



City of Maricopa

Meeting Minutes - Draft City Council Work Session

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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

Tuesday, March 25, 2025

5:00 PM

Council Chambers

1. **Call to Order**

Mayor Smith call the meeting to order at 5:23 p.m.

2. **Roll Call**

Present, 6 - Councilmember Knorr, Councilmember Manfredi, Vice Mayor Wade, Councilmember Goettl, Mayor Smith, and Councilmember Marsh

Absent, 1 - Councilmember Liermann

3. **Agenda Items**

3.1 **[WS 25-01](#)**

The Mayor and City Council shall discuss the Strategic Framework, Partnership Policy and Committee Restructure.

Quinn Konold, Community Enrichment Director, began the discussion on the strategic framework. He explained that for the past year and a half, the department has been updating their approach as Maricopa is rapidly growing, becoming the fifth fastest-growing city in the country. The main goal is to increase and improve recreational options in Maricopa responsibly, which involves encouraging private groups to come in, while also providing excellent recreation opportunities for city residents.

David McLeish, Recreation Superintendent, provided more details about the strategic framework. He highlighted the need for the city to be strong, financially sustainable, and constantly improving. Mr. McLeish gave examples of community events like the Veterans Day Parade and the Farmer's Market, which show that community-led activities can succeed without taking up city resources. He also talked about a community garden project illustrating how residents can take initiative and create something special without the city's help.

Mr. McLeish explained the key points of the strategic framework and mentioned changes made based on earlier feedback that suggested pricing activities at what other cities charge rather than just avoiding competition with private or nonprofit sectors. He gave examples of how the framework could be used, such as transferring youth soccer programs to private groups as more organizations become available to handle them. He also mentioned that they are considering partnerships for running senior centers.

Councilmember Knorr shared her concerns about the big changes that could come from this framework and asked for more detailed explanations on how it could affect programs that are popular, like youth soccer. Mr. McLeish and Mr. Konold explained that changes would be introduced slowly over 2-3 years, and every program would be assessed carefully.

Mayor Smith suggested changing the wording in item 4 of the framework from "the city should only be involved" to "the city will prioritize activities that benefit." The council agreed, finding this wording less troubling.

Councilmember Goettl expressed concerns about keeping costs fair for participants. He suggested considering scholarship options if activities moved to private groups. Mr. Konold agreed that this is an important aspect to think about when evaluating partnerships.

The council talked about the necessity of receiving regular updates and being included in main changes to recreational services. City Manager Bitter confirmed that every change would follow the rules for obtaining goods and services. He also noted that committees could help review recommendations first. Mayor Smith asked for at least yearly reports on how the framework is working.

Councilmember Knorr stated she was not pleased with the term "market rate" in Item 5 of the Strategic Framework. She would feel more comfortable with "rate comparable to other cities," as suggested by City Manager Bitter.

Next, Mr. Konold discussed the partnership policy, which seeks to improve residents' quality of life and support stable growth in Maricopa. The policy focuses on building partnerships in three main areas: providing assistance to seniors, supporting community art initiatives, and creating programs for teens. He emphasized that these areas are flexible and can be changed based on input from the council. A key point in the policy is that every partnership should either have a clear end date or a plan to become self-supporting over time. Councilmember Knorr raised an important question about how this policy applies to current partnerships, like the one with Little League. Mr. Konold explained that the plan is to use a single model that works for all partnerships, rather than creating a new agreement for each one. The goal is to make sure that any partner of the city can eventually operate on their own, without always needing city resources. Mayor Smith stressed that the partnership policy should serve a wide range of the community.

Councilmember Goettl suggested looking into scholarship options to help lessen any possible rise in costs for participants if programs move to private groups. This suggestion was positively received, recognizing it as an important factor to consider when looking at new partnerships. The city will set up these partnerships while following the existing rules for buying goods and services, as explained by City Manager Bitter. This means every partnership and collaboration will adhere to the required steps for choosing goods or partners, making sure everything is done fairly and openly.

Mr. Konold also emphasized the policy's flexibility in altering focus areas, in line with the council's instructions, and stressed that partnerships should eventually become financially independent. The discussion underscored the city's vision to be thriving and lasting, highlighting the balance between supporting external community champions and ensuring Maricopa's vibrance.

Assistant City Manager Jennifer Brown elaborated on the possibility of partnerships at

the Maricopa Library and Cultural Center, which could greatly expand community offerings. This could include educational events and collaborations, where local groups can use library resources, showing a pattern of enhancing the community's cultural life through strategic partnerships.

Councilmember Knorr brought attention to evaluating these partnerships cautiously to understand implications fully, especially highlighting how successful models like the Little League could inform a more uniform approach to future partnerships. The aim is to maintain a strategic outlook on what partnerships mean for the city's resource allocation and community engagement, ensuring that Maricopa remains dynamic and supportive of both public and private efforts in meeting residents' needs.

The discussion highlighted the importance of not only increasing recreational opportunities but also doing it in a financially smart way. The aim is to build partnerships that add to Maricopa's long-term future, economic health, and the community's overall happiness. Mr. Konold reassured the council that staff is ready to explore various partnership models, taking into account the potential for expanded services without increasing taxpayer burdens, ensuring transparency and community input throughout the process.

