



City of Maricopa

Meeting Minutes - Final City Council Special Meeting

City Hall
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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

Thursday, February 13, 2025

8:00 AM

Maricopa Public Library and Cultural Center
18160 N. Maya Angelou Dr

1. **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m.

2. **Roll Call**

Present, 7 - Councilmember Knorr, Councilmember Manfredi, Mayor Smith, Councilmember Goettl, Vice Mayor Wade, Councilmember Liermann, and Councilmember Marsh

3. **Agenda Items**

3.1 **SP 25-02**

The purpose of this meeting is for the City Council and City Staff to review and discuss the Future Planning of the City as well as City processes and practices.

Andrew McGuire with Gust Rosenfeld presented on growth. He covered land use regulations. He stated that cities had two primary discretionary tools; General Plan and Zoning. He also covered a moratoria. He stated that it's very challenging in Arizona. You must demonstrate need to prevent shortage of essential public facilities (water, sewer, streets, police, fire) and identify current over-capacity facilities (including capacity reserved under DAs). You must have a "compelling need" (clear and imminent danger to health and safety), 120-day limit; extensions allowed but limited.

Next, Ed Zuercher & Arminta Syed with MAG presented. Arminta discussed construction cost trends. She stated that regional construction activity is likely to remain high despite future market uncertainty nationwide. She added that high costs of construction, transportation infrastructure investments are necessary to support recent and future growth.

Next, Assistant City Manager Jennifer Brown presented the city's strategic priorities. Thrusts were changed to "focus" and the objectives were changed to "actions". She went on to discuss the new actions and their focus. Under Transportation, Councilmember Goettl asked to include small businesses under "Job Creation and Business Development." Councilmember Liermann asked to also include Cavit. She then presented the actions for Quality of Life. Councilmember Marsh stated that he would like to see language regarding the under served senior and youth communities. Next, she discussed Becoming a Destination City. Councilmember Knorr stated that she would also like to see something added regarding Public Safety.

Next, Rudy Lopez presented a Quality of Life proposal. He proposed making some changes to the City Code to require a unique feature that is pedestrian-oriented, such as, but not limited to, fountains, sculptures, murals, or other generally accepted forms of art. Council liked the flexibility allowed by the proposed code change.

Councilmember Manfredi was ok with expanding what the city already does but not force it on to developers. Mr. Lopez stated that this will be a zoning code amendment.

Next, Vanessa Bueras and Quinn Konold presented another Quality of Life Proposal. They proposed bringing back an event to celebrate the city's incorporation date of October 15. It was proposed that the event include a carnival, food contest, history tours, and can include a variety of other activities. Council was in favor of moving forward with this annual event. Councilmember Knorr stated that she would like to make sure that we include the various committees to help get the word out. Councilmember Goettl wanted to make sure we kept the price to our residents as low as possible.

Next, City Manager Ben Bitter presented. He provided updates on various projects. First was the Field House. He stated that design should be complete in Spring 2025 with construction to begin this summer and completion about Fall 2026.

Next, he discussed Iconic Park. He stated that this project is ever changing. He stated that this could be a \$55M project. It can be done in phases but this park could be one of their largest investments to Quality of Life. He provided some ideas of what the park could look like to include areas of the park that could resemble different Arizona landmarks. He also proposed some ideas for the old Police station. Those included a children's museum, shooting range, and various cultural opportunities.

Council broke for lunch at noon and resumed at 1pm.

Next, City Manager Bitter discussed sales tax. He stated that the city hasn't had an increase since 2004. He provided stats on cities who have recently increased their sales tax. Those cities included, Phoenix, Tucson, Scottsdale, Prescott, Gilbert. He stated that Maricopa is the 17th largest city in the state but ranks 24th in terms of sales tax revenue. Maricopa ranks 70th in terms of sales tax collected per resident. Statewide, the average sales tax for cities is 2.70%. Comparable cities are Apache Junction at 2.4, Avondale at 2.5, Buckeye 3.0, Goodyear 2.5, Marana 2.5, Prescott Valley 2.83, Queen Creek 2.225, Surprise 2.2, Coolidge, 3, Eloy 3 Kearny, Mammoth and Superior all at 4%. If we increased it, we could fund transportation projects. If increased by ½ percent, it could bring in \$8-9M per year. Ben proposed a 2.5%. Councilmember Goettl stated that he wanted to make sure they stipulate that the additional tax, if approved, would be used solely on transportation.

Next, Assistant City Manager Brown made a presentation on our Strategic Framework Guidelines. Councilmember Knorr stated that she didn't agree with some of these guidelines because she feels that everything should be priced for our residents to use and not for the private sector to rent out. We shouldn't be pricing something at a profit business rate. It should be lower. She wanted to make sure that we always find a way to say yes so that our fields are always being utilized, that she would rather us subsidize than have empty fields. The mayor stated that she would like to also speak to MUSD to utilize their fields i.e. performing arts, t-ball fields, etc. City Manager stated that he has spoken with Dr. Lopeman to best use these facilities to improve the quality of life.

