



# City of Maricopa

## Meeting Minutes - Final City Council Regular Meeting

City Hall  
39700 W. Civic Center  
Plaza  
Maricopa, AZ 85138  
Ph: (520) 568-9098  
Fx: (520) 568-9120  
www.maricopa-az.gov

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

---

Tuesday, July 16, 2024

6:00 PM

Council Chambers

---

**1. Call to Order**

*The meeting was called to order at 6:08 p.m. Community of Hope Pastor, Rusty Akers gave an invocation and Councilmember Marsh led the Pledge of Allegiance.*

**2. Roll Call**

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

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

*There were no items presented.*

**4. Report from the Mayor**

*Councilmember Marsh reported obtaining the draft General Plan update and elaborated on other cities updating their general plan. He explained the General Plan was a governing document that needs to be updated every 10 years that provides context for planning and zoning for City Council to make decisions and so forth. He stated the process was going to take several months and run through November 2026. He noted it started this month and encouraged those interested in being involved to stay tuned for announcements on opportunities to participate. He reported having a busy month of committee meetings and campaigning including: The June Senior Lunch and Learn at the Senior Center that featured Mayor Smith, the Pinal County Board of Adjustment meeting in Florence, the State of the County Town Hall with Supervisor Kevin Cavanaugh and Ak-Chin Chairman Robert Miguel, the Great American 4th at Copper Sky, the Pinal Partnership Water Resources Committee meeting and the Council Candidates debate hosted by inMaricopa. He noted it was not really a debate because Eric, Amber and he were basically all on the same page. He explained they looked at issues from different perspectives but understood each other and respect each other. He added the mayoral debate was another story. Lastly, he reported attending the Senior Advisory Committee meeting. He reminded everyone that this Friday, the Senior Lunch and Learn would feature City Manager Ben Bitter. He elaborated on door prizes and invited seniors to attend at the Senior Center at 11 a.m. on Friday.*

*Councilmember Knorr thanked everyone in attendance and to reminded everyone that*

school was about to start again and there were a lot of local businesses participating in a school supply drive with the Maricopa Pantry. She stated bins were located at several businesses across the city listed on the Maricopa Pantry's Facebook including Honeycutt Coffee, the Maricopa Chamber of Commerce, and Exception Health Hospital among others. She reported also attending the Great American 4th and commended the event.

Vice Mayor Liermann stated that with school starting, to remember to please be careful driving around, with walkways and new drivers. She encouraged everyone to plan accordingly in preparation of new traffic trends when school starts. She shared that the national political tone had unfortunately trickled down to the local level, and it saddened her that the Maricopa Police Department had to investigate 2 threats towards City Council members on July 8th and July 11th, right before the assassination attempt on former President Trump on July 13th. She requested that community members consider the impact of our behavior on those around us. She shared a remark from Melania Trump to encourage each member of the community to reflect on how to contribute to the health of the city, county, state, and country. She reiterated her sadness and shocks that here, in the city of Maricopa, they were getting threats from community members.

Mayor Smith reported that she was invited by the American Legion to go to a new installation of officers, in which Jonell Sullivan was installed as the American Legion Commander, as well as nine other veterans to new officer positions. She reported previously being invited, along with Vice Mayor Liermann to a women veterans' event and commended all veterans. She reported speaking at the Senior Lunch and Learn, attending the Juneteenth event at Central Arizona College (CAC), and a Veteran's Town Hall. Lastly, she invited the community to the new police and dispatch facility grand opening on July 27th at 9 a.m.

## 5. Report from the City Manager

City Manager Ben Bitter reported on the recent metal cacti landscaping installation on Porter Road. Mayor Smith commended the work.

## 6. Call to the Public

Barry McCain, Maricopa resident and write in candidate for County Supervisor of District 1, gave a brief background of his political involvement. He expressed concern that people did not know how to have spirited discourse. He stated that favoritism, cronyism, and nepotism were bad for democracy. He elaborated that showing partiality to family, friends, socialites, while lacking ethics, undermined the common good/fairness while giving the undo advantage to someone without merit. He said the most critical issue was the lack of competency and accountability that weakened the morale, integrity, and the faith in government, and it was important that public officials be held accountable because they received public money. He stated there were candidates behind him who were fair and worked hard to be fair and while the Mayor had the right to her opinion, she could not dictate. He expressed concerns with the lack of debates and that she had not been fair to other candidates and thought she should apologize. Mayor Smith invited Mr. McCain to discuss later and responded she was not sure what he was referring to. She responded that she appreciated all candidates, had participated in three debates, and was willing to debate every single time.

