



# City of Maricopa

## Meeting Minutes - Draft City Council Regular Meeting

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**Mayor Nancy Smith**  
**Vice-Mayor Henry Wade**  
**Councilmember Eric Goettl**  
**Councilmember AnnaMarie Knorr**  
**Councilmember Amber Liermann**  
**Councilmember Vincent Manfredi**  
**Councilmember Bob Marsh**

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Tuesday, April 15, 2025

6:00 PM

Council Chambers

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**1. Call to Order**

*The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. Community of Hope Church Pastor Rusty Akers gave an invocation and Councilmember Marsh led the Pledge of Allegiance.*

**2. Roll Call**

**Present:** 7 - Mayor Nancy Smith, Vice Mayor Henry Wade, Councilmember Eric Goettl, Councilmember AnnaMarie Knorr, Councilmember Amber Liermann, Councilmember Vincent Manfredi and Councilmember Bob Marsh

**3. Proclamations, Acknowledgements, Awards and Presentations**

**3.1 [PROC 25-04](#) Volunteer Appreciation Week Proclamation**

*Mayor Smith invited Jim DeVenezia, Victims Advocate, to join her for the proclamation. She read the proclamation declaring April 20-26, 2025, as Volunteer Appreciation Week in Maricopa. The proclamation highlighted that in 2024, 200 volunteers across 5 city departments contributed 16,491 hours, valued at \$550,000 in savings to the city. Mayor Smith emphasized the importance of recognizing volunteers who give freely of their time and talents. Jim DeVenezia spoke on behalf of the volunteers, expressing gratitude for the recognition. He highlighted some of the diverse volunteer activities, including supporting firefighters, assisting victims, conducting home visits with seniors, participating in community outreach projects, supporting city events, checking on homes, educating about city codes, providing support during death notifications, maintaining police vehicles, delivering books, assisting at the library and community center, and undergoing emergency response training. Mr. DeVenezia emphasized the vital role volunteers play in supporting city operations.*

**Read**

**3.2 [PROC 25-05](#) International Dark Sky Week Proclamation**

*Mayor Smith invited Councilmember Liermann and Parks and Recreation Committee member Adam Leach to join her for the proclamation. Mayor Smith read the proclamation declaring April 21-28, 2025, as International Dark Sky Week in Maricopa. The proclamation highlighted the importance of dark skies for astronomy, ecology, human health, and the economy. It noted that Arizona hosts 10% of the world's largest*

telescopes and that optical astronomy represents a \$1.3 billion investment in the state. Councilmember Liermann invited residents to participate in a "Dark Sky Lights Out" event on April 21st from 8:30-9:00 PM, turning off indoor and outdoor lights to enjoy the night sky. She provided examples of light pollution and ways to practice responsible lighting, such as using shielded fixtures, timers, and warm color bulbs. Councilmember Liermann emphasized that dark sky initiatives aim for appropriate lighting rather than no lighting and noted that Maricopa already practices responsible lighting in parking lots and streets.

**Read**

#### **4. Report from the Mayor**

Councilmember Liermann expressed heartfelt gratitude to the city staff for their diligent efforts in organizing the Wild West Music Fest, which took place from April 4th-6th, 2025. She noted the joy and sense of community it brought, highlighting the sight of families enjoying quality time together. Councilmember Liermann also reported attending the fire and police basketball fundraiser on April 4th, 2025, where firefighters and police officers competed in a spirited game for a good cause. She praised the event's success and hinted at more exciting fundraisers in the future, such as softball and flag football events, which are being planned to further strengthen community bonds and continue the spirit of friendly competition. Lastly, Councilmember Liermann reported attending a bagpipe recruitment held at the library on Saturday, April 5th, 2025. She invited anyone interested in learning to play bagpipes, irrespective of age or gender, to contact her or Terry Oldfield for more information.

