
Minutes Neighborhood Advisory Commission August 6, 2016

Minutes of the Neighborhood Advisory Commission (NAC) held on August 6, 2016, at the Tempe History Museum Community Room, 809 E. Southern, Tempe, Arizona.

(MEMBERS) Present: Isela Blanc, Jack Escobar, Carol Shixue Hu, Matt Korbeck, Kiyomi Kurooka, Nancy Lesko, Candyce Lindsay, Josephine McNamara, Robert Miller, Bill Munch, Julie Ramsey, Scott Smas.

(MEMBERS) Absent: Karen Adams, Nancy Buell, James Wennlund

City Staff Present: Ryan Levesque, Deputy Community Development Director – Planning; Elizabeth Thomas, Neighborhood Services Specialist; Shauna Warner, Neighborhood Services Manager

Guests Present:

Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:10 a.m.

Agenda Item 2 – Public Comment

None.

Agenda Item 3 – Consideration of Minutes: June 1, 2016

Commissioner Korbeck made a motion to approve the June 1 minutes as presented, Commissioner Hu seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 4 – Review and Approval of State of the Neighborhood Awards Nomination Forms, Rater Forms and Outreach

Commissioners engaged in a lengthy discussion about the updated materials including ideas to help broaden awareness and participation. Commissioners praised the “small town feel” of Tempe while acknowledging it can be challenging to get involved with busy schedules and multiple responsibilities competing for attention as well as for those residents living in less active and engaged neighborhoods.

The suggestion was made that event materials be also offered in Spanish and staff agreed. Commissioner Hu reported that the Sustainability Commission is interested in recognizing sustainability efforts through the State of the Neighborhoods event and will use the Neighborhood Awards nomination and rater forms as a starting point. The Historic Preservation Commission had also previously requested to participate through self-selecting eligible historic preservation properties. Staff will follow up with them to confirm if they plan to participate this cycle. The Property Beautification award category encompasses Public Art projects. Commissioners suggested that a member of the Arts Commission present that award if there are any nominees.

Recognizing that a before picture may not be available for a Property Beautification project, commissioners agreed that either a before picture or brief description of prior conditions would meet criteria. For the Alley Upkeep Award, a before picture will no longer be requested. Specific to the rater form criteria for all awards, the numbering will now range from zero to two and the scale will graduate from doesn't meet to meets to exceeds.

Prior Neighbor of the Year candidates will continue to be eligible nominees for future awards. Commissioners believe this will recognize continued community building and involvement efforts. In order to further encourage new nominees and nominations from less active neighborhoods, commissioners discussed expanding their outreach initiatives by participating in some community events with a table providing information about the commission, initiatives, any vacancies and the awards. Locations could include the polls on election day, local grocery stores, book stores and multi-gen centers. Discussion concluded with agreement to bring back the edited applications and rater forms for a final look.

Agenda Item 5 – Recap of Past Year's Commission Meetings

Commission members commented that their efforts seeking more proactive, inclusive, advance communication regarding changes to processes impacting neighbors and neighborhoods was showing results. They noted that it began with concerns about the Solid Waste scheduling changes and expanded into opportunities for earlier input in a variety of processes and proposals. Little Libraries was noted as the latest input on a proposal where the Commission's feedback was considered and helped to result in further review of the unintended consequences and perhaps need for this proposal. See also Agenda Item 6.

Agenda Item 6 – Discussion and Prioritization of Neighborhood Advisory Commission Goals for Fiscal Year 2016-2017

Commission members were provided the current City Council Strategic Priorities in their meeting packet for review and consideration when commission goal setting. After the Mayor/Council Retreat on Friday, August 12, these priorities may be refined and hopefully a greater level of detail will be available. Staff will then pass this information along.

Preliminary 2016-2017 Neighborhood Advisory Commission goals discussed included:

- Increase participation in State of the Neighborhoods Workshops (staff will bring some past event figures to the September NAC meeting)
- Communicate with and seek out more synergies between commissions – incorporate sustainability and historic preservation into the State of the Neighborhoods event, attend one of their boards and commission meetings and report back about what priorities and goals they are working on, look for areas of mutual interest
- (2) communications with Mayor/City Council annually ranging from written memo to speaking at a City Council meeting to an informal lunch for an exchange of ideas
- Round Robin personal invitation to a different Council Member each month to attend NAC meeting
- "Touch Our Community" – Connect with Tempe residents through volunteering to organize and staff a NAC table at Tempe and community events up to six times per year
- Become informed regarding homeless issues inside our neighborhoods. (Commissioner McNamara agreed to report back to the commission regarding the Saturday, August 13 Solutions-Oriented Town Hall on Homelessness.)
- Learn about drug issues impacting neighborhoods. Commissioner Escobar noted the Shot in the Dark program.

