

Minutes Neighborhood Advisory Commission September 1, 2010

Minutes of the Neighborhood Advisory Commission (NAC) held on September 1, 2010, 5:35-6:55 p.m., at City Hall, 31 E. 5th Street, 2nd Floor Conference Room, Tempe, Arizona.

(MEMBERS) Present: Don Calender, Tom Catlaw, Maureen Decindis, Pete DeMott, Andy Hall, Joochul Kim, Ira King, Josephine McNamara, Joe Pospicil, Lisa Roach, John Sanborn, Michael Wasko, Woody Wilson.

(MEMBERS) Excused Absences: Kevin Kaesberg, Leonard Montenegro, Jason Short, Bill Wagner.

(MEMBERS) Unexcused Absences: Jacob Nojourni, Michael Pickett.

City Staff Present: Shauna Warner, Neighborhood Services Director; Elizabeth Thomas, Neighborhood Services Specialist; Dawn Coomer, Senior Transportation Planner, Community Development, 480-350-8550, dawn_coomer@tempe.gov; Lisa Collins, Deputy Services Manager – Planning, 480-350-8989, lisa_collins@tempe.gov; Jyme Sue McLaren, Community Development, 480-350-8803, jymesue_mclaren@tempe.gov.

Guests Present: Councilmember Shana Ellis, 480-350-8813, shana_ellis@tempe.gov; Wulf Grote, Metro Light Rail, Director of Project Development, 602-322-4420.

Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order

Vice Chair Wasko called the meeting to order at 5:38 p.m.

Agenda Item 2 – Public Comment

There was none.

Agenda Item 3 – Consideration of Minutes: August 4, 2010

Commissioner Calender moved that the August 4, 2010 minutes be approved as written. Commissioner Sanborn seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 4 – Tempe South Corridor Study Update

Wulf Grote, Metro Light Rail, Director of Project Development provided a Tempe South Study Area presentation which focused on project recommendations for the High Capacity Transit, 2 miles funded, and the Rural Road Bus Rapid Transit, 19 miles unfunded. Following the presentation, members of the Neighborhood Advisory Commission were encouraged to ask questions and comment on the material presented. In the minutes notes beginning on page 2, the following abbreviations were used:

- Q – question
- A – answer

- C – comment

Q – How will land use change in the corridor with modern streetcar? Is more commercial possible?

A – There are three evaluation criteria considered by the federal government when requesting funding: cost effectiveness, land use and economic development. When light rail was implemented on Apache Boulevard, a station planning process was done. The specifics for the Mill corridor still need to be determined but a similar station planning process that defines land use and development aspects is expected for this project.

Q – Does this project have the potential to expand the character of downtown further south on Mill Avenue?

A – Yes, the station influence area of modern streetcar is more prominent than light rail since stations are closer with modern streetcar.

Q – How can character of existing development and redevelopment be defined in this project?

A – Character aspects can be considered in a station area planning effort.

Q – How much will the project cost to build?

A – The project's capital cost is approximately \$160 million with a mix of federal and regional funding sources.

Q – Can we use any stimulus funding for this project?

A – No, we cannot apply for existing funding due to requirements for project readiness but we are positioning the project to apply for future funding opportunities that might be announced.

Q – Will the modern streetcar be ADA accessible?

A – Yes, level boarding is expected or ramps can be used.

Q – How will bicyclists use the modern streetcar?

A – In Portland, there are no bike racks on vehicles. People stand next to their bikes on the modern streetcar vehicle. Most trips on modern streetcar are short in length.

Q – I like the loop route for downtown, but why do we still need buses?

A – Bus service will be reconfigured to minimize duplicative service and optimize access to transit for transit riders.

Q – Why can't we get the modern streetcar go all the way to Southern/Rural?

A – A modern streetcar extension to Southern/Rural is recommended as part of the study, but there is not sufficient funding in the regional plan to build it now. Keep in mind, too, that half of light rail riders have never used a bus.

Q – Will bus service be reduced on Mill Avenue?

A – There is no intention to reduce bus service to fund modern streetcar operations.