Kelly Anderson thanked the Mayor, Vice Mayor, Council and staff. She thanked Vice

Mayor Liermann for the school supply drive announcement and stated InMaricopa had posted an article with all the drop off locations including: Ace Hardware, Adobe Blinds and More, Mandy's Wine Bar, Big O Tires, InMaricopa, Maricopa Chamber of Commerce, Title Services of the Valley, Nando's Mexican Cafe, Native Grill and Wings, the Province Community, Raceway Bar and Grill, Roots Eatery, Tractor Supply, Thai Chili to Go, VFW Post 12, Zero 43, Water and Ice, and Cold Beer and Cheeseburgers. Next, she announced the Maricopa Monitor was conducting their Crème de la Copa survey which gave residents the opportunity to vote for the best and favorite business in the community. She noted the Chamber of Commerce was proud that 55 of their member businesses made the list and encouraged the community to vote at [cremedelacopa.com](http://cremedelacopa.com). She then invited the Council to attend the Adobe Blinds and More ribbon cutting ceremony for Majestic Moments Events on Thursday at 5 p.m.

Judith Zaimont commented on the world of the arts and the benefits and thanked the City for supporting the arts in several ways. She discussed the proclamations issued by former Mayor Christian Price and current Mayor Nancy Smith, and the various art initiatives. She announced that the two recent grants for performing arts organizations including: for the Maricopa Community Theater for its production of Chicago, and the Vibrant City Arts grant awarded jointly to the Maricopa Music Circle, the Maricopa Chamber Orchestra and the Maricopa Arts Council for a Grand Winter Holiday Concert. She stated they also have an upcoming art studio crawl, and a second abstract art gallery. She invited the community to the Artist Town Hall put together by the Maricopa Arts Council at the Library on August 22 from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Tara Gallagher, with Field of Vision Academy, discussed people she admired throughout history. She explained she started a micro-school to help students most at risk in the community after her local school district failed to provide safe working and learning conditions. She stated she continued serving students after getting a hate note and when local government failed to create a mayoral task force to find a solution. She highlighted her continued advocacy for other micro-schools and discussed their growing trends. She stated the Mayor and Council that they held the power to create a city ordinance in support of micro schooling without consulting the reservation, the state, nor federal governments. She asked what they had done since this was brought to their attention in June. She called to action and the creation of a task force to make constituents feel heard.

Rick Horst noted it had been over 40 years since he had the opportunity to speak at the call to the public forum, and clarified he was no longer a member of the senior leadership team and spoke as a citizen. He stated controversy was healthy in a democracy, and public interest was well served by robust public debate, however when individuals elected to attack the person, it degenerated debate by blocking constructive compromises. He noted there were those within the community that seemingly delighted and directed attacks against people, rather than concepts and institutions seeking to demean, harass, and discredit. He continued to say they attacked a person's faith, their character and family members. He contemplated their purpose and goal and challenged them to stand before the Council to engage in public discourse if they truly believed that the policy and the city trajectory needed to change. He stated those individuals mostly never attended council meetings, and when they did, they chose not to speak, and would rather skip the opportunity to engage in the conversation prior to Council action and wait after the action to attack the results. He stated both, elected and appointed, officials had offered the opportunity to meet various times because such meetings would allow them to gather facts and have a better understanding of the issues. He stated that though there were only a few, they sought to make loud noise and we needed to reduce the noise and vitriol and elevate

*the notion that there would be differences and divisional issues. He asked those few to bring their voice here, make your case, but stop the vitriol. He applauded the mayor, council, and staff for always taking the high road, for their dedication and steadfastness.*

*Kenneth Golacki stated he was a State Route (SR) 347 survivor and recounted his accident from October 7, 2016. He stated he just wanted change. Next, he talked about the youth and events like the school supply drive and expressed concerns that the fast-paced growth there was not enough being done for the youth. He stated he wanted the community to invest in our young people.*

*Christine Bellinger thanked the mayor and council for all they have done for the city and stated it looked beautiful. She reported reading an article in InMaricopa magazine about allegations of misconduct at Copper Sky. She stated the article reported city officials launched an investigation into the allegations and thanked the police force and investigators for doing that and for having a code of conduct for the facility. She stated she came today, as she had in the past, to ask that a code of conduct be developed for the library books. She highlighted books she considered obscene that did not adhere to a code of conduct. She stated she worked for the school district and elaborated.*

*A member of Blaze Ministries commended Vice Mayor Liermann for attending their services. He stated his Bishop, Deon Hill and the people galvanized around her. He discussed their different programs and asked the council to consider sitting down with the pastors and religious leaders and asking what we can do about the youth. He commended Vice Mayor Liermann again and lamented that the mayor and council have received threats and hate. He stated Crystal O'Jon, who was running for council had some of her political signs removed and destroyed. He reiterated that council should sit down with black leaders in Maricopa and thanked them for their time.*

*Linda Cummings stated she was a 7-year resident. She reported attending one of the city council candidate debates and commended the information. She expressed interest in learning about the budget process and asked if there was a way to go through the budget book to understand it. She expressed concerns with the lack of affordable housing for seniors and elaborated.*

