

Minutes Neighborhood Advisory Commission November 3, 2021



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

(MEMBERS) Present: Hannah Moulton Belec, Maureen Eastty, Jana Lynn Granillo, Diane Harden, Barb Harris, Matt Heil, Linda Knutson, Christopher McCabe, Michael McLendon, Mark Rude, Daniel Schugurensky, Joel Stern, Nicholas Weller, Justine Yates

(MEMBERS) Absent: Melanie Larimer, Justine Yates

City Staff: Jeff Tamulevich, Code Compliance Manager, jeffrey_tamulevich@tempe.gov; Elizabeth Thomas, Neighborhood Services Specialist; Shauna Warner, Neighborhood Services Manager

Guests: Summer Baker

Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Chair Hannah Moulton Belec

Agenda Item 2 – Attendance Roll Call

Present: Hannah Moulton Belec, Maureen Eastty, Diane Harden, Barb Harris, Linda Knutson, Christopher McCabe, Michael McLendon, Joel Stern, Nicholas Weller

Absent: Jana Lynn Granillo, Matt Heil, Melanie Larimer, Mark Rude, Daniel Schugurensky, Justine Yates

Agenda Item 3 – Public Comment

None.

Agenda Item 4 – Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes: October 6, 2021

Motion: Commissioner Harden made a motion to approve the October 6 minutes as presented.

Second: Commissioner McLendon

Result: Approved by a 9-0 vote of those present at the time vote was taken.

Commission Member Ayes: Hannah Moulton Belec, Maureen Eastty, Diane Harden, Barb Harris, Linda Knutson, Christopher McCabe, Michael McLendon, Daniel Schugurensky, Joel Stern, Nicholas Weller

Abstention: Hannah Moulton Belec (absent from Oct. meeting)

Absent: Jana Lynn Granillo, Matt Heil, Melanie Larimer, Mark Rude, Daniel Schugurensky, Justine Yates

Note: Commissioner Rude arrived in meeting shortly after minutes vote was taken.

Agenda Item 5 – Code Compliance Overview and Discussion

Jeff Tamulevich, Code Compliance Administrator, provided a brief overview of the Department noting that Code Compliance was deemed an essential activity and that more cases were logged throughout covid than ever before. This increased activity is likely a result of more residents being at home and becoming more aware of issues in and around their neighborhoods. Overview highlights:

- Over 8,000 residential and commercial cases
- During covid, special stickers have been placed on notices of violation allowing more time and flexibility - if delays in addressing issues and making improvements are due to resident illness or care of a sick family member
- Code Compliance has transitioned from prior days of being exclusively enforcement, providing numerous education and assistance opportunities and offering greater transparency over the last ten years
- Program additions and improvements are a source of pride and have attracted attention from other Code Compliance agencies throughout the country seeking information, advice and expertise
- Top complaints - overheight grass and weeds, deteriorated landscaping, junk and debris, lawn parking, obstruction

Jeff requested commission member questions and comments. Some of the input offered by members, along with responses provided by Jeff are captured below:

- Residents don't have an idea of what codes are. Some parts of code do not make sense, others are nit picky. Could we create a code compliance for residents that is in layman's terms? We are losing good neighbors who are leaving Tempe due to code issues. Explain code so it can be readily understood. Inspectors advising "go read the code" are not helpful.
- Concern about neighbors using Code Compliance as a weapon against other neighbors or to be retaliatory

I understand your concerns. We oftentimes do have to interact with two neighbors with two very different viewpoints in times of dispute – the neighbor who is concerned about the appearance of a property and the neighbor who feels angry they got a violation.

- What about repeat offenders?

Our repeat offender program has not been very active during the last two years. We are starting to ramp it up again, placing a \$82.00 fee (charged to homeowner) on any property receiving a second violation in a 12-month period. Note that this fee is separate from when a violation/ticket is issued.

- What happens with abandonments and abatements?

These type of cases require more time and attention and multiple departments can be involved. In cases where an owner cannot be located, we skip citation phase and go straight to abatement. This requires a public hearing to seek approval for use of city contractors to handle work that needs to be done. Code compliance is dealing with about a dozen of these scenarios around Tempe now, one of which that involves

multiple departments and has taken nearly a year. This is frustrating for all involved including the Inspector who must visit the property every two weeks.

- Kudos to Inspector Mike Scarpitta. We were cited for dead trees. He worked with us to address and to allow for planting of new trees to take place after summer and in more favorable weather conditions.

Thank you for the feedback. We appreciate hearing that.

- Are our Tempe codes similar to neighboring cities?

Yes, in many respects but there are also differences. Not as familiar with other cities codes as with Tempe's.

- How many violations are city initiated versus resident initiated?

55% of all cases are proactive (note: typically occurs when an Inspector is in a neighborhood issuing a notice and takes note of other, like properties)

45% of all cases are reactive (follow up to resident initiated complaints)

Our Open Mind program provides a matrix of information and directories explaining violations and what can be done to address them and bring properties into compliance. There is a map showing locations of active violations. When appropriate, Code Compliance provide information along with the violation regarding landscape, decomposed granite, painting and graffiti removal resources that the city has researched and vetted for homeowners to use. All provide discounted rates. The Code Compliance website is at www.tempe.gov/code and has links to all resources and offerings.

