



# City of Maricopa

## Meeting Minutes - Draft 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**

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Tuesday, August 20, 2024

6:00 PM

Council Chambers

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### 1. Call to Order

*The meeting was called to order at 6:16 p.m. Pastor Kevin Teeling from the Door Church of Maricopa gave the invocation and Councilmember Knorr led the Pledge of Allegiance.*

### 2. Roll Call

**Present:** 6 - Mayor Nancy Smith, Councilmember Eric Goettl, Councilmember AnnaMarie Knorr, Councilmember Vincent Manfredi, Councilmember Bob Marsh and Councilmember Henry Wade  
**Absent:** 1 - Vice Mayor Amber Liermann

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

*Councilmember Wade acknowledged Michael Vallone and presented him with a certificate of appreciation for this donation to the Maricopa Little League.*

### 4. Report from the Mayor

*Councilmember Marsh reported he started attending the Pinal Partnerships Water Resources Committee meetings in July and elaborated. He reported on the Senior Lunch Learn from July 19th in which City Manager Ben Bitter presented. Next, he reported on the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Maricopa Police Department (MPD) station, and election day. He encouraged Crystal O'Jon to run again and commended her campaign. He reported that on the 1st of August, State Representative Teresa Martinez took members of the council to see a demonstration of Arizona State University's (ASU) Decision Theater. He went on to report on the following: a meeting with a micro-school representative, the Special Council Meeting on the 13th for the election results, the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) meeting at the library, and a meeting with the Mayor and a citizen's team to discuss the possibility of bringing senior trips back. He announced the Mayor and Council would be attending the Arizona League of Cities and Towns Conference and would report back.*

*Councilmember Manfredi elaborated on the ADOT meeting. He commended the public attendance and emphasized the importance of public involvement. He gave information on 347Facts.com and encouraged participation. He stated the meeting was available*

online on ADOT's website for those interested.

Mayor Smith reported attending the ribbon cutting ceremony for Majestic Moments Events, and the Maricopa Unified School District welcome back event for teachers and staff at the Harrah's conference center. She reported on the Maricopa Police Department grand opening and added the move was done and dispatch would be moving soon. She discussed the ASU Decision Theater and why it was important. Next, she reported attending MPD officer graduation ceremony and added she met two more recruits going into the process. She thanked MPD Chief Goodman for staying on top of that. Lastly, she talked about the ADOT town hall and commended the presentations. She stated they described the options and encouraged the provide feedback on the options and directed those interested to InMaricopa for an article containing the links. She stated her recommended options of two Florida T intersections, and for Riggs Road overpass, option B1 because it gets done three months faster, and adding a comment to include sensors at the intersections so that the lights only trigger when vehicles are waiting to turn. She emphasized that community input often has a big impact on decision making, and noted ADOT was impressed at the attendance numbers. She encouraged the community to please go fill out that form, and added it only takes about 5 minutes. She directed those interested in her recommendation to view the City Council meeting online, or contact her with any questions.

## 5. Report from the City Manager

City Manager Bitter reported that on their July meeting, the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) turned over the final segment of State Route (SR) 347 within the city limits and was recorded in Pinal County in late July. He stated that along with that, intersection improvement would now start at the intersection of SR 347 and Smit-Enke that would help with the capacity within that intersection. He noted there would be some some periods of inconvenience but would eventually have a right-turn lane with continuous flow heading northbound from Smith-Enke to northbound 347, like what was put in at Lakeview. He expressed excitement to see that kick-off in the next week, approximately July 27, and then continue with projects to enhance capacity.

## 6. Call to the Public

Barry McCain, commended MPD Chief and his level of communication. He discussed elections and stated this election was important and encouraged people to vote.

Judith Zaimont, with the Maricopa Arts Council, invited the community to the Artist Town Hall taking place on Thursday, August 22, 2024 at the library, Redwood Room, at 5:30 p.m. She stated the event was free, open to all, and elaborated on the event. She stated the speakers would include local news media chiefs, officers of Maricopa Friends of the Arts, the city's Cultural Affairs and Arts Advisory Committee, the director of Maricopa Agricultural Center, and the city's Chief of Economic Development Department. She indicated information cards were available in the foyer for those interested.