*Rich Vitiello thanked everyone for the 4th of July celebration. He stated he was working with Jim at the Maricopa Food Pantry to raise funds for the food bank. He stated he was selling tickets for a 50/50 raffle and thanked those who donated. He stated the drawing would be July 25th and tickets were \$20 and elaborated. He directed those interested to contact him at (480)358-8051. He thanked everyone again and stated the food bank was trying to rebuild a facility after their previous one burned down and encouraged donations. He stated the drawing would take place at Raceway and encouraged participation.*

*Tena Dugan discussed community involvement and gave information on 347facts.com. She stated the web site gave information on State Route 347 that James Singleton provided. She stated that in the last 10 years, there have been 35 fatal accidents and 43 fatalities. She stated that through 347facts.com residents could submit their names and email address to send out over 100 emails to state legislators, representatives, and the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT). She stated it was an easy way to make a difference and elaborated.*

*Victoria Defranco expressed concerns with the senior center at the Community Center.*

*She provided background on previous facilities for the seniors. She stated the Community Center was supposed to be the Senior Center and not a shared space and expressed concerns that they were being rearranged. She stated she was told there was not enough money for a senior center, but when she looked at the budget from last year, former City Manager Rick Horst and his group of people made \$892,000. She stated it was unreal that one person could make that kind of money and then respond with, there's not enough money. She stated seniors should be treated with respect because they have paid taxes longer. She expressed discontent with the room they used being cleared of their personal stuff and noted they were there 5 days a week for 7 hours per day. She reiterated that there were high salaries that should be distributed better and expressed concerns that former City Manager, Horst was still working for the city, and then the new City Manager Ben Bitter and his staff were making \$892,000. She addressed the Mayor, and said she kept saying it's a new city, and they don't have that kind of money, but it looked like they do and was just not distributed correctly.*

*Mayor Smith responded that while she said there's not enough money for a Senior Center, seniors have been very blessed to have a spot for many years. She stated there were still needs for a teen center and such. She responded that regarding staff salary, comparisons were done and leaders in the city were paid according to the salary amongst surrounding cities.*

## 7. Consent Agenda

### Approval of the Consent Agenda

**A motion was made by Vice Mayor Amber Liermann, seconded by Councilmember Bob Marsh, to Adopt the Consent Agenda .The motion carried by unanimous vote.**

- 7.1 [CON 24-21](#) The Mayor and City Council shall discuss and take action to ratify the Purchase and Sale Agreement with Dozerland, LLC, related to the sale of 11.34 acres of real property generally located North of State Route 238 between N. White Road and N. Green Road, Maricopa, Pinal County, Arizona, Assessor Parcel No. 510-15-002G, for \$700,000.00 and authorizing the City Manager to execute any future amendments to extend the Closing as he deems necessary and any closing documents related thereto. Discussion and Action.
- This Contract was Approved.**
- 7.2 [SUB 22-18](#) The Mayor and City Council shall discuss and take action to approve Subdivision Final Plat Case # SUB22-18, for Sorrento Parcel 8, subdividing 23.75 gross acres of land into 93 single-family lots and nine (9) open space tracts. Discussion and Action.
- This Subdivision was Approved.**
- 7.3 [SUB 22-30](#) The Mayor and City Council shall discuss and take action to approve Subdivision Final Plat Case # SUB22-30, for Sorrento Parcel 18, subdividing 26.98 gross acres of land into 82 single-family lots and eight (8) open space tracts. Discussion and Action.
- This Subdivision was Approved.**
- 7.4 [SUB 22-39](#) The Mayor and City Council shall discuss and take action to approve Subdivision Final Plat Case # SUB22-39, for Sorrento Parcel 19, subdividing 26.12 gross acres of land into 119 single-family lots and thirteen (13) open space tracts. Discussion and Action.

**This Subdivision was Approved.**

- 7.5 [ORD 24-08](#) An Ordinance of the Mayor and City Council of the City of Maricopa, Arizona, amending the zoning requirements as described in Zoning Case Planned Area Development (PAD) 24-02 for the Anderson Farms PAD which is approximately 566 acres generally situated on the southeast corner of W. Bowlin Rd. and N. Hartman Rd. within the City of Maricopa incorporated limits. The parcels of land are located in Section 33, Township 4 South, Range 3 East of the gila and salt river base and meridian, Pinal County, Arizona. Discussion and Action.

**This Ordinance was Approved.**

- 7.6 [MISC 24-17](#) The Mayor and City Council shall discuss and take action to approve a Map of Dedication, Case # MOD24-02, dedicating to the City of Maricopa, the necessary right-of-way for a collector road (W. Lococo St.). Discussion and Action.

**This Miscellaneous Item was Approved.**

- 7.7 [MIN 24-45](#) Approval of Minutes from the June 18, 2024 City Council Regular meeting. Discussion and Action.