Councilmember Knorr expressed heartfelt gratitude for the significant contributions of volunteers, stating that their dedicated service helps the smooth functioning of city operations. Recognizing their extensive efforts, she highlighted that there are over 100 volunteers actively participating in the city's sports programs, extending appreciation for their invaluable contributions as well. Next, Councilmember Knorr reported attending this season's inaugural session of the Citizen Leadership Academy held on April 8th, where she praised the remarkable participation and enthusiasm demonstrated by everyone present, including the youth council. She stated that this session featured approximately 35 engaged individuals, reflecting a desire to contribute positively to city initiatives, with the Citizen Leadership Academy serving as a platform for empowerment and civic engagement. Later, Councilmember Knorr announced a vacancy on the Cultural Affairs and Arts Committee, inviting interested individuals to email her to express interest in applying.

Councilmember Goettl reported on the upcoming American Legion pancake breakfast fundraiser, scheduled for May 3rd. He stated this annual event serves as a wonderful opportunity for the community to come together in support of local veterans and enjoy a hearty breakfast. Next, Councilmember Goettl expressed deep sadness over the recent passing of Paul Shirk, a renowned historian who significantly contributed to preserving and capturing the history of Maricopa. He emphasized his crucial role in making Maricopa's history accessible and voiced the importance of his work in enriching the community's understanding of its roots. Lastly, Councilmember Goettl also took a moment to request prayers and support for Shirk's family, underscoring the loss felt by the community and acknowledging the impact of Mr. Shirk's legacy within Maricopa.

Councilmember Marsh reported attending on April 2nd, the Central Arizona Project stakeholder's dinner in Florence. He and other stakeholders were briefed on upcoming discussions concerning the division of water from the shrinking Colorado River

*between the upper basin and lower basin states. Councilmember Marsh shared that the dinner provided valuable insights and noted his appreciation for learning about the challenges and plans related to water management. On April 4th, Councilmember Marsh reported participating in the Pinal Partnership breakfast, where major state and county power companies were present to give updates on the holistic approach being taken by power companies towards incorporating renewable and exploring modular nuclear energy. Also, he reported attending the Wild West Music Festival, on April 4th, 5th, and 6th with his wife. Councilmember Marsh shared that all acts were spectacular and that the event was efficiently managed, illustrating a strong sense of community involvement and enjoyment. On April 7th, he reported attending the Pinal Partnership Water Resource Committee meeting, which centered on tracking water-related legislation progressing through the legislature. Lastly, Councilmember Marsh shared his condolences to the family of the late Paul Shirk.*

*Vice Mayor Wade reported attending the Wild West Weekend, describing it as a lot of fun, and particularly appreciated spending time with fellow council members and their families during the event. He expressed anticipation for the number count of the Wild West Weekend attendees, observing crowded events on Friday and Saturday. Vice Mayor Wade commended the involvement of the Citizen Leadership Academy, highlighting his previous suggestion for the Youth Council to participate to gain a real understanding of city government. He reported on his experience as a guest speaker at the fire and police charity basketball game sponsored by Leading Edge Academy. Vice Mayor Wade noted Leading Edge Academy as a good host and acknowledged the charity's importance.*

*Councilmember Manfredi urged everyone to participate in the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) 5-year transportation plan public comment period, highlighting the critical importance of the State Route 347 expansion project. He emphasized that the expansion is vital not only for the city of Maricopa but also for the surrounding areas, including Hidden Valley and Thunderbird Farms. Councilmember Manfredi advocated for overwhelming the ADOT site with responses to prioritize the project, encouraging each resident to fill out the Google form provided on the site. Councilmember Manfredi expressed strong confidence that increased community pressure can spur action, highlighting that this year is crucial for getting the project into the 5-year plan. He further noted that if the project isn't included this year, it could face significant delays. Additionally, he appealed to residents to participate in the upcoming ADOT board meeting in Benson with their opinions, even if only virtually, to make their voices heard. Lastly, he encouraged residents to engage actively in community events and initiatives to further strengthen Maricopa's position and advocacy efforts.*