Kevin Teeling encouraged the community to attend church services. He stated he was a Palo Brea resident and expressed concerns that the community only had one outlet and it was not ideal in case of an emergency. Lastly, he asked that Maricopa consider adding electric vehicle (EV) charging stations for the community.

Sue Van Gosen reported that on Monday, during school drop off time, a child was almost hit at Saddleback Elementary crossing to Leading Edge Academy. She expressed concerns that there are no 15 mile per hour school-zone signs around Saddleback or the other 5 charter schools. She stated more school zone signs were needed on Porter Road even if the speed limit could not be lowered. She expressed concerns that the 45 miles per hour speed limit was too fast for the intersection of Porter Road and Adams Way because three different schools used that intersection. She stated a marked pedestrian crosswalk between Saddleback and Leading Edge would be useful for the kids.

Leon Potter Good greeted Mayor Smith and City Council members. He requested that the contract with the Chief Strategy Officer, the former city manager, be terminated because it was invalid. He stated, he believed that the employment agreement as amended on February 20th, 2024 was not consistent with the City Code. He stated City Code allowed the City Council to directly hire and fire 3 positions, the City Manager, the City Attorney and the City Magistrate. He stated the current contract, as amended, was with the Chief Strategy Officer. He elaborated that while the city code allowed amendments to the city manager's contract, the city code also stated any amendment must not be inconsistent with the city code itself. He stated the City Code generally authorized the City Manager to create or eliminate city employee positions if they were within the budget as approved by the Council. However, he noted that Rick Horst, on April 1st, 2024 filled the Chief Strategy Officer position himself, which in his opinion, was a conflict of interest. He explained the contract stated that he worked at the pleasure of the city manager, but the current city manager did not hire him because Mr. Bitter became City Manager on April 1st, 2024 and in effect was under recourse through March 31st, 2024. He continued that even if the current City Manager wanted to terminate the Chief Strategy Officers employment, the contract called for pay severance equal to the remainder of his contract through July 1st, 2025 (which with nearly ten months remaining), would be about \$145,000. He stated this essentially shielded the Chief Strategy Officer from being terminated and with no accountability to the body that hired him, the City Council. He reported the city attorney told him that the council could approve the amendment to the employment agreement because it was under the corporate powers of the city code. He continued that the Council had broad authority to contract with whomever it wants, per the city code, the council could contract with third parties and the three positions mentioned earlier. He stated that he believed that the broad definition went against the spirit of the council manager form of government that Maricopa has because it would also mean the ability to contract with other employees regardless of where they were on the organizational chart. He ended with an excerpt from a document published by the League of Arizona Cities and Towns in June 2018, "Some of the motivation to use this form of government comes from frustration with the practices observed in the current system which the public finds distasteful and offensive. Cronyism, influence peddling, drafting secret arrangements, partisan decision making, and hiring based on connections rather than objective qualifications."

Kiana Earley-Palafox introduced herself as the founder and director of the Maricopa Debutante Organization. She stated her organization included 18 teenagers, some that wanted to go to Harvard, to be lawyers, or to sit on council. She gave information on what her organization offered such as teaching etiquette and do formal events. She added they offered college preparation, interviews, how to do community services and more. She stated the kids would be hosting a fundraiser on August 30th at the Central Arizona College (CAC), building 101. She stated it would be a talent show and that tickets were \$5 for ages ten and up and \$2 for age nine or younger. She stated the funds raised would be used for the program to buy diner, materials but the goal was to

*raise enough funds to rent a van to take the teens on college campus tours and elaborated. She stated the event was called Maricopa Debs Got Talent and would be from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. and encouraged the community to participate. Mayor Smith encouraged the teenagers from her organization to apply for the Youth Council.*