**The Minutes were Approved.****8. Regular Agenda and/or Public Hearings**

- 8.1 [ORD 24-09](#) An Ordinance of the Mayor and City Council of the City of Maricopa, Arizona, amending the zoning requirements as described in Zoning Case Planned Area Development (PAD) 24-05 for the Stonegate PAD, which is approximately 28.53 acres of land generally located at the northwest corner of W. Maricopa-Casa Grande Hwy. and N. Stonegate Rd., within the City of Maricopa incorporated limits. The parcels of land are located in portions of Section 26 and 35, Township 4 South, Range 3 East, of the Gila and Salt River Meridian, Pinal County, Arizona. Discussion and Action.

*Planner Derek Shearer presented the agenda item 8.1. He explained the ordinance was for a major planned area development (PAD). He stated the PAD was heard by the Planning and Zoning (PZ) Commission on May 13th and was approved unanimously, however subsequent to that meeting, the applicant met with city staff, the city engineer, and city attorneys to refine the stipulations of approval. She elaborated on the specific stipulations to clarify responsibilities of off-site improvements that the projects may incur, specifically at the intersection of Stonegate Road and Alan-Stephens. He explained that because of the changes in the stipulations, this item could not be on the consent agenda. He stated he prepared a presentation for the Council if they would like to hear. The Mayor and Council requested the presentation.*

*Derek Shearer stated the Stonegate PAD (PD24-05 ) was requested by Gammage & Burnham, PLC, on behalf of Stonegate BFC, LLC. He displayed the site that encompasses the area, of approximately 28.53 acres. He explained the amendment request was to address the changes to the PAD where the former spine road that connected the Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway to Allan Stephens. He stated the new proposed internal/external access truncated and limited vehicular traffic and changed the traffic pattern in the area. He stated the change required a public hearing and approval by the council instead of administrative action at staff level. He explained the proposed truncation was the only thing being proposed in the PAD amendment and clarified there was no changes to any densities for residential development, height*

deviations, or architectural changes. He stated the public hearing was heard on May 13th by the PZ Commission and was now before council to seek approval. He detailed the traffic circulation plan and how traffic would be rerouted along Alan Stephens Parkway to the intersection of Stonegate, eliminating cutting through all the commercial and residential private development. He stated that the applicants proposed developing a trail in lieu of Spine Road going through there and elaborated it would be a nice landscape trail with hardscape and softscape paths that would connect to Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway all the way past Walmart to the South. He stated the applicant included those provisions as part of a built to rent multifamily product. He explained there weren't any regulations in the previous PAD for this, and it was just regular multifamily and elaborated. He stated, on the 13th of May, the PZ Commission voted to approve the rezone request for PD24-05 and staff therefore recommended approval, with the conditions of approval and the staff report, and as amended by the memo that was presented to the Council. He opened the floor for questions and noted the applicant's consultant team was present to answer any questions.

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

8.2 [PRES 24-14](#)

The Mayor and City Council shall hear an Economic Development Update from Chief Strategy Officer Ricky Horst. Presentation only.

Chief Strategy Officer Ricky Horst presented an economic development update. He introduced team members of the Office of Economic Opportunity: Chief Economic Development Officer, Christian Price, Senior Project Manager, Doctor Joshua Nkoom, Senior Project Manager, Rachel Leffall, Administrative Assistant, Nicole Audens. He apologized that the presentation would be lengthy and explained it was important to tell the whole story to educate the public on economic efforts, to clarify misinformation, and to stir excitement about the opportunities that exist for the city that will generate new revenues. He stated the Office of Economic Opportunity worked to enhance Maricopa's economy by supporting the creation of higher wage jobs, promoting direct investment, and increasing prosperity for our citizens. He gave background on the City, from its 2003 incorporation with a population of around 4,000 people, to the housing boom, the housing market crash. He explained that the city really struggled because the old economy was tied to housing by itself. He continued that a decade later, the Wall Street Journal put out another article, highlighting Maricopa as one of the most resilient comeback cities. He elaborated on the housing bust and stated that in 2018 something changed, city leadership met in strategic planning sessions for the purpose of creating and executing an economic prosperity plan, with both short-term and long-term, objectives. He stated today, all evidence suggested that Maricopa was a far cry from where it was less than a decade ago. He stated the objective was clear, fostering economic growth, generating local revenue, creating job opportunities ultimately improving the well-being of the community. He stated that in pursuit of reaching these objectives, Maricopa government officials must employ strategic approaches aimed at bolstering economic growth and vitality. He stated this council, the council before, and the one before chose to be proactive and the evidence was the citizen driven visioning plan that resulted in the 2040 Vision Plan. He warned that, "Committing to a Strategic Plan raises an immediate and profound question." "How as a result of this Strategic Plan, will the city have to think and act differently from how they did in the past as it moves towards the future vision?" He continued that there were several segments and multiple strategies he wanted to highlight to establish an inventory of shovel ready sites designed to encourage the creation of new jobs, and explore opportunities to engage in public-private partnerships to leverage city and private resources generating a positive economic return. He discussed sister cities, and noted they had been around 100 plus years, and discussed how their industrial

*parks have brought jobs. He stated Maricopa has laid down the foundation and now the execution was underway to start seeing the results.*