*Mayor Smith reported on the Arizona State Transportation Board work session focused on State Route 347. She noted it was significant that an entire work session was dedicated to this single project, indicating its importance. She encouraged residents to fill out the ADOT 5-year plan survey to show support for the 347 expansion project. Mayor Smith provided easy steps on her mayor's page for residents to get informed and provide input. Next, Mayor Smith highlighted the first open house on the proposed half-cent sales tax increase. She encouraged residents to attend future open houses or review materials online to understand the proposal. Mayor Smith also reported on the well-attended Maricopa Citizen Leadership Academy, noting the diversity of participants in age, interests, and involvement levels. Lastly, Mayor Smith also mentioned the ongoing 2026 Maricopa General Plan update and encouraged residents to participate in the survey at [maricopagp.com](http://maricopagp.com). She also expressed condolences regarding the passing of Paul Shirk, recognizing his contributions as a historian for the city.*

**5. Report from the City Manager**

*City Manager Ben Bitter reported on the creation of a traffic strike force to proactively address transportation concerns in the community. He stated that this initiative aims to involve all departments within the city that deal with traffic and transportation issues, notably the police department, engineers, and construction teams. He shared that by coordinating these departments, the city can quickly respond to safety and traffic concerns. He explained that this integrated approach allows the city to be more efficient in addressing accidents and issues that occur within the community. He highlighted the importance of police input, especially since they see accidents firsthand and can provide valuable feedback on potential immediate improvements. City Manager Bitter indicated that funding has been earmarked in the next fiscal year's budget specifically for this purpose, allowing the city to promptly go into the design phase for traffic improvements as warranted. City Manager Bitter shared that this funding allocation will enable the City to quickly respond to needs such as new traffic signals, road modifications, and enhancements to existing infrastructure. He shared that the ultimate goal of the traffic strike force is to be nimble and responsive to community concerns. City Manager Bitter acknowledged that some solutions might take time, such as new signage or engineering plans, but restated the city's commitment to minimizing negative impacts and maximizing positive outcomes for the residents. Lastly, he shared that this strategic approach seeks to ensure the safety and well-being of the community by addressing issues as they arise with coordinated, efficient action.*

**6. Call to the Public**

*Peg Chapados shared her gratitude for those who organized the charity basketball game between the police and firefighters. Ms. Chapados emphasized its success and announced she hoped there would be more events like it in the future. She spoke on item 8.1 on the council agenda, which pertained to the rezoning code for the original Smith Family Farm. Ms. Chapados highlighted its historical significance and potential as an important landmark for the city, urging the council to approve it.*

*Joseph Harvey, the school counselor at Leading Edge Academy, and Tamara Washington, the assistant principal, spoke on the recent charity basketball game where Maricopa's police and fire departments competed against each other. Mr. Harvey thanked the council and the community for their overwhelming support and shared that the event successfully raised \$1,435.75 for the police department and \$435.75 for the fire department. Mr. Harvey invited the council members to attend a forthcoming check presentation ceremony on April 25th at 9:30 AM during a character counts assembly at Leading Edge Academy, stating that the funds raised would be returned to support both departments.*

*Priscilla Behnke from the Be Awesome Youth Coalition came forward to announce a citywide Pokémon-themed scavenger photo hunt. She shared that the event is set to transform the community into an interactive game board, providing a safe and engaging way for teens to connect. Ms. Behnke mentioned the support from Crown Castle and more support being garnered from the community to fund the hunt, including an upcoming barbecue rib competition fundraiser on April 26th. She shared that for just \$10, community members could enjoy rib tasting, with proceeds going directly toward bringing the youth event to life. Lastly, Ms. Behnke passionately urged those who believe there's nothing for teens to do to come forward and contribute their ideas, emphasizing the importance of transitioning from complaints to creative,*

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actionable steps to engage Maricopa's youth.

## 7. Consent Agenda

### Approval of the Consent Agenda

**After a brief presentation on Consent Agenda Item 7.1. summarized below, a motion was made by Councilmember Manfredi, seconded by Councilmember Marsh, that this Consent Agenda be adopted. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.**

#### 7.1 MISC 25-03

The Mayor and City Council shall discuss and take action on approving the addition of the Traffic Signal at Smith-Enke Rd & Desert Greens Dr project into the FY24-25 Capital Improvement Plan. Discussion and Action.

