



## Minutes of the Development Review Commission Study Session August 28, 2018

Minutes of the Study Session of the Development Review Commission, of the City of Tempe, which was held in Council Chambers,  
31 East Fifth Street, Tempe, Arizona

**Present:**

Chair David Lyon  
Vice Chair Michael DiDomenico  
Commissioner Philip Amorosi  
Commissioner Thomas Brown  
Commissioner Andrew Johnson  
Commissioner Scott Sumners  
Commissioner Don Cassano

**City Staff Present:**

Chad Weaver, Director – Community Development  
Ryan Levesque, Deputy Director – Planning, Comm. Development  
Suparna Dasgupta, Principal Planner  
Diana Kaminski, Senior Planner  
Cynthia Jarrad, Administrative Assistant

**Absent:**

Alternate Commissioner Angela Thornton  
Alternate Commissioner Barbara Lloyd

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Chair David Lyon began the Study Session at 5:30 p.m.

**Review of July 24, 2018 Minutes**

- Item #1 – 7/24/18 Study Session Minutes, no changes
- Item #2 – 7/24/18 Regular Meeting Minutes, no changes

**Review of August 28, 2018 Regular Meeting Agenda**

- Item #3 – Tempe Student Housing, PL180175 – to be heard.

**Project Update by Staff (City Council Action Items):**

**Discussion: Boards and Commissions Process Changes**

Mr. Chad Weaver, Community Development Director, explained the City Council working group and its initiative. Mr. Weaver explained the group is mostly focused on community development & economic development. He noted that a significant amount of time and effort has been dedicated coordinating the efforts with this City Council working group has dedicated and he is hoping City Council's blessing soon. Mr. Weaver stated that in the past ten years there have been three reports done to regarding certain processes. These processes were about customer service, procedure, and technology. The City recently had a public meeting that broke it down into four categories for Community Development. These categories were technology and training, streamlining processes, customer advocacy & communication, and updating the codes. Mr. Weaver stated he wants to add a little more legibility to the process both externally and internally. He stated the last two years has been the busiest Tempe has ever had and mentioned how some slight changes to the PAD system about two years ago, the level of detail of design review and development review being ramped up, had put a bit of a burden on the staff. Mr. Weaver stated staff has been trying to be efficient as possible, while also streamlining processes. Mr. Weaver declared that a big challenge within our technology is the

Accela system, how it has never been fully implemented, and how the department has been struggling for three years with it. He said ramping up the ability to accept and deliver things online would be incredibly helpful to the customers. He said that it comes down to the online training of the staff and continues to say that one of the largest struggles is the financial aspect of it. Mr. Weaver addressed the Project Assistance Team hoping to become a one stop shop for customers and helping folks that do not understand how these processes work. Mr. Ryan Levesque, Community Development Deputy Director, said that wanted to discuss items that directly affect planning and the Development Review Commission (DRC) process. He mentioned working with the City Clerk's office on procedural changes such as an agenda software update for agenda preparation and reports to DRC and City Council that will roll out by 2019. Mr. Levesque added DRC processes will also be able to create and review documents and help the interface with the iPads, and reports, migrating more efficiently to the city council process. He stated that there are changes coming to Hearing Officer duties; variances would go straight to the Board of Adjustment, use permits would be heard by the DRC, and the Hearing Officer can focus on abatement procedures. Mr. Levesque mentioned there are eight pages of code text amendments being made as well as looking into once a month meeting of DRC instead of twice a month meeting. This will reduce overlapping deadlines for application submittal and deadlines, which create a burdensome processing timeline for staff. Vice Chair DiDomenico believed it would be a disservice to the process and citizens to reduce the meetings to once a month. He appreciated streamlining, but it may reduce public input, reduce access, and slow a case down too much. He suggested more staff, doesn't believe commissioners could handle the length of a once a month meeting, and that end cases will not get same attention which leads to loss of citizen attendance. He mentioned the meetings will lose effectiveness allowing developers to play the system and did not want to be a part of a once a month commission meeting. Commissioner Cassano agreed with Commissioner DiDomenico regarding the meeting needing to be twice a month. Chairman Lyon was in favor of once a month meeting due to them being easier to attend and would likely cause more efficient meetings. Commissioner Amorosi & Brown believed two meetings are better. Commissioner Amorosi stated that with one meeting he would require significantly more time to prepare for the meeting versus splitting it up twice a month. Commissioner Brown stated that the quality of work could possibly go down due to pressure from an extended work load and approaching deadline, which would lead to another month's wait until the next meeting. Commissioner Sumners stated he would not want the public to show up for a long meeting. Commissioner Cassano interjected that there needs to be less presentation and there is too much backup information. Commissioner Johnson addressed Mr. Weaver stating he heard in the past some good reasons why a once a month meeting was appropriate and asked him to reflect on that statement. Mr. Weaver mentioned that this had just been his personal experience and he can discuss it more with anyone that has interest another time. Commissioner Lloyd asked Mr. Weaver about the discussion of possibly moving the Study Session a little earlier. Mr. Weaver suggested that with once a month meeting, the study sessions could be longer and more robust. Mr. Weaver added that projects will still get attention. Chair Lyon interjected and said this topic needs more discussion and wanted Mr. Weaver to come back with a more concise bulleted list. Mr. Weaver said staff and commissioners can discuss this topic more in the next meeting in September.

**Announcements:** NONE

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**The Study Session adjourned at 6:10 pm.**

Prepared by: Christopher Ray



Reviewed by: Suparna Dasgupta  
Suparna Dasgupta, Principal Planner