*He stated growth was the top tier economic tool and explained that everybody in this room was the benefactor of some job, directly or indirectly and elaborated. He stated Maricopa was expected to welcome 100,000 residents by 2029 according to recent US Census data. He continued that the city reported fewer than 60,000 residents in the most recent 2020 census, but the most recent estimate brought us over 74,000 residents, marking a 23% growth rate. He explained the city's 6% plus annual rate was expected to climb gradually over the next six years and would soon be over 100,000 people. He stated in just 20 years Maricopa surpassed Casa Grande, a 119-year-old city, and became the most populous municipality in the county. He discussed how some individuals and communities in the country took slow-growth, or no-growth stances and reiterated that growth was both, desirable and inevitable. He discussed the benefits of growth as it relates to jobs, income, tax revenues, property values and diversity. He stated places with stagnant growth were often less vibrant, residents died or migrated, businesses moved or closed, local structures and infrastructure depreciated and were eventually replaced. He provided examples and three long term benefits of growth: One, larger size means greater economies of scale such as shopping centers, systems of hiking or bike trails, strong public safety, art museums, and a right-sized transportation system: Two, larger size means economic benefits to derived from clustering such as retail stores cluster in shopping centers to benefit from increased traffic created by proximity: Three, larger size means greater choices and diversity and generates, creates greater employment choices and employment security. It also provides for greater social diversity which could include greater tolerance and respect for others; greater choices in cultural, retail and restaurant experiences; and greater likelihood of new and innovative ideas. He listed all the new development growth in Maricopa and added that developers invested in the community based on present, and future growth. He noted big retailers have left neighboring cities due to stagnation. He listed other benefits of growth such as six years of lower property taxes, enhanced public safety programs, enhanced personnel, and AAA and AA+ bond ratings, which led to a reduction in the secondary primary tax and the savings of over \$4 million to citizens. He discussed the need to find equilibrium to the relationship between land development, revenues, and expenditures. He explained land development impacted local public finance because it generated change in the level of services, quality of services demanded, and forecasted and mitigated the magnitude and direction of those revenues and expenditures. He went on to discuss the symbiotic relationship between commercial, and residential real estate stating that they complemented each other in a complex dance of development. He explained that when it comes to finding this equilibrium, these sectors work in harmony to create dynamic and thriving communities that benefit everyone. He reiterated that revenues, expenditures, public service demands, and real estate values all change in response to land development. He provided facts about revenues regarding the costs of public services and how revenues from retail/commercial subsidized funds to provide resident's demand for services. He elaborated on the equilibrium of housing development and gave stats on single-family and multi-family units built or approved to be built. He stated he heard tonight public comments on the need for housing options for seniors and lower income persons and elaborated. He provided more stats on commercial development and stated that there were options.*

*He discussed the municipal land sale options and explained that current state statute restricted the sale of land to a value not to exceed \$1.5 million dollars unless approved by the voters of a community and noted that as of September 14, 2024 the legislature amended the statute to reflect voter approval for any land sale in excess of \$15 million.*



He stated Proposition 482 sought authorization from the voting public to sell land for the purpose of economic development because at the time, it was not decided if the law would change and for transparency. He explained that almost every parcel in the packet, would not reach \$15 million, but it was important to have the people have a say, even when state law would preempt that. He explained the city bought land to remove blight from public health and safety reasons, to support infrastructure, save taxpayer money for future development, and to control land use. Then, he explained the city sold land when excess parcels that are no longer needed, to put it back on the tax rolls, land assemblage to support master development economic projects. He noted that all land development was city controlled via zoning ordinances and the process went through the PZ Commission and City Council with multiple opportunities for citizens to speak on the issue. He provided a land summary that was mailed out with the Prop 482 that represents 728 acres, of which 680 of those acres was the land assembled for an industrial park. He elaborated on the Maricopa Business Park that was announced six years ago, and explained the area was selected because it was close to utilities and elaborated on the selection thought process. He discussed the properties that were bought systematically and approved by Council with opportunities for public comment. He stated it left 48 acres of miscellaneous parcels and elaborated on the Sonoran Creek Marketplace and how it created jobs and funded public services. He discussed the South Bridge Market Place and the process of attaining the land and putting out an invitation for bids for retail development. He noted the bid was awarded to Lowe's and elaborated on the jobs, and additional taxes for the city. He detailed the Alterra property across the street with a project proposal for an Elevate Trampoline Park. He noted none of the properties had been sold for housing yet. He discussed the Copper Sky medical campus and mixed-use property that has been on and off again and reminded everyone we were in a high inflation situation, and it was still hard to get products. He stated the outcome would meet the criteria that laid out by the city, to fulfill a public need. Next, he discussed the Seasons Living Senior Care Center and elaborated on where they are in the process. He then mentioned the Shea-Connelly project at Copper Sky with mix-use retail concept. He moved on to discuss the civic center project, and noted that around 2008, the previous Mayor Smith had enough foresight to buy the land for \$0.47 cents a square foot for a total of \$3,000,000. He stated the land value today was worth 50 million. He stated that of the 142 acres, 24 acres would be sold for non-public use that would generate \$8.36 million. He detailed the proposed projects including a restaurant row and provided an early conceptual design. Next, he talked about the Maricopa Business Park with 680 acres of city owned land with potential rail access, all the utilities well positioned, and lies within the East-West corridor and the favored side of ACA. He provided visuals of the location and stated there would be a process, but there was an invitation for bids that went out. He invited Chief Economic Development Officer, Christian Price to present some of those bids.

