



Minutes City Council Issue Review Session March 5, 2009

Minutes of the Tempe City Council Issue Review Session held on Thursday, March 5, 2009, 6:00 p.m., in the City Council Chambers, Tempe City Hall, 31 E. Fifth Street, Tempe, Arizona.

COUNCIL PRESENT:

Mayor Hugh Hallman
Vice Mayor Shana Ellis
Councilmember P. Ben Arredondo
Councilmember Mark W. Mitchell
Councilmember Joel Navarro
Councilmember Onnie Shekerjian
Councilmember Corey D. Woods

Mayor Hallman called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

Call to the Audience

No one came forward to speak.

2008 Community Attitude Survey

INFORMATIONAL BACKGROUND available in City Clerk's Office.

DISCUSSION – Presenters: Community Relations Manager Shelley Hearn; Chris Thatham, ETC Institute

Chris Thatham summarized that he has administered surveys on behalf of ETC in over 500 communities during the last fifteen years and ETC has surveyed over 1 million people across the country in the last five years. Many communities aren't doing as well this year. Tempe's accomplishments are significant, given what this nation and region are experiencing.

- 2400 households were selected to receive the survey, the same process as last year and this year the survey was expanded significantly with 40% more questions.
- Goal was to get 800 completed surveys, and 859 were received.
- Demographics characteristics of respondents are similar to Census data:
 - White: 80% survey vs. 80% census
 - Asian: 4 % survey vs. 6% census
 - Gender: 50% male and 50% female
 - Age: approximately 1/5th of respondents from each of the age groups: 18-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65+

- GIS mapping was also done
- Composite index improved by four points, while the nation declined by four points.

He summarized that the areas with the most improvement included: feeling of safety, as a place to retire, quality of local police services, safety in neighborhoods, appearance of city, condition of streets, enforcement of local traffic laws, direction the city is heading, planning for growth, quality of Kid Zone after school programs, as a place to raise children, image of city, and condition of alleys. He added that a new set of questions was added about alley maintenance and about 1 in 4 or 5 people were dissatisfied. He suggested adding some GIS layers to put this into more meaningful context.

Mayor Hallman added that the maps, which show neutral and less happiness with the alleys and property and code enforcement, are very important.

Mr. Thatham added that at the end of the survey, respondents were asked for their top priorities. Public safety is still at the top, but it is about 20% lower than it was last year.

Mayor Hallman noted that this year's survey speaks about "law enforcement" rather than "public safety" which is police and fire. Fire dropped down, but Police issues still remain very high.

Mr. Thatham added that since alleys were not part of the survey last year, the distribution gets spread out over more variables this year. There is more of a plateau this year. Last year, public safety was up above everything else.

- If a community outperforms the national average by 15%, they are considered setting the standard in that area. Most communities that are high-performing might have several items in that category, but Tempe rated above national average in all areas assessed. Overall satisfaction was 34% above national average, which ranks it in top 5% of all US cities.
- No major deficiencies were identified.
- Maintenance of private property in neighborhoods was the only "very high" priority identified.
- Challenge for the future is to sustain high levels of satisfaction.
- Key strategies for sustaining long-term success:
 - Continue to focus on the top overall priorities for the community: (1) public safety, (2) neighborhoods, and (3) transportation.
 - Monitor issues identified as "high priorities."

Mayor Hallman stated that last year, Council had asked for the raw data to use to highlight hot spots to focus on for policing issues. This survey demonstrates that there are still some lingering issue with property maintenance, code enforcement and alleys. Again, this data will help highlight those areas where we need to do some work.

Councilmember Shekerjian stated that Shelley Hearn is working with the Constituent Management tool, along with IT, and this is the kind of data, geographically speaking, that is useful for identifying community issues. She appreciates the fact that it is already geographically separated. This is something Council is happy about, but the work is being done by the staff, and she congratulated staff. This is a wonderful report card and shows the level of commitment and the excellence standards City employees set for themselves.

Councilmember Navarro appreciated the report card, especially for public safety, knowing that we are doing a good job and making sure that we are keeping on our game. For the other departments, it says our customer service is satisfying residents and this provides a better understanding where we need to work harder to keep our trends in a positive direction.

Councilmember Arredondo asked how we are going to let the community know about the results.

Mayor Hallman agreed that we can confirm what the respondents' perceptions are, but it is important that their fellow residents feel the same way. Last year there was quite a lot of coverage based on the results. It is not short of amazing what this City, its staff and its residents do together to create a great community. Ms. Hearn will follow the same media plan as last year to make sure the community knows.

Councilmember Arredondo stated that Council makes decisions based on information such as this.

Mayor Hallman noted that there were 859 respondents to the survey and it is important that the community understands what the result is and to let Council know if the information is wrong.