Q – What is the annual operations cost of the modern streetcar?

A – The gross annual cost is approximately \$3 million, which would be offset by fares and other possible funding sources which are currently being studied for feasibility.

Q – Is there a domestic manufacturer for modern streetcar vehicles?

A – Oregon Iron Works is in Portland.

Q – Is the Portland streetcar free?

A – Portland has a free zone in downtown, but all other areas are the standard fare of approximately \$2 or \$2.50.

Q – Will the federal government allow you to charge a fare?

A – Yes.

Q – What types of board and commission meetings are you doing in the next few months?

A – We will be going to the City Council on September 16 and October 21. There is a public meeting on September 23, from 6 to 8 pm, at MADCAP Theaters. Additional information will be provided to Shauna and Elizabeth.

Q – When will design begin?

A – A precise schedule has not yet been established. The project is scheduled to open in 2017. Design refinement will begin soon as discussed in the presentation. Next summer we hope to have approval from the Federal Transit Administration to enter project development.

Q – Is property acquisition required for this project?

A – Likely not for stations. The intention is to stay within the established curb. A park-and-ride is possible at Southern/Mill.

Commissioner Wilson made a motion to support the staff recommendation for downtown Mill Avenue loop as the route and mode for the South Corridor Study. Commissioner Calender seconded the motion. The motion passed with 8 in favor, two opposed and three abstentions.

Agenda Item 5 – Volunteer Needs in Neighborhoods – Selection of Neighborhood Advisory Commission Adopt a Park

Commission members were informed that Hudson Park has been adopted. There are seven other parks that have been adopted but Neighborhood Services staff did not have the names of those parks yet from Recreation. Even those parks that have been adopted can have additional groups adopt them as all parks need extra attention and larger parks or parks with more maintenance and clean up to do will benefit from several adopters. Commissioners briefly discussed whether to select a park because of its convenient location, significance to members, perceived need, etc. Ultimately the decision of which park needs to be made by the commission members collectively. Sixth Street and Birchitt Park were both mentioned as possibilities. The minimum commitment is a quarterly clean up. This item will be discussed further at the October meeting.

Agenda Item 6 – 2011 Neighborhood Workshop and Awards Planning

Survey results from the April 2010 workshop and awards indicated an interest in pursuing a downtown event location provided convenient and free parking would be made available. After some additional discussion, commission members requested that staff follow up to see if Madcap Theatres, US Airways or Tempe Gateway might be available.

Commission members felt the Outreach Committee should begin by exploring topics that received the most interest/votes from survey respondents including:

Going Greener, Sustainability efforts

Meet your neighbors – building community

Neighborhood Beautification

What is happening in downtown/Mill Ave district

Community Gardens

Code Compliance

The possibility of hosting some mobile workshops was also suggested - walking tours, biking tours, historic building tours and/or Segway tours can be looked into.

Staff noted that some of the topics such as Code Compliance could have materials made available if not a full workshop. As the Beautification Awards have ceased due to budget cuts, staff suggested that perhaps a Neighborhood Beautification award could be added to the existing

Neighbor of the Year Awards to recognize an individual or business or group. Commissioners agreed that this is a good link.

Agenda Item 7 – Discussion of Neighborhood Advisory Commission Committee Structure, Membership and Goals

Commissioner Calender made a motion to add Commissioner DeMott as a member of the Budget/Finance Committee, Commissioner Roach seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Committee chairs will be elected at the first meetings of the group and group members can decide how often and for what duration they need to meet.

Agenda Item 8 – Getting Arizona Involved In Neighborhoods Update

A GAIN flyer was provided in the meeting packet materials. An organizational meeting will be held on September 28 with GAIN scheduled for Saturday, October 23 from 4-8 p.m. NAC members were encouraged to help each of their respective neighborhoods coordinate and host a gathering.

Proposed Agenda Items for October 6, 2010 Meeting

Overview of Customer Relations Center
Committee Updates
Adopt A Park

Agenda Item 8 – Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Prepared by: Elizabeth Thomas, Neighborhood Services Specialist

Reviewed by: Shauna Warner, Neighborhood Services Director