Christian Price commented on the complexities of growth and how large projects take time and effort. He stated that six years ago, a series of groups reached out to start the conversation and circumstances and financial situations changed but they never gave up. He stated there were successes in the horizon and he wanted to discuss those. He stated they had permission to discuss some but one could not be discussed at this time. He talked about Envision Waste and stated it was a mixed waste processing facility, and how right now they were looking at a Cap Ex, which is a capital investment into the community of \$64 million, buying approximately 25 acres of city-owned property. He stated they would provide about 80 jobs at about \$56,000 average wages. He stated this was important due to the cluster that Mr. Horst discussed earlier, because it drove other businesses to the area, and put the city on the map and attracted other businesses. He stated the other businesses did not want

to disclose their name yet, but was a plastics renewal origination, that happened because of the previous entity that was just showed put interest, with a Cap Ex between \$600 and \$800k on about 70 acres. He noted it would create 200 jobs at about \$50,000 average wage. He stated they utilize locally generated plastic waste, mitigate environmental hazards of landfills, and use technology that produces hydrocarbon liquids that can be repurposed into plastics and other circular products. He stated that whether you liked green or not, green was going to go into the economy, and put the city on the empirical map for a whole new industry. Councilmember Manfredi clarified that the Cap Ex was \$600 to \$800k, talking about billions. Mr. Price concurred. He stated the next statement of interest was from Prescott Composites and Prescott Renewables, a multiplicity kind of an umbrella company with a system of a series of different companies that have different partners. He reiterated that was how clustering worked. He explained Prescott Composites did CF composite construction or structures and Prescott Renewables did frontline and conversion of waste to energy and precursor materials. He added Prescott Composites also does graphite, graphene materials and battery components with another partner and elaborated. He stated their Cap Ex was between \$701.8 billion for 172 acres and the average wage would be between \$60,000 and \$110,000. He reiterated those were conservative numbers. He stated they would grow in phases as they take down these 172 acres starting in 2025 at about 160 jobs, all the way through 2029 to a total of about 2600 projected jobs. He explained the project was vertically integrated in Advanced Composites Technology firm. He reiterated this was just the start, and when something like this located here it was exciting because it puts the city on the map and suddenly others show interest. He turned the presentation back to Mr. Horst.

Mr. Horst elaborated that the companies were not talking about traditional concrete and elaborated on graphene and how they intend to develop their park infrastructure out of some of those materials so people can see it and, be a part of it. He stated there was another statement of interest received that would be a complete metamorphosis of the city, with the potential of 37,000 new jobs and 5,000 temporary construction jobs. He elaborated on the SmartRail Park with a Cap Ex of over \$1 billion with over \$40 million in new infrastructure, over \$5 million in new property taxes, not including the residual taxes of what comes in their buildings and their structures, or taxes on any products sold. He stated the city, the county, the school district, and other groups would benefit. He noted they would build between 500 to 2,000 on-site housing units to attract potential employees. He noted they were interested in the entire 680 acres and elaborated on the potential problem and stated that the next item on the agenda was the purchase of 172 acres to meet those needs. He stated most of the Prescott pieces were there, and they were ready to be able to make announcement in the next 6-8 weeks. He added that while it was an expensive purchase, the city would get that money back when the land was sold. He elaborated on the 12.6 million square feet of Class A industrial space, 637,000 square feet of office space, and the estimated 15,000 parking spaces needed to accommodate it. He addressed concerns about traffic and added that this would provide funds to address infrastructure issues. He provided examples of innovation and how growth attracts growth. He stated he was told there was a worldwide logistics company out of the west coast that wants to get out and contemplated the opportunity. He said after, Tuesday, 2 weeks from now, official bids would go out and the best bid would be selected but he wanted to highlight the SmartRail development team: Wendell McCain, Managing Member of Onset Capital Partners, Greg Watkins with 45 years of international master planning work, Ruben Smith, Managing Partner of Frost Brown Todd Law Practice, real estate veteran Anthony Monos, and Redevco Solutions entrepreneur Paul Gonzalez. He noted they were major developers throughout the nation and the world. He explained they were interested in Maricopa because of the great location, there's water, the right land, the