*Doctor John, and his wife May, gave information on Kids Day Maricopa. They shared that the event would be at Maricopa Wells Middle School on Saturday, September 21st from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. They shared it was a health, safety, environmental awareness event for children. They noted the event was complete free, including free admission, free food, free drinks, free toys, giveaways and more. They elaborated on the activities and the participating organizations. They recalled that 17 years ago, former Mayor Tony Smith, made a proclamation that the third Saturday of September would be Kids Day in the City of Maricopa and elaborated on the growth of the event. They listed more of the activities and programming and encouraged attendance.*

## 7. Consent Agenda

### Approval of the Consent Agenda

**A motion was made by Councilmember Eric Goettl, seconded by Councilmember Bob Marsh, to Adopt the Consent Agenda. The motion carried unanimously.**

- 7.1 [RES 24-30](#) A Resolution of the Mayor and City Council of the City of Maricopa, Arizona, accepting public improvements and maintenance responsibility for all local internal streets within Rancho Mirage Parcel 13, into the City Street/Road Maintenance System. Discussion and Action.
- This Resolution was Approved.**
- 7.2 [RES 24-31](#) A resolution of the Mayor and City Council of the City of Maricopa, Arizona, delegating to the City Manager or his designee the authority to exercise the city vehicle designation exemption pursuant to Arizona Revised Statutes §38-538.03. Discussion and Action.
- This Resolution was Approved.**
- 7.3 [SPEVLIQ 24-05](#) The Mayor and City Council shall discuss and take action on recommending approval to the Arizona Department of Liquor Licenses and Control for an application for special event liquor licenses provided by Brenda Campbell to allow Roots Eatery to serve alcohol during special event series known as Concerts in the Park on October 19th, 2024 and November 2nd, 2024 at Copper Sky Recreation Complex 44345 W Martin Luther King Jr Blvd Maricopa, AZ 85138. Discussion and Action.
- This Special Event Liquor License was Approved.**
- 7.4 [SPEVLIQ 24-06](#) 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 Michelle Trujillo on behalf of the Province Community Association for special events on September 19, October 17, November 21, and December 19, 2024 to be held at 20942 N. Province Parkway, Maricopa, Arizona 85138. Discussion and Action.
- This Special Event Liquor License was Approved.**

- 7.5 [MIN 24-53](#) Approval of Minutes from the July 16, 2024 City Council Regular meeting and the August 13, 2024 City Council Special meeting. Discussion and Action.

**The Minutes were Approved.**

- 7.6 [RES 24-38](#) A Resolution of the Mayor and City Council of the City of Maricopa, Arizona, designating the City's Chief Fiscal Officer for purposes of submitting the City's Fiscal Year 2025 Annual Expenditure Limitation Report to the Arizona Auditor General. Discussion and Action.

**This Resolution was Approved.**

## 8. Regular Agenda and/or Public Hearings

- 8.1 [PRES 24-15](#) The Mayor and City Council shall hear an Economic Development Update from Chief Strategy Officer Ricky Horst. Presentation only.

*Chief Strategic Officer (CSO), Ricky Horst provided an economic development update. He discussed the voter approved Proposition 482, which received a majority of votes, and expressed gratitude for those who supported the measure. He explained that they now had the tools, one of the lands from the proposition, and a new law going into effect on September 14th that changed the level to \$15 million. He emphasized that there were several municipal-led bills in the last several years and approximately and elaborated. He recounted that the city had purchased lands over the years, specifically for the industrial park, and noted that until the sites were shovel ready, there was going to be no interest, and that was why this was a critical piece. There was an error with the PowerPoint Presentation, so CSO Horst improvised.*

