

Minutes Neighborhood Advisory Commission December 7, 2011

Minutes of the Neighborhood Advisory Commission (NAC) held on December 7, 2011, 5:35–7:10 p.m., at City Hall, 31 E. 5th Street, 3rd Floor Conference Room, Tempe, Arizona.

(MEMBERS) Present: Karen Adams, Nancy Buell, Joochul Kim, Pete DeMott, Ann Lynn DiDomenico, Gary Johnson, Ira King, Josephine McNamara, Robert Miller, Leonard Montenegro, Joe Pospicil, Lisa Roach, John Sanborn, Michael Wasko

(MEMBERS) Excused Absences: Maureen Decindis, Britney Scott Kaufmann, Angela Lopez, Scott Smas, Bill Wagner

(MEMBERS) Unexcused Absences:

City Staff Present: Shauna Warner, Neighborhood Services Director; Elizabeth Thomas, Neighborhood Services Specialist

Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order

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

Agenda Item 2 – Public Comment

There was none.

Agenda Item 3 – Consideration of Minutes: November 2, 2011

The date provided in the November 2 minutes for the 2012 Neighborhood Workshop and Awards was incorrect. The correct date is Saturday, April 28, 2012.

Commissioner King made a motion to approve the minutes as amended; Commissioner Miller seconded the motion and it passed with 11 affirmative votes and three abstentions due to not being present at the November meeting.

Agenda Item 4 – Nomination of Officers

Commission members nominated Chair Wasko for Chair and Vice Chair McNamara for Vice Chair. Both Chair Wasko and Vice Chair McNamara indicated their willingness to serve another year-long term. Additional nominations (if any) will be taken at the January meeting when the voting will also take place.

Agenda Item 5 – Commission Goals and Objectives Discussion

Goal 1 – Strengthen and grow Neighborhood Workshop and Awards

Vice Chair McNamara offered to prepare a first draft of a revised Neighbor of the Year Award evaluation form for the January meeting. The evaluation form will be updated to be more in keeping with the updated Neighbor of the Year Award application.

Commissioners reviewed the packet materials provided regarding previous years' attendance at the Neighborhood Workshop and Awards as well as previous nominations received and number of awards presented. It was noted that 2008 had the highest registered attendees for the awards portion of the event and was also the year when the two group awards were presented. Likely the large number of award winners attracted more attendees to the event in support of them.

Some commissioners expressed concern that when Mayor and City Council present the awards in casual clothes while coming from home or other events, event decorum is lacking and respect for those being honored is diminished. Suggested solutions included: having the NAC members announce the awards, presenting the awards at a City Council meeting and having the workshops as a separate event, asking nominators of award winners to speak to and present awards offering a "personal touch" or making Mayor and City Council aware of this concern and encouraging them to dress for the occasion. Commission members also expressed that it's fine for the Mayor and City Council to present the Awards but it's important that the Neighborhood Workshop and Awards not be treated as a political event or forum.

Elizabeth agreed to confirm the deadlines for event brochures and posters. Should a commission member approach a potential sponsor, commissioners want to have a form or letter with general event information such as deadline for sponsorships, number of brochures and posters to be printed, anticipated event attendance and a list of which types of donations might be needed. Commissioner McNamara inquired about the possibility of selling advertising space. There really isn't space to sell, it's not tax deductible and in past years all sponsor logos have been the same size regardless of the cash donation or in kind offering amount. It's a delicate balance when the city is requesting sponsorship help with an event and this event is put together very economically.

The results for the recent Neighborhood Services Neighborhood Workshop survey done using the Neighborhoods ListServe were also briefly shared. Thirty responses were received with 80% of respondents indicating a willingness to attend a Neighborhood Awards and Workshop event. Formal presentations with time for Q and A, round table topics with opportunities for open discussion, learning from experts and learning from peers were all appreciated. The following Workshop topics generated higher numbers of positive responses –

- What's Happening in Downtown Tempe?
- Hands on how to use Public Art to build community (painting tiles, making a mosaic, etc.)
- Neighborhood Opportunities to get involved – a Year at a Glance
- Code Compliance
- Crime Prevention
- Importance of buying locally, highlight locally owned and operated businesses

Staff is continuing to seek out appropriate speakers who have availability on April 28, 2012. Hosting an activity that is appropriate for families and/or providing some type of childcare is also being explored. Staff encouraged Commission members to invite neighbors and guests and if they are unable to come or unwilling to do so, to find out why.

Goal 2 – Improve feeling of safety in neighborhoods

Lighting was identified as a factor in feeling safe or unsafe in your neighborhood. For the purpose of coming up with a metric, Commissioners requested information regarding how the city identifies and keeps track of lights that are out and what length of time is typical for repairs. Alley lighting or

lack thereof was also mentioned and Commissioners were advised to contact SRP or APS for that and were reminded that residents then have to pay the associated electric bills.

Commissioners also would like baseline data for how many block watches exist and where they are located to help determine which neighborhoods or zip code areas are lacking/needing them. Staff agreed to see if an officer from the Crime Prevention office is available to speak to this issue for the January or February meeting. It was also suggested that perhaps they could bring along a representative from a highly performing Block Watch for recognition by the Commission. Another PD and safety related topic mentioned was illegal parking, specifically cars parked the wrong direction or partially on the sidewalk. Commissioners requested an update from PD regarding whether this is being addressed proactively and noted their opinion that tickets given for this could be a revenue stream as well as a deterrent.

Goal 3 – Improve maintenance of private property in neighborhoods

The following questions were posed:

How many slum lords and banks are there who are not maintaining their properties?

What is the policy of other cities with regards to same?

How often does our city staff contact banks or slumlords to demand that vacant, blighted or unkempt properties are cleaned up?

Does code need to be improved or merely enforced?

Commissioners also expressed frustration with garbage and recycling cans left out for days becoming unsightly, smelly and dangerous when they are on sidewalks forcing pedestrians to use the street. What is the city doing about those residents who consistently leave their cans out? Commissioner Adams suggested that the commission propose a change to the ordinance requiring that garbage and recycling cans be placed back at least to the side of the house or building if not behind a gate. This would help to eliminate smelly and unsightly cans placed just off the sidewalk.

Can Commissioners obtain a list of Code Compliance's repeat offenders and try to help shrink it? Commissioners DeMott and Allen volunteered to help examine this issue further. How does the ordinance currently read? Does code need to be changed or merely enforced? Why must neighbors always have to take the initiative to report violations even for repeat offenders? Why doesn't Code Compliance staff automatically and periodically check on those residents who continually are warned or cited?

Goal 4 – Improve quality of neighborhood parks

Commissioners asked if there was a way to get a list of the most common parks related complaints. For neighborhood parks that are heavily used and have no restrooms, is there any possibility of getting porta-johns delivered? What plans if any are there for park lighting improvements? Specifically what type of parks maintenance is still being done during this budgetary crunch?

Agenda Item 6 – Neighborhood Workshop and Awards Planning

See Agenda Item 5, Goal 1 – Strengthen and grow Neighborhood Workshop and Awards

Agenda Item 7 – Board and Commission Recruitment

No names for review were provided.

Agenda Item 8 – Proposed Agenda Items for January 4, 2012

- **Election of Officers**
- **PD Crime Prevention**
- **Tempe Elementary School District Facility Repurposing**
- **Commission Goals**

Agenda Item 9 – Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Prepared by: Elizabeth Thomas, Neighborhood Services Specialist

Reviewed by: Shauna Warner, Neighborhood Services Director