable model including City of Tempe Transportation & Sustainability/Community Services, Town of Guadalupe, RAIL CDC, Unlimited Potential, ASU Walton Sustainability Solutions Service, Tempe Elementary School District, Tempe Unified High School District, Tempe/Guadalupe Residents-Tempe Neighborhoods: University Heights, Alegre, Escalante, La Victoria, Baseline/Hardy

Neighbors are key! ***We will be working with neighbors to green their neighborhoods with them rather than doing it for them.***

1. **Community Tree Stewards** will be neighborhood champions working with fellow neighbors with low canopy coverage and high heat vulnerability. Participants will be learning how to plant, grow and maintain trees.
  - Cohort based, on the job training program opportunity with six cohorts of 10 persons each (60 total). Participants paid \$20/hr./12 hours per month learning tree care and maintenance in outdoor settings and in classroom, train the trainer model, get inspired, stimulate engagement with neighbors
2. **School Greening Grounds Main Program** - school staff capacity is limited in maintaining trees. It's important that we protect our past and future investments and help the school district and their staff to maintain these trees. To this end, 3 city funded positions will be added and school district staff will also have opportunities to learn about horticulture, planting trees, removal of dead trees, and best practices.
3. **Food Forest Pilot Project** - Sites at McClintock High School and EnVision Center to provide more shade and increase food access providing more food security in densely packed small area locations offering both food and shade

Current work and next steps will be putting this all together with tasks including: creating job descriptions, meeting with community partners, expanding timelines, planning training, creating curriculums, identifying cohorts, securing tools and more. We hope to begin training in September with Food Forests slated to begin in 2025. We will make changes and adapt as we go along and will have feedback after the first cohort which will help inform the future ones.

#### **Commissioner Questions and Comments:**

? Food Forest - explain please

A: Having a garden, plants of different height in the same space, provides shade, creates a micro-climate which allows plants to grow more closely in small spaces and provides desert edibles in landscapes and diets

?: Were areas identified specifically for the community trees? What is is being targeted?

A: Areas apply to all 3 of the programs

?: How many HOAs or NAs total in those areas identified?

A: I don't know for sure but one of our community partners - Rail CDC - will be working on this outreach and communication as part of their scope of work

?: Can we provide them that info., contact individuals to start?

A: We will follow up.

?: Is this just a 3 year program? Are you going to expand to other neighborhoods?

A: This could be region wide once established. A future goal can be creation of a sustainable model. Grant covers these identified areas only. Neighboring cities are starting their own programs w different approaches and variations. We will learn from each other too.

?: Is there a % of people that are more in need?

A: 100% of the participants will be from those neighborhoods that are socially vulnerable, lacking shade and recognized as underserved. We are working with our partners to to identify standards/selection criteria.

Comment: Maybe business owners in these identified areas will be willing to help.

A: Perhaps they would want to add some fruit, edible trees as well.

?: Curious about goals and measurable outcomes?

A: Yes, we had numbers we put in grant re: trees, plants, households engaged, cohorts trained, measurement of temperatures - baseline and later after trees planted  
We can provide if you'd like? (Commissioner answered they are assuming it will be public later so that's ok.)

?: Is there a metric around extended impact w teaching ppl how to do it?

A: We do have some measurement goals. Steward participant maybe could even have a nursery in their backyard. Each tree steward will do tracking of # of people working with them.

?: Re: Workforce Development pay of \$20 hr. If grant were to continue, would there be opportunities for them to have continued employment?

A: Yes, possibly. There will be opportunities for additional certifications, possibly micro-credentialing and training like Smartscape Certification, Arborist training or other. ASU is involved in the Scholarship Program.

?: How many trees expected? How do you identify residentces?

A: At least 60-75 per neighborhood. Self ID and locations where trees might be of benefit. Community assessment by stewards with neighbor involvement and input. They will need to take on care and maintenance. Right tree, right place. Right of Way areas and small open plots can be considered.

?: How are you going to get stewards/champions upfront? How are you going to get people to sign up?

A: Our folks and our partners specialize in developing relationships. Tree stewards will have to be in role of community organizer, neighborhood champions.

?: Are we considering folks on a budget who can't afford water or hose or?

A: That will be part of stewardship outreach. Will need to determine if this is an issue. Again, appropriate tree selection is critical. Tree stewards will be trained to perform

some of the simpler tasks and funding will be allocated for hoses or irrigation supplies for those in need and wanting to take on a tree.

### **Agenda Item 5 - Neighborhood Celebration Event Promotion Recap and NAC Member Event and Awards Feedback, Maegan Pardue, Public Information Officer**

Maegan Pardue provided an overview of all the outreach done for the award nominations process and later for the 2024 Neighborhood Celebration. Staff estimated attendance at 350. Tempe Today, the water bill newsletter, remains the most common source of information for residents. Outreach modes again included citywide email blasts, news releases, social media, local ads, and more. A Spanish translation was provided for platforms where translation is not automatic. This includes a NextDoor post, a Wrangler news ad, and the Spring Opportunities Brochure.

The look from prior two years of this event carried forward with some updates to retain branding while helping to keep it fresh and more evergreen. For example, the new ramada pillar signage had the event year removed allowing future reuse.