Next, Assistant City Manager Brown presented a Partnership Policy. The purpose of the partnerships is to increase quality of life and promote sustainable growth through targeted partnerships in the areas of Senior services, community art projects, and teen-focused services and programs. She stated that through these targeted partnerships, we aim to create collaborations that contribute to the city's sustainability, economic vitality, and community well-being. She stated that all partnerships should have a clear end date, or a business model that leads to their self-sufficiency. Councilmember Goettl suggested adding a 4th for some sort of sport aspect. Councilmember Knorr stated that she supported Councilmember Goettl's suggestion. Councilmember Manfredi suggested to just have one priority area for all residents addressing their needs in the community. Mayor wanted to make sure we remained flexible so that certain groups weren't excluded.

Assistant City Manager Brown continued stating that she proposed that we reengage a staff member with each of the committees to guide some of the discussions. With the assistance of staff, the committee members would obtain feedback from the public on plans, policies, and programming and conduct research on potential solutions. Engage with residents to foster dialogue and participation in city-related matters. Provide recommendations to the City Council and staff based on community input and committee expertise. Promote transparency by keeping the community informed about city plans and developments. Advocate for city initiatives, and strategic priorities. Council liked the idea of bringing a staff member liaison back. Mayor Smith stated that she sees committee members being more involved. She stated that this is critical when filling seats. She stated that she feels like committees need a small budget. She also wanted to make sure the Senior Expo was completely funded whether by sponsorships or by the city. She also recommended a pamphlet for each committee that states what their committee does. Councilmember Marsh proposed to take the different senior members to tour various senior centers across the state.

Next, Assistant City Manager Brown presented on the performing arts/business incubator. She stated that we budgeted 1.2M for this project but based on initial research, it would cost \$3.3M. She stated that after speaking with community stakeholders the recommendation was to look for ways to partner with MUSD and charter schools to create opportunities for arts groups. Also, to consider partnerships with art groups that may assist with limited costs and marketing. Staff's recommendation was not to move forward with building the performing arts center in the old PD building. Council was in agreeance. Councilmember Marsh suggested that the building be repurposed to be used by City staff as they have outgrown City Hall.

Next, Assistant City Manager Brown presented on the business incubator. She stated that staff met with the Chamber of Commerce and they felt that the proposed space would be too small and not meet the needs of the business community. She added that the chamber is leasing space to small businesses.

Next, council topics were discussed. City Manager Bitter stated that the idea is to develop consensus on which of these projects to advance. Some of the council topics of interest were Memberships (Chamber/BMCC) from Mayor Smith, Apartment vacancy from Vice-Mayor Wade, senior center from Councilmember Marsh, veterans' banners from Councilmember Liermann, proclamations/recognitions from Councilmember Goettl and Economic Development from Councilmember Knorr.

Mayor Smith stated that wanted to see partnership agreements to be brought back. She proposed that the Maricopa Chamber of Commerce should be a \$5,000 sponsor. The proposed sponsorship for the Black Maricopa Chamber of Commerce would be

\$3,000. Council didn't have any concerns with moving forward with this.

Vice-Mayor Wade Stated that he would like some research done regarding the apartment vacancies that we currently have. He wants to make sure that we are not over building. City Manager stated that this information is on our website. We currently have 76,372 total units either built, unimproved and improved units. Built is 30,350, improved is 2,653 and unimproved is 43,611. Our multifamily make up 9% of total dwelling units.

Councilmember Liermann presented that she would like to implement veteran banners so that banners with pictures of our veterans that would go on the light posts. City Manager stated that these would go up periodically maybe during veterans and Memorial Day. There would be a cost associated with this to cover the printing of the banner and city staff would install.

Next, Councilmember Marsh presented the need for a senior center. He stated that he would like to get the word out about the senior center so that it can be better utilized. He asked for our communications team to get the word out.

Councilmember Goettl stated that there a number of groups in Maricopa that would like to provide recognitions at council meetings. He proposed that all specialty groups have a way to connect with staff to see how the city can partner helping them bridge the gap to make their project feasible. The mayor stated that she would like staff to do some research on this to see how big of a project this would be and what burden it would have on staff. Councilmember Knorr agreed with the mayor.

Councilmember Knorr stated that she wanted to make sure that the momentum created in the past several years in Economic Development (ED) continues. Continue to show up at GPEC, ICAC, etc. We want to bring the best retail and the best way to do that is to be there. She stated that she feels like she's missing a strategy in ED. The mayor stated that she feels like we need ED's vision and strategy.

Council stated that they would love to hear presentation from our Public Safety Departments, Police and Fire. Councilmember Goettl stated that he would also like to see a presentation from Judge McCarville.

The mayor and council thanked the City Manager and staff for all their hard work today.

4. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:34 p.m.