Minutes
City Council Work Study Session
June 2, 2016

Minutes of the Tempe City Council Work Study Session held on Thursday, June 2, 2016, 4:00 p.m., in the City Council Chambers, Tempe City Hall, 31 E. Fifth Street, Tempe, Arizona.

COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT:
Vice Mayor Corey D. Woods
Councilmember Robin Arredondo-Savage
Councilmember Kolby Granville
Councilmember Lauren Kuby
Councilmember Joel Navarro (*participated telephonically; joined the meeting at 4:42 p.m.*)
Councilmember David Schapira

COUNCILMEMBER ABSENT:
Mayor Mark W. Mitchell

STAFF PRESENT:
Andrew B. Ching, City Manager
Ken Jones, Deputy City Manager – Chief Financial Officer
Judi Baumann, City Attorney
Steven Methvin, Dep. City Manager – Chief Operating Officer
Brigitta M. Kuiper, City Clerk
Shelley Hearn, Community Services Director
Barbara Roberts, Deputy Community Services Dir. – Library
Alex Smith, Deputy Community Dev. Dir. – Special Projects
Eric Iwersen, Principal Planner
Don Bessler, Public Works Director
Craig Hayton, Parks Manager
Various Department Heads or their representatives

Vice Mayor Woods called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m.

Call to the Audience

Robert Lashua, Phoenix, spoke in support of the naming request for a new literacy center at the Tempe Public Library, in honor of John Gannon, his partner and former City employee with 30 years of service. The John Gannon Literacy Center, which would further enhance library services for children, would be privately funded with no cost to the City or taxpayers.

Issue Review Session Items

Naming Request for Literacy Space in the Tempe Public Library

Barbara Roberts, Deputy Community Services Director – Library Services, presented background information on the donation request to name a new literacy center, to be located in the children's section of the Tempe Public Library, the "John Gannon Literacy Center". She discussed Mr. Gannon's contributions to the Library and the community. Robert Lashua submitted the naming request on behalf of Mr. Gannon's family, friends, and colleagues, as a memorial to honor his commitment to the Library and Tempe children. The Literacy Center would specialize in staff-driven classes and passive interactive activities for children in preschool through third grade, and their parents and caregivers.

The History Museum and Library Advisory Board reviewed and unanimously recommended support for the naming request on April 6, 2016. Commitments have been made for $30,000 in donations with the potential for an additional $10,000 in fundraising. The funding is predicated upon the City Council's approval of the request to name the center the "John Gannon Literacy Center". No City funds are being requested for this center.

In response to a question, Judi Baumann, City Attorney, stated that the current naming policy allows the City Council to rename any facility for which a naming request has been previously approved; no specific time period has been prescribed.

Councilmembers recognized Mr. Gannon's service to the Tempe Public Library and contribution as a literacy advocate in the community. As Tempe has the highest number of children aged 0 to 5 years who are living in poverty in the region, any resources dedicated to this population are greatly needed and are important. Councilmembers expressed support for the naming request and the commitments for donations received so far.

Based on the discussion, City Council agreed to move forward with the request to create a literacy center within the youth section at the Tempe Public Library with private funds and to name it the "John Gannon Literacy Center".

Vice Mayor Woods noted that Ms. Roberts is retiring after a total of 43 years in the library industry, and expressed appreciation for her service to the City.

Downtown Parking and Fifth Street Update

Alex Smith, Deputy Community Development Director – Special Projects, provided an update on the Downtown Parking Study and Strategic Plan. He reviewed the changes made to the Tempe City Code to improve loading activities, and to the Downtown Parking Standards in the City's Zoning and Development Code.

Eric Iwersen, Principal Planner, explained the Request for Qualifications process and the proposal submitted by CollectiV Landscape Architects for the design and construction of the project on Fifth Street from Farmer to College Avenues. The contract with CollectiV, at a total estimated cost of $400,000, will be placed on the June 23, 2016 Regular Council Meeting agenda for City Council's consideration. Staff has reserved sufficient funds in the Parking Fund managed by the Downtown Tempe Authority (DTA) for fiscal years 2016/17 and 2017/18, for the preparation of concepts and final design plans for this project.

Councilmembers and Mr. Smith discussed incorporating Lyft, Uber, and other ride sharing models under Taxi Loading to avoid the issue of blocking traffic. Mr. Smith noted that he will further investigate this issue, including best practices adopted by other municipalities, and present his findings to the City Council.

Mr. Smith reviewed demand-based dynamic meter pricing and staff's recommendation for a pilot program to remove the morning parking pricing on weekends and to reduce on-street rates in low demand areas. Adam Jones, Deputy Director – Operations and Parking, DTA, explained the meter time zones and staff's recommendation to enforce meters in certain zones until 10:00 p.m. instead of 6:00 p.m. at the same rate. Councilmembers recommended that the meter times end earlier to encourage families to visit the restaurants and participate in activities in the downtown area. Mr. Smith stated that the 1,500 parking stalls in the Tempe Gateway Garage are available for free after 6:00 p.m. weekdays and on weekends; additional signage and notification will be provided. The parking rates and times for various downtown zones will be modified as recommended by staff.

Discussions continued regarding increased development in the downtown area and its impact on available parking. Staff recommends a pilot program that will convert two existing on-street car parking spaces on South Mill Avenue into four motorcycle parking spaces each, at the rate of $1.00 per hour. In addition, temporary on-street signage advertising free parking will be installed on Ash and Mill Avenues. Councilmembers discussed the use of social media, temporary and wayfinding signage to provide parking information.