*Keith Brown, Public Works Director, explained that the intersection has been challenging and accident-prone. He shared that over the last several months, the city's engineering and traffic engineering team conducted a traffic warrant study that confirmed the need for a signal. Mr. Brown shared that the recommendation was to move forward with this solution, and the signal will be timed and synchronized with the nearby Porter Road signal to minimize delays. Mr. Brown shared that although significant consideration was given to closing the intersection or making it right-turn only, this idea was ultimately rejected due to potential inconvenience. He shared that there are no other accessible routes close by to allow eastbound traffic if the right-turn option were enforced, which would have posed a considerable inconvenience for drivers needing to head in that direction. Mr. Brown shared that concerns about potential congestion due to closely spaced signals were acknowledged, but assurances were given that appropriate timing coordination would be implemented to mitigate stoppage at both intersections, enhancing accessibility and maintaining traffic flow for eastbound and westbound travelers.*

**This Miscellaneous Item was Approved.**

#### 7.2 SPEVLIQ 25-04

The Mayor and City Council shall discuss and take action on recommending approval to the Arizona Department of Liquor Licenses and Control for a Special Event Liquor License application submitted by Alyson Cooney on behalf of Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church for a special event known as Our Lady of Grace Annual Festival to be held from May 2, 2025 to May 4, 2025 at 18700 N. Saint Gabriel Way, Maricopa, Arizona 85138. Discussion and Action.

**This Special Event Liquor License was Approved.**

#### 7.3 MIN 25-19

Approval of Minutes from the March 25, 2025 Work Session and the April 1, 2025 City Council Regular meeting. Discussion and Action.

**These Minutes were Approved.**

## 8. Regular Agenda and/or Public Hearings

#### 8.1 ORD 25-03

An Ordinance of the Mayor and City Council of the City of Maricopa, Arizona, amending the zoning map as described in Zoning Case ZON25-01 Assessor Parcel Number 512-04-0010, approximately ±2.5-acres of land, from Single Family Residence/Planned Area Development (CR-3/PAD) to Public-Institutional (PI), located at 20864 N. Smith Farms Road within the Maricopa incorporated limits. The parcel of



land is situated in a portion of Section 22, Township 4 South, Range 3 East of the Gila and Salt River Base and Meridian, Pinal County, Arizona. Discussion and Action.

*Rick Williams, Planning Manager, presented a city-initiated request to rezone 2.5 acres from single-family residence to public institutional for the Smith Family Farm located off Butterfield Parkway. He shared that the proposal aims to transform the site into a museum, preserving it as a historical site and cultural center. Mr. Williams provided a detailed conceptual development plan, highlighting necessary minor modifications, including widening the entrance to accommodate traffic and introducing ADA improvements to ensure accessibility. He reported that the Planning and Zoning Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of the rezoning after conducting two public hearings, during which one letter of opposition was received. Mr. Williams mentioned the support from community members during the hearings, reflecting a strong community interest in the project.*

*Quinn Konold, Community Enrichment Director, added that the Smith family gifted the property to the city with the intent of ensuring the preservation of Maricopa's roots. Mr. Konold spoke on the vision to partner with the Maricopa Historical Society for this endeavor, aiming to create an immersive historical experience distinct from the static displays of the existing museum. Councilmember Liermann inquired about the facility's capacity, and Mr. Konold confirmed it would be limited to under 50 people to minimize the impact on the surrounding neighborhood, ensuring it remains an asset to the community without causing disruption.*

**A motion was made by Vice Mayor Wade, seconded by Councilmember Knorr, that this Ordinance be Approved. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.**

**8.2      ORD 25-04**

An Ordinance of the Mayor and City Council of the City of Maricopa, Arizona, adopting that certain document filed with the City Clerk and entitled "2025 Amendments to Section 2.15.130, Standing Committee" by reference to amend sections 2.15.130 of the Maricopa City Code and providing for severability and the effective date thereof. Discussion and Action.