*He stated the important thing about the industrial park was that they were going to be large companies and explained how it would also benefit smaller local businesses in the long run. He elaborated on the trickle-down economic benefits. He continued that one of the properties was called Murphy Park, and currently it was privately owned, north of the Ak-Chin industrial park and elaborated on the acreage and the plans for a business park development. He stated that after the support of Prop 482 an RFP (request for bids) went out and he was prepared tonight to announced that a bid was award to a company. He stated the bid was from a master developer interested in buying the entire 680 acres and negotiations were moving forward for a purchase and sale agreement (PSA) that would approximately be presented for council approval in September. He reported they were already working with potential tenants for that master development, including some that Christian Price was working on. He continued that at the end of the day, they would have a class A business park. He explained the class A business park would constitute 6,000,000 square feet and would be rail served, meaning the train rail would go right to their buildings. He continued that in addition they would have a trans load station for other entities within the industrial park to bring their stuff to the loading station to load or offload products. He elaborated on the potential for job creation and added the estimated investment onto the property was \$1.4 billion. He relayed that they asked for a 12-month period for them to do their due diligence. He elaborated they would use the first four months to check the environment and political atmosphere to make sure it would work, and then at the end of those 4 months they would issue a \$250,000 non-refundable escrow deposit. He stated in the following eight months, they would continue their due diligence and present or sign a PSA. He elaborated on the response and approval process. He emphasized that this was a significant development and addressed possible concerns about traffic. He noted this was a significant rail project that would open the ability to apply for federal grants, which the developer would do at their expense. He stated staff*



would come back with a proposed resolution in support and give them the authority to move forward with the grants. He discussed the importance of the grants and the percentage of approval based on analysis. He noted that in the case they received zero grants; they would still have the capital for the project. He explained that part of the benefit of the grants was that they could leverage some other components such as East-West Corridor or SR 347. He noted all this would take time. He went on to announce that the University of Arizona had appointed a new president, Suresh Garimella, and stated he hoped that would revitalize efforts with the area of innovation at the U of A property. He stated he would be meeting with them in September along with Mr. Christian Price and elaborated. He concluded his presentation.

Mayor Smith asked him to confirm that there was a bid process, a bid was awarded for 680 acres, and the winning developer, that the developer would go after tenants, and was putting forth a master plan with a class A businesses park that was rail-served, with a trans load station which was critical to a lot of businesses to have the ability to load and unload. CSO Horst responded and stated he had slides in the presentation that listed other projects they had done and elaborated. He elaborated on the potential projects and the companies. He stated City Manager Bitter met with some of their leadership today and expanded on other projects they have done, including one in Mesa. He added they would be building housing on-site for their employees, but they were also interested in building housing to support firefighters, police officers, teachers, nurses and a potential autistic village.

Mayor Smith inquired what they would presentation in September would entail. She asked if it would include the master plan concept and include tenants. CSO Horst responded they would present a sense of the types but they were competing so the information would proprietary. He elaborated and stated details would become apparent later. He stated that when the PSA came forward, it would probably not include the master plan and elaborate on the process.

Councilmember Goettl stated he would like to volunteer if a coalition was needed to give feedback on the autistic village. Secondly, he stated that there were some benefits for foreign trade zone established when it came to a lot of these businesses, and asked if that was something that needed to be looked at. CSO Horst responded there was an approval process, and it had a very clear process, and added that Mr. Christian Price was taking lead on that project. He explained it was a fairly simple process that would ultimately be approved by the Phoenix City Council, and added they would keep them updated. He elaborated on the benefits of a foreign trade zone.

Councilmember Manfredi asked what the potential time frame was from today to the possibility of having the first jobs. CSO Horst responded that they indicated that they would like to do a project concurrently with the master plan and elaborated. He stated in the best case, we were looking at 12 to 18 months.

#### **The Presentation was heard.**

#### **8.2 [RES 24-32](#)**

PUBLIC HEARING. A Resolution of the Mayor and City Council of the City of Maricopa, Arizona, vacating and abandoning, without compensation, a portion of West Bowlin Road, generally located south of the current improvements on West Bowlin Road between N. White and Parker Road and N High Lonesome Drive within the City of Maricopa. Discussion and Action.

Mayor Smith asked if the following agenda items could be handled together. City Attorney, Tina Vannucci responded that one presentation could be done for all items, but had to be separate votes.