NAC members were encouraged to check out the website and reach out to Jeff directly if they are seeking additional information or have concerns about a specific situation in their neighborhood. Chair Moulton Belec then ended the topic discussion by encouraging members to continue thinking about and brainstorming potential action items adding that we do not want Code Compliance weaponized and we do want city to look nice.

Agenda Item 6 - State of the Neighborhoods & Awards 2022- final opportunity for edits and additions to Neighbor of the Year/Beautification and Alley Upkeep award categories

NAC members were reminded that lead by the Mayor's office, the 2022 State of the Neighborhoods & Awards event format is being reimagined. This will include changing the event location, moving it from Tempe History Museum community room to outdoors at Kiwanis and transitioning to a more informal, neighbor and neighborhood-centric environment. Commissioners Knutson, Stern, McCabe and Vice Chair Melanie Larimer had volunteered to serve on an event planning group with staff.

The desired award categories need to be finalized to meet initial print deadlines. Members discussed wanting to expand neighborhood related awards and remarked on the challenges of getting nominations for the Alley Upkeep category. The possible overlap/duplication between property beautification category and other categories like sustainability and water conservation was also noted. There was consensus to move alley upkeep into the beautification category and to encourage more diversity in the beautification nominees such as celebrating the addition of a cool patio area or the addition of a mural. This category can continue to be open to celebrating holiday décor, yard renovations and impeccable upkeep too.

Commissioner Knutson suggested adding a separate Neighborhood Business of the Year category to recognize businesses that are especially mindful of and friendly to neighborhoods. She added that awards for Neighbor of the Year could be in the form of a gift to the neighborhood – such as a new tree planted in a public/neighborhood location. There was also discussion about the Chuck Malpede Neighbor of the Year award, intended by prior NAC members to honor longevity and more sustained contributions. It was determined the award could be renamed and have a separate application with different criteria and questions so nominators would have to be more intentional for their nominee to receive this consideration.

NAC members agreed to the following six categories (specific wording of category names subject to change):

- 1) Neighbor of the Year
- 2) Chuck Malpede Lifetime Excellence and Longevity Neighbor of the Year
- 3) Neighborhood of the Year
- 4) Neighborhood Event of the Year
- 5) Neighborhood Friendly Business of the Year
- 6) Neighborhood Beautiful Space

Agenda Item 7 – Communication and Grants Working Group Updates

The Communications Working Group will look further into determining award category names and accompanying criteria for each category so that all nomination forms can be finalized and updated promptly. Chair Moulton Belec and Hannah have also been working on ideas for the editorial calendar including securing more communications and public information staff attention and focus once the nominations open to help spread the word and post-event to celebrate award winners and their stories. Similar efforts will be made once the 2022-2023 Maryanne Corder Neighborhood Grants application opens. NAC members will also be encouraged to use all their communication channels to help share event related and grant related information.

Chair Moulton Belec shared her screen to go over the Communications Working Group notes and showed those Neighborhood Associations and HOAs that have not yet opted into NAC's opt in list. Members were encouraged to go into the working group notes document (saved on "the hub" website) to type in contact information if they know of a person living in a neighborhood who is willing to be listed, does not have to be the official contact person. This ongoing effort to capture contacts for each neighborhood area is a long-term endeavor that Commissioners Stern and Yates have volunteered to work on.

Commissioner Harden shared her screen and described her recent work using tax records and mapping to help increase coverage and outreach. She recommended setting goals such as focusing on single family homes (not included in existing neighborhood associations or hoas) for the first half of next year and then townhouses for the second half. The following year, 2023, could be devoted to capturing condominiums.

Agenda Item 8 – Review and discussion of NAC Annual Report

Chair Moulton Belec reminded NAC members that the Annual Report will need to be approved at the December meeting. She encouraged everyone to go into the saved document on the hub tonight and add any desired information or edits such as neighborhood related meetings or community events attended and NAC

accomplishments. Staff will incorporate all provided edits best possible and include the final draft document in the December meeting packet.

Agenda Item 9 – Tempe 150 Sesquicentennial Events Reminders

Events related information was provided in meeting packet background materials.

Agenda Item 9 – Proposed Future Agenda Items

Prior/Oct. meeting items:

- Theft of catalytic converters from vehicles
- Housing affordability
- Homelessness, hotel conversions (could potentially be merged with housing affordability)

New Items:

- Commissioner Knutson offered to provide a STEP manual update in Dec. Next steps per Council direction.
- Nominations for Chair and Vice Chair will be taken at the December meeting as well as the first meeting of the new year in January when the election will be held.
- NAC will have members terming off in zip codes 81 and 83 in December and will be welcoming new members likely in January.
- January 10, 2022 is date of Sustainability Commission meeting. NAC is working to coordinate a joint meeting in early 2022, may tie in with Climate Action Plan update.
- The February and/or March meetings of NAC will have to be moved to accommodate the Neighborhood Awards selection process timeline. Staff will reach out to members with a doodle poll to see which new dates work best for all.

Agenda Item 10 – Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Prepared by: Elizabeth Thomas