utilities and most importantly because Maricopa was doing it right by creating partnerships. He stated he hoped, if it went through the formal bid process, he could introduce these people and let them tell their story about why they chose Maricopa. He reiterated some of the important factors such as population size, and location. He noted citizen often ask about getting more retail and commercial in that area and noted that residential zoning has also been rezoned for commercial. He stated the PZ commission approved reducing the housing and land on the property on Hartman Road and Bowlin Road. He explained that retails were suddenly interested in that location because there were enough rooftops and population. He stated major commercial spurred minor commercial, and discussed the Wells at Stonegate, and everyone knows where the new Home Depot's being built. He explained that Home Depot did something that they have ever done before by buying other land beyond what they need for building and elaborated. He stated there were already plans been submitted for two of those sites, including Starbucks and Panda Express. He emphasized developers were looking for the high-density housing. Next, he reviewed the six acres on the east side of Walmart, and noted plans had been submitted. He discussed the Avalea Commercial/ Mixed Use around Copper Sky. He added they owned the land for 15 years, and there was a master plan good for 12 years, that has expired but there was interest in renewing. He stated circumstances had chanced and it was along the Sonoran Desert Parkway. Next, he reviewed the Seven Ranches area and noted the city has worked for years and years to resolve the water issue, and soon as they were resolved the area blossomed and has attracted a lot of development. He turned the presentation over to Rachel Leffall.

Rachel Leffall presented on the Retail Incubator project. She stated the city was responsive to the needs of the business community and there had been many requests for a space for small and micro businesses. She stated the Retail Incubator would serve as an opportunity to answer the call. She stated the former Police facility would be partially repurposed to serve as a strategy for economic development and community enhancement. She stated the administration building would serve as a retail incubator for micro businesses with the objectives to provide affordable and flexible retail space, foster collaboration and networking, offer resources and support services including mentorship, workshops, business development resources, and more. She stated the incubator would stimulate economic growth by attracting foot traffic to the central business district, boosting local spending, contributing to the overall economic vitality in the city of Maricopa. She stated this would allow partnerships with local government agencies, economic development organizations, educational institutions, and community stakeholders. She added this would be another way to promote business in Maricopa, garner support, access resources, and promote retail. She stated to incubate the Retail Incubator as a catalyst for economic revitalization, community stakeholders needed to also be committed to this project because it would take more than just what the city offers. She added, it was an opportunity for those individuals, entrepreneurs who've been working from home, maybe out of their garages, but they need a place to showcase their creations, and this would be a product-oriented space for the incubator with the opportunities for pop-ups. She noted that for those that don't want to go through the program, but want to see if it would work, this would be a great opportunity. She stated she already received calls from interested individuals and looked forward to providing services. She thanked everyone for their support.

Mr. Horst elaborated on repurposing the old PD building for the retail incubator. He provided slide pictures of the possibilities and clarified it was not the government's role to incubate businesses but to provide the opportunity and people step up and do that themselves. He turned the presentation to Mr. Price.

*Mr. Price discussed the 2,100 acre opportunity at the University of Arizona (U of A) property. He explained it has been present over the years, and they have only started farming and kept farming just a small portion of it, and it was not being utilized to its highest and best possibility. He stated the city proposed a partnership to find a way to make it more fruitful for everybody involved. He stated that through that partnership with the County, U of A, Malcom Green who oversees the facility at this time, senior leadership, and the Council, it was decided to go for a federal EDA grant. He stated they were awarded a \$4,000 grant to put together a master plan and a vision for what this could become. He stated it was critical and brought in renowned economist, Jim Rounds. He elaborated that U of A had a little financing glitch which was a positive problem that has stalled the project. He stated they continued to prod, poke, and offer solutions. He stated this was a product of the vision, to make the cornerstone at Honeycutt Porter and White Parker, and make that the first entry point because that was where the utilities were located. He stated they proposed starting developing inward. He stated at the end of the day, it was a mixed-use component and cool things that were coming from it. He stated there was a proposed 300-acre technology park, 600 acre area of innovation, and an satellite U of A education campus. He stated U of A finally realized that 60% of their students came from the Phoenix metro area, and it made sense to have a satellite campus here. He elaborated on the career, research, and development opportunities. He noted that this would remove SR 347 commuters and would allow our kids to go through grade one, through graduation, getting jobs and training. He stated the Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA) was fantastic at coming in and working together with an industry or a city and basically creating a program that tailors the education to any given industry and elaborated. He cautioned that it was not the end all, be all but based on conservative numbers, if this project was developed in its phases and comes to its fullest completion, it would produce \$11 billion for this region just in that location, but collectively or cumulatively. He stated over the years, plus all of the other economic output that it does, it would be \$96 billion worth of economic generation for the constituents of this city. He stated it would make a huge impact to us and tax revenues and elaborated on the numbers. He stated this was the ancillary employment that this type of thing draws and emphasized that the value of this partnership and seeing something like this come to fruition was fantastic.*

*Mr. Horst added that the partnership started when he asked Development Services Director, Rodolfo Lopez and his team to put together a plan. He commended staff and their talent. He closed with a quote from Terry Maxwell.*

*Mayor Smith invited questions from the Council. There was a brief discussion on adding senior services and how to get the message to citizens.*

**The Presentation was heard.**

**8.3**      [CON 24-22](#)

The Mayor and City Council shall discuss and take action to approve the Purchase and Sale Agreement and Escrow Instructions with Nico David Moric, related to the purchase of 172.60 acres of real property generally located west of N. White and Parker Road between W. Peters and Nall Road and W. Steen Road, Maricopa, Pinal County, Arizona, Assessors Parcel No. 502-43-002C, for \$12,405,452.40 and authorizing the City Manager to execute this agreement, any future amendments to extend the Closing as he deems necessary and any closing documents related thereto. Discussion and Action.