*Mr. Konold presented proposed amendments to the city code regarding advisory committees, focusing on the reintegration of staff liaisons to work with the committees. He shared that staff liaisons will play a pivotal role in helping committees comprehend ongoing city projects and effectively gather community input. Mayor Smith expressed her support for the amendments, which represent a significant transformation in committee involvement and expectations. Mayor Smith requested that the Board, Committee, and Commission Handbook be reinstated and updated to align with this new direction, thereby reinforcing the enhanced involvement expected from committee members. Vice Mayor Wade shared that the committees are crucial for community involvement, serving as a direct line for citizens to engage with and influence city government. He noted that the revitalized committee structure could empower citizens with a deeper understanding of city affairs, enabling them to advocate effectively for various initiatives within the community. Councilmember Marsh expressed excitement about how the new vision would reinvigorate the Senior Advisory Committee, noting the fresh opportunities for members to contribute meaningfully. The council also discussed the potential for committees to assist in generating funding for their projects, offering a more robust support system for community-driven initiatives and expanding the scope of what these committees can accomplish.*

**A motion was made by Councilmember Liermann, seconded by Councilmember Knorr, that this Ordinance be Approved. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.**

**8.3      APP 25-02**

The Mayor and City Council shall discuss and take action on making appointments to the various committees. Discussion and Action.

*Mayor Smith, along with Councilmember Goettl, presented their respective nominations for various committee appointments. Mayor Smith reappointed May McCarthy for the Cultural Affairs and Arts Committee. For the Senior Advisory Committee, she reappointed Toni Johnson. Next, Mayor Smith reappointed Adam Leach for the Parks and Recreation Committee. Lastly, for the Planning and Zoning Commission, she reappointed James Singleton. Councilmember Goettl reappointed Joan Koczor for the Senior Advisory Committee. For the Cultural Affairs and Arts Advisory Committee, Councilmember Goettl reappointed Peg Chapados. For the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, he reappointed Devin Pitcher. For Planning and Zoning Commission, Councilmember Goettl reappointed Robert Klob.*

*Councilmember Manfredi reminded the public of the significant role they can play by attending committee meetings. He emphasized that public engagement is crucial, and even those not currently appointed to a committee should actively participate in meetings. Councilmember Manfredi shared that by doing so, they not only stay informed about ongoing civic issues but also position themselves as potential future committee members, ready to step into roles as openings arise.*

**A motion was made by Councilmember Knorr, seconded by Councilmember Marsh, that these Appointments be Appointed. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.**

**8.4      PRES 25-08**

The Mayor and City Council shall hear a 2024 City of Maricopa Fire/Medical Annual Report. Discussion only.

*Fire Chief Brad Pitassi presented the Maricopa Fire and Medical Department's 2024 Annual Report. For starters, Chief Pitassi shared a considerable 30-second reduction in overall response times, which reflects improved efficiency in emergency operations. He attributed this success to proactive efforts by the department to enhance systems and processes, enabling quick and effective deployment during emergencies. He also reported the department's increased attention on addressing falls and sick person emergency calls, which prompted enhanced community outreach targeting high-risk populations. Next, Chief Pitassi reported on training activities surging by 41% due to the implementation of improved systems, highlighting the department's commitment to professional development and operational excellence. Additionally, he reported that the community outreach was expanded with the successful introduction of 15 Fire Pals classes in local schools, reinforcing fire safety education among youth. Chief Pitassi shared that the department reinstated its smoke detector program, leading to the installation of 59 detectors in homes previously lacking this vital safety component. He also reported notable advancements in workforce development, citing the promotion of five firefighters to engineer and captain positions. Chief Pitassi also highlighted the integration of key performance indicators (KPIs) across each division—an initiative that saw over 80% of goals achieved, demonstrating the effectiveness of targeted strategic planning. Lastly, he shared the plans for 2025, including applying for a Certificate of Necessity to broaden ambulance services, reinstating pivotal programs such as those for chaplains and an honor guard, and celebrating two decades of dedicated full-time service to the Maricopa community.*

**The Presentation was heard.**

**9.      Executive Session**

*No Executive Session was conducted.*

**10. Adjournment**

**This meeting was Adjourned at 7:40 p.m.**