*This item was presented by Alexander Bosworth, Planner. He stated there were six (6) abandonment request running concurrently for various portions of right-of-way on West Bowlin Road, North Rober Frost Drive, North Maya Angelou Drive and North Park Plaza. He stated the abandoned right-of-way would be subsequently acquired by the City of Maricopa without compensation, and the city may choose to sell the parcels separately to private developers in the future. He presented a visual with the portions of the public right-of-way to be abandoned highlighted in yellow and stated it included 20 feet on both the north and south side of Bowlin Rd as well as small portions on Robert Frost Dr., Maya Angelou Dr., and Park Plaza. He explained that as required by the City Code, the public notification process was conducted which included signs, mailing notices to utilities, as well as contacting the public agencies for any utilities that needed to be taken care of. He noted that no public comment was received at the time. He stated staff supported the abandonment request, as the portions of right-of-way were not foreseen to be improved on in the future and were not part of any adopted studies or capital improvement plans. He added that the portions of right-of-way on Bowlin Rd. were no longer necessary for the future widening projects and elaborated. He stated staff recommended approval of items 8.2 through 8.7 of the agenda tonight, except for with the conditions of set forth in the staff report.*

*The public hearing was opened at: 7:21 p.m. There were no public comments and subsequently closed at 7:21 p.m. There were no questions or comments from the Council.*

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

**8.3**      **[RES 24-33](#)**

PUBLIC HEARING. A Resolution of the Mayor and City Council of the City of Maricopa, Arizona, vacating and abandoning, without compensation, a portion of West Bowlin Road, a portion of North Maya Angelou Drive, and a portion of North Robert Frost Drive, generally located north of the current improvements on West Bowlin Road, east of the current improvements on North Robert Frost Drive and west of the current improvements on North Maya Angelou Drive within the City of Maricopa. Discussion and Action.

*The public hearing opened at 7:22 p.m. There were no public comments and the public hearing was closed at 7:22 p.m.*

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

**8.4**      **[RES 24-34](#)**

PUBLIC HEARING. A Resolution of the Mayor and City Council of the City of Maricopa, Arizona, vacating and abandoning, without compensation, a portion of West Bowlin Road and a portion of North Maya Angelou Drive generally located north of the current improvements on West Bowlin Road and east of the current improvements on North Maya Angelou Drive within the City of Maricopa. Discussion and Action.

*The public hearing opened at 7:22 p.m. There were no public comments and the public hearing was closed at 7:23 p.m.*

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

**8.5**      **[RES 24-35](#)**

PUBLIC HEARING. A Resolution of the Mayor and City Council of the City of

Maricopa, Arizona, vacating and abandoning, without compensation, a portion of West Bowlin Road and a portion of North Park Plaza, generally located north of the current improvements on West Bowlin Road and west of the current improvements on North Park Plaza within the City of Maricopa. Discussion and Action.

*The public hearing was opened at 7:23 p.m. There were no public comments and the public hearing closed at 7:23 p.m.*

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

8.6 [RES 24-36](#)

PUBLIC HEARING. A Resolution of the Mayor and City Council of the City of Maricopa, Arizona, vacating and abandoning, without compensation, a portion of West Bowlin Road, generally located north of the current improvements on West Bowlin Road between North Park Plaza and North High Lonesome Drive within the City of Maricopa. Discussion and Action.

*The public hearing was opened at 7:23 p.m. There were no public comments and the public hearing closed at 7:24 p.m.*

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

8.7 [RES 24-37](#)

PUBLIC HEARING. A Resolution of the Mayor and City Council of the City of Maricopa, Arizona, vacating and abandoning, without compensation, a portion of West Bowlin Road generally located north of the current improvements on West Bowlin Road between North White and Parker Road and North Robert Frost Drive within the City of Maricopa. Discussion and Action.

*The public hearing was opened at 7:24 p.m. There were no public comments and public hearing was closed at 7:24 p.m.*

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

9. **Executive Session**

This meeting moved to Executive Session at 7:24 p.m.

10. **Adjournment**

**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 20th day of August, 2024. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.**

**Dated this 3rd day of September, 2024.**



Vanessa Bueras  
City Clerk