In addition to event photos by an event photographer and communications staff videotaping the awards ceremony for Facebook live and later viewings from website, Maegan shot shorter videos of tabling, vendors and overall event for promotional purposes for next year. She shared news of a Warner Wrangler post event spread.

Chair Stern praised the 2024 Neighborhood Celebration as another great event.

#### **Member questions and comments about the event:**

?: To what do you attribute the increased attendance this year?

A: Varies each year. Keep in mind this version of awards event is still new, only the third year. More FB views to some posts. Lots of factors.

?: Any follow up to folks who attended? Ideas for future events?

A: Not really. Could ask winners what they thought as we have their contact information. We do not collect for all attendees. Have done surveys in the past.

?: Why more emails opened this year?

A: Hard to say. Can only hypothesize. Used same feeds on all posts.

?: What goes where? You have an idea in mind but there is no sketch or map. Maybe assign a team for tasks?

A: NAC did not have an event planning working group for this year.

Could have some members walking around with a clip board to collect survey info.

People like to relax and may not want someone approaching with a clipboard. Might think it is for something else.

Maybe some tasks could be done in advance at a prep meeting rather than day of? Would need to plan a date for same.

We don't know who is coming. Need a list of dignitaries and award winners so we can welcome them and show we expect them.

I wouldn't know what they look like even with a list. Why not separate tables for each with a sign like Award Recipients Check In with name tags and they complete them. Two to three welcome tables can extend down walkway so not everyone clustered around one table.

Some folks like to be incognito and will enter from the other side.

Pillar wrap arounds super easy once you figure them out. Need one trainer, maybe use strips of Velcro rather than dots?

Maybe a NAC team takes this on?

If we prep, we may need less volunteers day of and need to recalibrate. I was less busy with take down when I volunteered and felt I wasn't needed.

Take down is always easier.

Food and coffee were great!

Had enough coffee to serve everyone and served through the last cup

No leftover food but lasted until near conclusion of event  
(staff noted that purchased food items were increased over 2023 year)

?: Can we add bull riding or bouncy house?

A: Maybe. Need funding and could be liability issues.

?: How do we get a bigger budget?

A: Current budget already set for next year and it covers all of event's current needs. What else do you want? Need to identify asks and obtain price estimates. Members would then need to take on solicitation of sponsorships (outside of Salt River Project) that are a good fit with event and pose no conflicts. Staff can help create flier for outreach efforts when more is known.

Event tshirts would be nice! Tempe Jams does a tshirt onsite every year.

A face painter

Tshirts could help with event branding and reminders. Builds community.

Tshirts are event advertising. Talking points when worn.

Get a design made and distribute day of versus printing onsite like Arts in Parks.

Some businesses may prefer an ad in a day of flier or newsletter over tabling. Ads could be for a fee.

Fine line. No fee for event tabling.

Great foundation. We want to add to this event.

### **Member questions and comments about the Awards and Awards process:**

Liked open-ended application. Allowed for flexibility.

Lane deserved the award. However, the nomination put him in an awkward position. Lane could have declined consideration of the nomination or the award.

Uncomfortable for all parties.

Commission members should not be eligible for that reason. It's a conflict of interest.

We need to implement rules and parameters. This has never come up before. Could just add a note or disclaimer on the nomination form or website.

Was there a word count limit on the form? Should we standardize or let it flow?  
Nominations varied widely.

Should be at least one letter of support with all nominations. At least for Neighbor of the Year.

Businesses must be a Tempe business. Felt uncomfortable with HOA nomination, getting paid to provide service, seemed to be self-promotion.

Once they click on a business in application, add a disclaimer.

We are getting too complicated here. We don't need to but could add live, work or play in Tempe - state the obvious.

Give people a chance, on webpage, describe contents/elements of a quality application. Is that possible?

A: Staff can design/format website page, you just have to agree on what you want.

Might we consider a rolling nominations process? We could still review them all together closer to the event date. I always forget about potential, good candidates in the window the nominations are open. University Park neighborhood recently hosted park sessions music event at Daley Park. Over 400 people attended and it was great. Would be nice to capture feelings, emotions, fond memories while fresh.

Twenty people attended my outdoor movie night.

I don't do anything in November and December. Too busy.

Could open nominations earlier and then ask folks to bring their letters of support to holiday gatherings!

Members agreed to include nominations and nominations review process and event planning on the August Retreat agenda.

### **Agenda Item 6 - Proposed Future Agenda Items Specific to JUNE meeting**

- Joint meeting with Sustainability Commission - June date tbd via member polling, June 17 to align with their meeting date or June 5 to align with NAC regular meeting date.
- Establish Event Planning Working Group at June mtg. These members can then meet between June and Aug. Retreat date to discuss ideas/plans and get estimates for any event additions which can be shared with all members at Aug. Retreat. Also need confirmation of any other Aug. Retreat items so staff can arrange speakers and prepare background materials as needed.
- Discussion of Retreat Date options and timeframes that work for all/most members.

### **Prior Items**

- Alley Cleanups with Keep Tempe Beautiful/Joe Forte - updates/outcomes?
- Vision Zero Update
- NAC Working Groups Updates (if applicable)
- Habitat for Humanity

### **Agenda Item 8 - Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 7 p.m.

Prepared by: Elizabeth Thomas