Angela Howell, Manager of the Maricopa Library and Cultural Center, talked about how they are broadening programs through partnerships. She pointed out that libraries want to promote all kinds of learning beyond just books, including financial, cultural, and digital literacy. Ms. Howell noted that these partnerships with organizations, businesses, and people help offer valuable activities, events, and services that benefit both the city and its residents. She detailed the library's careful planning and review process, which checks if programs meet city goals and maintain quality. This process involves structured paperwork where potential programs are examined based on their objectives, target audience, timelines, budget, staffing needs, and lesson plans. This ensures programs are efficient and meet community standards. Typically, volunteers lead these programs, but city staff supervise them to ensure they align with the library and city mission. Programs often run on an 8-week cycle to assess ongoing success and community impact.

Mayor Smith asked for more details about the library's guidance of these programs. Ms. Howell explained that the library offers detailed reviews and refinement of program ideas led by volunteers, making sure they are well-organized and meet community needs based on feedback. She emphasized the library's willingness to start partnerships for programs frequently requested by the community, which shows an active approach in addressing educational and cultural gaps.

Ms. Howell also shared examples like collaborating with community figures, like Jayden Hill, for programs reaching different audiences. For example, Jayden's program used Legos provided by the library for educational purposes, highlighting the library's dedication to valuable educational programs within current budgets. Mayor Smith inquired about volunteer participation in the various library programs, to which Ms. Howell clarified that volunteers are crucial and that the library guides and adjusts program ideas, ensuring they match the library's goals.

Councilmember Knorr shared that programs need to fit the community's real interests and needs. She praised the library's strategic process, which aims to meet community expectations and city goals, emphasizing the need for adaptable programs. Councilmember Goettl saw the potential in these collaborations to further enhance kids' learning experiences, suggesting programs should include interactive parts to

actively engage participants. He supported the library's commitment to inclusive programming.

Vice Mayor Wade praised Ms. Howell for a well-rounded strategy and showed excitement for the library's active pursuit of partnerships. He recognized these collaborations' role in building community and using resources wisely.

Ms. Howell wrapped up by discussing the financial and resource needs of these partnerships. When extra materials are needed, like in Jayden Hill's educational activities, the library might supply resources while volunteers lead, ensuring that the library stays focused on being a learning hub for everyone, regardless of their financial situation. This approach ensures that programs are available, aligning with public desire for a variety of educational and low-cost activities.

Councilmember Marsh reinforced the idea that the community is key to successful library programming and urged ongoing engagement with residents to ensure library programs grow with community needs.

Next, Travis Orian, Cultural Affairs Superintendent, discussed the committee restructure. He presented the proposed changes to the Cultural Affairs and Arts Committee, Senior Advisory Committee, and Parks and Recreation Committee. He explained how these committees, with a focus on transparency, aim to connect city leadership with residents by researching and prioritizing city decisions, thus promoting clear communication and advocacy for city initiatives. Mr. Orian emphasized committees' goal is to be the bridge between city leadership and the general public.

Mr. Orian shared how the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, for instance, could gather youth input using a variety of local resources, such as schools and community organizations. This process could include engaging with groups like Be Awesome and exploring potential collaborations with schools and nonprofits, thus enabling the city to develop well-informed policies and programs that resonate with its younger residents.

Mr. Orian announced the designation of two Staff Committee Liaisons. For starters, Superintendent David McLeish for the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, and Mr. Orian himself for the Senior Advisory and Cultural Affairs and Arts Committees. Mr. Orian stated that with the assistance of a staff liaison, the committees would be challenged to attain feedback from the public on plans, policies, and programming. His remarks highlighted the city's intent to actively involve committees in fostering a thriving community.

Councilmember Goettl spoke on the importance of including council liaisons in agenda preparation and goal setting. He highlighted the need for the council to have the final say on the agenda, ensuring committees do not become staff-run and remain under council purview. This perspective ensures that elected officials remain integral to committee processes and retain oversight. Councilmember Goettl also recommended creating a formal mechanism for committees to report back to the council, such as through agendaized presentations. He suggested a formal process be considered, enabling committees to present and dialogue, with councilmembers appreciating their hard work. The council discussed establishing formal communication avenues for committees to report back, with Mayor Smith suggesting yearly presentations to review committee work, acknowledging their efforts. She stated this would be an opportunity to share their success with council and our public.

During public feedback, Peg Chapados spoke on the need for the council to provide clear goals and show where committees could add value. She emphasized training, budget allocation, and the importance of committees in promoting community leadership. Ms. Chapados suggested regular training for committee members on city procedures and policies to enhance their effectiveness and alignment with city goals.

Priscilla Behnke with Be Awesome spoke on widening the focus from just teens to include all youth, pointing out the importance of engaging tweens to help foster lasting connections within this demographic. Ms. Behnke suggested the use of "youth," over "teens," to help build that connection with all youth in Maricopa.

Mayor Smith spoke on recognizing these concerns and emphasizing that the meeting and proposed adjustments indicate an understanding of the need for improvement. This underlined the council's commitment to evolving committee structures to better serve Maricopa's citizens.

Further discussions between council members and staff reflected on ongoing plans, including determining necessary budgets for committees. City Manager Bitter reiterated the council and staff's dedication to these changes, reinforcing the importance of strategic planning and community engagement for sustainable growth, and suggested future work sessions focused on addressing facility space rental and field use policies.

4. Executive Session

There was no executive session held.

5. Adjournment

This meeting was adjourned at 7:09 p.m.