INFORMATION ONLY – NO CONSENSUS

Human Services Recommendations

INFORMATIONAL BACKGROUND available in City Clerk's Office

DISCUSSION – Presenters: TCC Executive Director Kate Hanley; TCC Board Member and the Enhancement Committee Chair Woody Wilson; TCC Board President Margaret Hunnicutt

Kate Hanley summarized that the traditional users of TCC's services have been significantly impacted by this economic downturn. She added that when the economy began to turn, they reached out to their food banks and asked for an increase in the number of deliveries. For example, the Salvation Army went from providing 1,000 food boxes per month, to about 1,500. In the area of utility assistance, a significant amount of money was infused into the system through the federal government, and the Tempe Community Action Agency (TCAA) worked with others to host a day where those funds could be distributed very quickly and allowed them to pay in advance. For the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) program, a second shift of volunteers was added which allowed them to change their hours from 5 hours per day to about nine hours. About \$1M was brought into that program, and so far this year, that amount has been exceeded. Benefits testing is also being done this year for food stamps and healthcare. They are pleased to be working with the faith community which is hosting sessions for networking, preparation of resumes, and preparation for interviews. She added that there has also been an increase in volunteerism which reflects on the outstanding community we have.

Woody Wilson thanked Mayor Hallman and the Council for their unwavering support for human services and the agencies that assist those most in need. For FY 2009/2010, 36 agencies submitted 51 program funding requests for a total of \$1,437,119. This was nearly \$165K above what the City of Tempe allocated, including the supplemental funding, in FY 2008/2009. It was almost \$270K above the budgeted amount for FY 2009/2010. With only two new agencies and programs, the additional request from existing programs has seen an increased demand for services. In the agency review process, the community volunteer review panel recommended funding, mostly partial, to 49 programs and one new agency. The reviewers faced very difficult challenges and with fewer resources, greater demand for services and without the availability of supplemental funds for 2009/2010, hard choices were made. The priority is to spend the available funds to help those individuals with families in crisis. They were able to maintain a modicum of support to the traditional groups that provide services to seniors, troubled youth and character-building sports programs, but the focus was on saving families and providing basic human services such as food and shelter. As co-chair of the TCC enhancement committee, he thanked the TCC staff, fellow board members, and the 40 community volunteers, including 13 new volunteers this year,

who donated an average of 20 hours of service. This contribution of time has an estimated economic value to the process of nearly \$15K. With so much involvement within the community, agency review remains a robust, accountable and completely citizen-driven process. From his personal perspective, it is a genuine joy to work with such a dedicated group of people.

Margaret Hunnicutt added her thanks to the Mayor and Council for their support of the TCC's endeavors. The community outreach for their services is in high demand and services are greatly needed. They are doing everything they can to help.

Mayor Hallman summarized that this recommendation gets adopted through the City's budget process. He is grateful for all the volunteers who work on this effort to identify the needs in the community, prioritize them and bring them forward.

NO CONSENSUS – INFORMATION ONLY

Economic Stimulus Update – American Recovery & Reinvestment Act

INFORMATIONAL BACKGROUND available in City Clerk's Office.

DISCUSSION – Presenters: Community Relations Manager Shelley Hearn; Government Relations Director Amber Wakeman

Amber Wakeman summarized that staff has been working with local, state and federal agencies on the stimulus funds that have been coming through the State of Arizona through either competitive grants or formula funds. Staff has been in constant contact with the state and federal lobbyists, the National League of Cities, the local League, the Governor's Office, and various state agencies for ways in which the City could apply for competitive grants and any other federal stimulus funds. Specifically, staff has been working with Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) for transportation/transit funds, the Governor's Office for a variety of projects, and other state agencies which have already listed their criteria for competitive grants. The City has an economic stimulus liaison in every department and she reported that staff is aware of every opportunity available for stimulus funds. The City's federal lobbyist informed her this afternoon that the Vice President of the United States will hold a meeting in Washington, D.C., on March 18th for municipalities to discuss economic stimulus legislation, and with the Governor's economic stimulus contact on March 12th. Staff will keep Council updated on every stimulus opportunity that presents itself.

Mayor Hallman asked how the representatives are being selected for the municipal presentation.

Ms. Wakeman responded that she did not know.

Mayor Hallman clarified that for the presentation by each state, the Governor's point of contact will be two people who will be present in a Washington briefing, and he asked how will they be selected.

Ms. Wakeman responded that Jim Apperson is the Governor's contact for economic stimulus but she did not know who the other person is. She has placed a call to Mr. Apperson.

Mayor Hallman asked that a list of the economic stimulus liaisons for each department be provided to the Council.

CONSENSUS

Provide a list to Council of the economic stimulus department liaisons.

Follow-up Responsibility: Amber Wakeman

Formal Council Agenda Items

None.

Future Agenda Items

None.

Mayor's Announcements/Manager's Announcements

None.

Meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Jan Hort
City Clerk