Staff will follow up regarding whether a City Boards and Commission event is being planned. NAC commissioners would like the opportunity to network with other commissioners. The neighborhoods email list serve includes periodic messages about NAC vacancies and State of the Neighborhoods Event information. This can be expanded to include an invitation to attend NAC meetings or to highlight an agenda item that may be of broader interest.

Agenda Item 7 – Discussion of Neighborhood Advisory Commission Annual Report

The annual report is by calendar year and the Commission must approve of the contents so it will include meetings up through the October or November meetings only. The annual report is due to the City Clerk on November 14 for a mid-January release of all reports to Council. Commissioners reviewed and discussed the provided draft document. Some had questions regarding meeting attendance, a section that has yet to be completed, as well as commission member terms. Staff will provide that information, along with changes or more specifics about Council Strategic Priorities, if any, for the September meeting. Commissioners commented that they still feel uncertain of Council expectations of the group.

Agenda Item 8 – Overview of City Outreach Efforts and Communication Methods

The commission primarily discussed outreach specific to the State of the Neighborhoods Awards and Workshops event rather than public involvement and outreach in general. A commissioner inquired if the State of the Neighborhoods event or NAC could have its own Facebook Page. All allowed Facebook pages feed through the city site. To date, events have not been allowed to have their own presence and the City Clerk's office maintains and updates general information about each board and commission including vacancies.

Commission members are relied upon to help publicize the event and can distribute event posters to their churches, favorite local shops and work places to help expand outreach efforts. Staff confirmed that all sponsors and city buildings including multi-generational centers receive and post the event promotional pieces and local coffee shops, grocery stores and bookstores are often willing to post them.

Agenda Item 9 – Character Areas Update

Ryan Levesque, Deputy Community Development Director – Planning provided a brief Character Area 3 update. This large, highly diverse character area encompasses downtown, ASU, Rio Salado and several neighborhoods. Council anticipated that the process of reaching out to so many varied audiences would take longer than the one year provided to prior character areas, CA3 will likely extend through next Fall. Staff will keep commissioners updated as the next meet ups and public workshops are scheduled.

Agenda Item 10 – Sign Code Reform Update

Following a Business Stakeholders March 2, 2016 meeting and an online comment forum period, four commercial sign regulation changes were proposed for Council Working Group and staff consideration. Proposed changes include allowing updates to existing sign criteria packages without Development Plan Review approval with the property owner's written consent and increasing the size of freestanding multi-tenant signs (when there is more than 4 tenants) from a maximum of 24 square feet to 40 square feet. (Single use site and centers with up to 4 tenants would remain at 24 sf.) Process change recommendations include offering over the counter permitting by appointment and implementation of electronic submittal process and electronic review to offer an expedited, more user friendly process. Ryan added that due to new businesses and established businesses revamping signage, permit requests run 400-500 per month.

Agenda Item 11 – Development Project Update

There was a significant amount of discussion regarding the Lake Country Village update, located just east of the north east corner of Rural and Baseline, provided by Ryan Levesque. Project proposed plans include a paseo leading to the new apartments and three commercial buildings including Alamo Theatre and Draft House, restaurants with outdoor dining space and landscaped walkways between buildings and an overall more pedestrian friendly environment. Some concerns were expressed about an increase in traffic along Lakeshore. Commissioner Ramsey made a motion seconded by Commissioner Lesko that Chair Miller speak to City Council at their August 18 meeting to share commission concerns specific to this proposal noted below.

In light of the fact that this project has been long awaited and will have substantial impacts on surrounding neighborhoods adjacent to and north of the center as well as the Lakes community just south of the development, the Neighborhood Advisory Commission has several concerns which include:

- Quality of design is not sufficient – looks like any other corner of new development in Gilbert or Mesa. Design appears to be in or trendy, what happens when that is out?
- Project lacks sustainability – Developer has not proposed or been asked to provide solar parking or trees to shade vehicles in all of those parking lots. Shade would offer comfort and encourage lengthier visits for those who come by car.
- More of the mature, historic, established trees along Baseline Road should be saved and integrated into the new landscape plans increasing pedestrian shade and walkability
- Need to create some pedestrian space and breathing room between project sidewalks and Baseline Road
- Implement traffic calming along Baseline Road to make accessing the center safer and dining on outdoor patios more desirable

Chair Miller encouraged fellow commission members to attend the August 18 Council meeting and/or the project update at the Development Review Commission on August 9.

Agenda Item 12 – Proposed Agenda Items for September or Future Meeting

- Commission Goal Setting - in light of City Council goals and priorities identified at their retreat
- Lake Country Village update
- Little Libraries update
- Homelessness Issues update
- Neighborhood Awards Applications and Rater Forms

Agenda Item 13– Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11 a.m.

Prepared by: Elizabeth Thomas, Neighborhood Services Specialist

Reviewed by: Shauna Warner, Neighborhood Services Manager