

Minutes Neighborhood Advisory Commission February 3, 2010

Minutes of the Neighborhood Advisory Commission (NAC) held on February 3, 2010, 5:35 p.m. – 6:55 p.m., at City Hall, 31 E. 5th Street, 3rd Floor Conference Room, Tempe, Arizona.

(MEMBERS) Present: Don Calender, Tom Catlaw, Maureen Decindis, Pete De Mott, Andy Hall, Kevin Kaesberg, Joochul Kim, Ira King, Joe Pospicil, Lisa Roach, John Sanborn, Jeffrey Sheppard, Jason Short, William Wagner, Michael Wasko, Woody Wilson.

(MEMBERS) Excused Absences:

(MEMBERS) Unexcused Absences:

City Staff Present: Shauna Warner, Neighborhood Services Director; Elizabeth Thomas, Neighborhood Services Specialist, Theresa James, Homeless Coordinator, 480-858-2360, theresa_james@tempe.gov; Don Hawkes, Water Utilities Manager, 480-350-2660 or don_hawkes@tempe.gov; Tom Duensing, Deputy Financial Services Manager, 480-350-8860 or tom_duensing@tempe.gov.

Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order

Chair Kaesberg called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Agenda Item 2 – Public Comment

There was none.

Agenda Item 3 – Consideration of Minutes: January 6, 2010

Commissioner Decindis moved that the January 6, 2010 minutes be approved as written. Vice Chair Wasko seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 4 – Overview of United Way Permanent Supportive Housing Initiative

Theresa James, Homeless Coordinator, gave an overview of homeless issues in Tempe. Ms. James explained that it takes considerable time and patience to establish rapport with homeless individuals, particularly the chronically homeless. Typically, they have not had success in shelter environments due to all of the rules imposed and the challenges living amongst others while battling their conditions. The recent Homeless Count in late January 2010 noted 156 homeless individuals but that is just a one day snapshot of the situation. Police Department Officers and Social Workers estimate the numbers likely to be more like 300-500 impacted individuals any given day. As the need for assistance grows, the resources are scarcer and harder to come by.

The city of Tempe has a Homeless Outreach team and coordinates Project Homeless Connect events quarterly. Project Homeless Connect is designed to provide numerous immediate services all in one setting on one day. These services include Department of Economic Security, Social Security, attorney consultations, health services testing, haircuts, clothes, toiletries and meals. Each event has served from over 100 to 300 individuals.

Approximately 20 percent of homeless individuals in Maricopa County are chronically homeless defined as being homeless for more than one year or at least four times in the last three years. These individuals use an estimated 50 percent of the homelessness emergency resources available such as police, fire and emergency rooms. Valley of the Sun United Way along with the city of Tempe and the Arizona Department of Health Services have partnered together to develop a permanent supportive housing pilot project. The project will assist 35 chronically homeless individuals with disabilities with affordable housing units in Tempe. These units will be in scattered apartment unit sites encouraging community inclusiveness while providing access to services that will allow long lasting changes and the building of stable, independent lives.

This permanent supportive housing pilot project anticipated to start this month is the first phase in Valley of the Sun United Way's efforts to develop 1,000 permanent supportive housing units over the next six years. The long term goal is to reduce homelessness in Maricopa County by 75% by 2020.

Agenda Item 5 – Discussion of Water Utilities Residential Rates and Billing

Don Hawkes, Water Utilities Manager, provided an update and overview of the Water and Wastewater Rate Study. This study provided an in depth analysis which will be reviewed and updated annually to ensure full recovery of operating costs, financing of capital projects and maintenance of the unreserved portion of this enterprise fund balance.

The city is in the second year of a three year phased approach to the cost of service rate structure. Existing wastewater rates have been in effect since November 2008 and include a monthly base charge that varies by meter size and a volume charge that varies by customer class and is based on billable water usage.

This phased approach is intended to smooth the impact of significant rate fluctuations and ensure each class (residential, commercial, industrial, etc.) of customer pays its fair share of costs by the conclusion of the 3-year period. Don added that even with the increases, Tempe's combined water and wastewater rates remain among the lowest when compared with other local cities.

Some commission members questioned why any borrowing took place for infrastructure improvements. Tom Duensing, Deputy Financial Services Manager, explained that it's a balancing act of what you can cash finance, what you can borrow for and what is appropriate and fair to charge customers for. Don added that the utility is a lean one in terms of number of full time employees however providing safe, clean water is an expensive undertaking. Significant plant updates have been made in recent years to ensure water quality and to comply with Federal regulations. That coupled with an aging water delivery infrastructure with some parts and pipes being forty and fifty years old, complete replacements versus repairs are often called for.

Aging water meters are also a factor. As they age, they are slower and less accurate. The city has targeted over 14,000 accounts with meters needing replacement. Each year a portion of these old meters will be replaced with meters that can be retrofit for electronic reading.

Agenda Item 6 – 2010 Neighborhood Workshop and Awards Planning

Elizabeth noted that the Thursday, February 18 deadline for Neighbor of the Year applications is approaching and again encouraged members to think of submitting an application on behalf of someone who goes the extra mile for their neighborhood. Members wanted to know how many applications typically are received, it varies and usually they come in close to or on the application deadline.

Speakers for all four workshops have been identified. Kimber Lanning, Executive Director of Local First Arizona will speak to the importance of buying locally where your home is. Final workshop titles are being confirmed as well as event details. The March edition of Tempe Today (the water bill newsletter) will highlight event information to date including how to rsvp. Additional event promotion will be featured through press releases, the website, Channel 11 as well as outreach through Facebook or Twitter. This will allow for new event details to be shared as they are confirmed.

Agenda Item 7 – Committee Reports and Consideration of Minutes

- A. Codes Committee** – No meeting was held since the last commission meeting.
- B. Housing Committee** – No meeting was held since the last commission meeting.
- C. Outreach Committee** – No meeting was held since the last commission meeting. Chair Wilson noted his intention to call a meeting prior to the March commission meeting.

Proposed Agenda Items for March 3, 2010 Meeting

- 2010 Neighborhood Workshop and Awards Planning
- Neighbor of the Year
- Committee Reports
- Budget
- Water Utilities Residential Rates and Billing

Agenda Item 9 – Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Prepared by: Shauna Warner, Neighborhood Services Director
Elizabeth Thomas, Neighborhood Services Specialist