*Rick Horst reiterated this was a purchase of 172 acres from the Morgan family. He stated in order to accommodate jobs and, the clustering that was talked about, he encouraged the council to approve. City Manager Ben Bitter noted this was included*

within the budget this year.

**A motion was made by Vice Mayor Liermann, seconded by Councilmember Marsh, that this Contract be Approved. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.**

**8.4**      **PRES 24-13**

The Mayor and City Council shall hear a presentation on the 2024 State Legislative Regular Session. Discussion only.

*Katy Proctor, Intergovernmental Affairs Director provided a 2024 legislative session update. She stated back in January, there was conversation about the platform that the Council wanted to adopt, and it was basically heavy on supporting local control and supporting infrastructure projects so she would focus on that tonight. She provided a few facts from the session that included 16,160 bills, the second highest number of bills introduced at the state legislature so far and elaborated on the increase. She noted not many bills were going into law, partly because there have been a lot of vetoes in the last two years, among other factors. She stated only 259 bills were signed into law this year in the 160-day session. She stated quite many folks resigned this year, and that was important for continuity purposes and explained how it affected the session. She stated most bills would become effective on September 14th and staff was already working on implementing the bills that affect the City. She reported the state budget was predominantly the biggest issue and elaborated that the existing fiscal year budget for 2024 needed to be reduced quickly and effectively to meet the obligations and the restrictions on revenue. Then also needed to enact a new fiscal 25 budget and elaborated on the sweeps, fund transfers, and operational cuts. She stated when it came to infrastructure, it was probably the biggest issue talked about on budget, and what we're looking at were some delays in projects. She cautioned she wanted to be careful and use that term delay because there was another way they could have done this and elaborated. She stated, instead they moved those appropriations into fiscal year 2028, so they were still physically in law and elaborated. She stated the piece that was not there was the \$70 million for pavement preservation and it was significant. She explained the state transportation board allocated 78% of their revenues towards pavement preservation and that would come back throughout the program, and we were fortunate to receive some funds and supplementals for design work that was still going on SR 347. She stated right now we're probably looking at being able to go out for bid in late 2026 according to ADOT, but with the new funding that was operationalized in this budget, dirt could be turned as early as July 1 of 2027, so there was not a big gap even though it was fiscal 28. She reminded everyone that starts in January, July 1 of 27. She continued by stating the legislature also sent 11 items to the ballot for the November election this year, four of those were last session and then the remainder were this session. She stated those measures would be effective upon canvas if they passed. She stated staff was already working on some implementation measures as we got closer to that point, just in case. She detailed water legislation and noted it was very contentious and a special session on waters issues might be called. She detailed the housing bills signed into law and stated that these would not affect the city operationally until the next decennial census. She stated they dealt with these bills, as if they affected the city now because the threshold could change at any point in time throughout session and could also change next year by another bill. She stated there was a lot of push this year to move commercial back to residential and to make that process faster and elaborated on the bill. She stated SB 1162 had two components and elaborated. Next, she discussed HB 2720 on accessory dwellings requirements also known as (ADU) Additional Unit. She reviewed HB 2721 and the concept of middle housing, which was duplex, triplex, fourplex, and the requirements. She detailed other housing bills including HB 2570, SB 1506, HB 2815, HB 2584 and SB 1665. She discussed other bills of interest that did not pass including SB 1361, HB 2120, SB 1731, SB 1403, SB 1376, SB 1025 and SB*

*1335 that was on public meetings that would have allowed, for City Council to respond directly to somebody in a call to the public. She detailed state agency continuations and open the floor for questions and thanked the Council and staff for their support, especially Rodolfo Lopez.*

*Councilmember Goettl commended staff for their phenomenal work. Councilmember Wade commended staff as well. Councilmember Knorr thanked Katy Proctor and stated Maricopa was lucky to have her. Vice Mayor Liermann echoed Councilmember Knorr and commended Proctor. Mayor Smith commended Katy and staff for following these bills.*

**The Presentation was heard.**

**9. Executive Session**

*There was no executive session conducted.*

**10. Adjournment**

**This meeting was Adjourn at 8:24 p.m.**

**Certification of Minutes**

**I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the regular meeting of the City Council of Maricopa, Arizona, held on the 16th day of July, 2024. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.**

**Dated this 20th day of August, 2024.**

---

**Vanessa Bueras  
City Clerk**