Councilmembers, Mr. Smith, Mr. Jones, and Andrew Ching, City Manager, discussed options to extend the hours of operation at the City Hall Garage to either 8:00 p.m. or 11:00 p.m., and to provide free parking in the evenings to encourage more people to visit downtown. Discussions continued regarding automated parking infrastructure and the design limitations in the City Hall Garage, to include further examination and study. The advantages and disadvantages to variable rate, on-street, metered parking were reviewed. Staff noted that 80% to 85% of downtown businesses provide employee parking, although at times those employees park in the free spaces because they are closer to their workplace.

Councilmembers discussed increasing parking costs in high demand areas and reducing costs in low demand areas; requiring paid parking until 3:00 a.m., at which time the parking garage gate will be raised; offering a prepayment option after 8:00 p.m. to help eliminate long lines at garage exits; and, allowing up to three hours of free parking between 4:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. on Thursday through Saturday, with a receipt from a downtown business. Mr. Jones noted that DTA receives complaints when parking costs vary in different garages. DTA is creating a mobile app for downtown Tempe to show real-time parking availability. The ability to pay for parking by smartphone is already in place.

Mr. Smith explained that staff recommends maintaining the current hourly rates and raising the monthly rates for the City Hall Garage from $60 to $75 for unreserved parking, and from $85 to $100 for reserved parking. In addition, staff is working on installing parking space sensors and signage showing the number of spaces available in the garage, and collecting data to present to the City Council at a future update.

Councilmembers and Mr. Smith discussed the need to explore additional options, including allowing people to pre-pay for parking on the weekends, reducing parking rates for summer periods to increase business, and obtaining feedback from downtown restaurant and bar owners on the idea of paid parking ending at 3:00 a.m.

Councilmembers expressed support to maintain the current daily rate structure for the City Hall Garage; increase the monthly rate for the City Hall Garage; implement a pilot program of two hours free parking at the City Hall Garage with a receipt from a downtown merchant/business; and allow free parking after 8:00 p.m. There was not support to pilot a prepayment option after 8:00 p.m. Staff will collect a school semester's worth of parking data with the pilot program beginning in August, 2016, and present their findings to the City Council in January/February of 2017.

On behalf of the City Council, Vice Mayor Woods congratulated Mr. Smith on his recent promotion.

Councilmember Schapira left the meeting at 5:38 p.m.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program

Craig Hayton, Parks Manager, delivered a slide presentation outlining sustainability practices related to Integrated Pest Management (IPM) within City parks and rights-of-way. Parks staff strives to provide safe, clean, attractive, and sustainable parks and recreational facilities by controlling weeds and pests (rodents, fungus, and insects). IPM utilizes a holistic approach to managing pests by considering impacts to public health and safety, the environment, and cost. The four main methods for managing pests under IPM were reviewed: cultural, mechanical, biological, and chemical. Green waste collected from City parks is turned into nutrient-rich compost at the Public Works Priest Yard Compost Facility, and is then incorporated back into the parks system. It would take approximately 10 years to incorporate compost into all of Tempe's parks at the current rate of 500 yards per year.

Mr. Hayton provided background information on the organic herbicide pilot program, including costs for inorganic versus organic herbicides. The selected product, Weed Zap, an organic clove and cinnamon oil product, was used in six public right-of-way areas and two park sites; the pilot results were seen in 24 hours with immature weeds, although mature weeds still required manual removal after being treated. Utilizing organic herbicides and composting result in better landscape health to proactively address pest issues and reduce reliance on inorganic chemicals. Public Works staff is developing standard operating procedures and best practices, and identifying locations where inorganic herbicides should not be used, such as playgrounds and dog parks. The IPM program will include follow-up evaluation and documentation. Staff recommends emphasizing landscape health through increased use of organic products; continuing the organic herbicide pilot program; and, formalizing the IPM program.

Councilmembers discussed the use of organic herbicides to ensure public health and safety, although it is a more labor-intensive approach. Councilmember Kuby stated that according to the International Agency for Research on Cancer, glyphosate, the active ingredient in RoundUp, is a likely carcinogen. The City should discontinue using this inorganic weed control chemical on sports fields, parks, and dog parks. Councilmembers recommended gathering additional data, utilizing metrics, and educating the public on this chemical.

Councilmembers also suggested creating a volunteer program to assist in composting in neighborhood parks, and partnering with elementary schools located adjacent to park areas to incorporate IPM practices. Councilmembers thanked Mr. Hayton and his team for their work examining best practices and implementing a healthier approach to control weeds and pests.
In response to a question, Judi Baumann, City Attorney, explained that a City Council request for banning a particular herbicide on sports fields would fall within the discussion of the IPM program.

Councilmembers discussed and requested information on the number of sports fields, square footage, cost, and neighborhood input regarding a possible ban on the use of RoundUp, and current City usage of this chemical and its life span. Mr. Hayton stated that staff is currently using RoundUp to burn out the foul lines instead of using paint on approximately a dozen softball fields. In addition, RoundUp and pre-emergent herbicides are used along fence lines and within the public rights-of-way.

Councilmember Schapira returned to the meeting at 6:03 p.m.

Don Bessler, Public Works Director, stated that the task of incorporating compost into all of the parks is labor intensive, and staff resources are limited. The City has also been giving away excess compost to help encourage the community to reuse green waste.

Discussions continued regarding the transition to a total green organics program in the parks. The Parks, Recreation, Golf, and Double Butte Cemetery Advisory Board and the Sustainability Commission should be involved in such discussions; a working group should also be formed.

Based on the discussion, Councilmembers agreed to move forward with staff recommendations to emphasize landscape health; continue the organic herbicide pilot program; and, formalize the IPM program. Staff will provide the City Council with additional information relating to an analysis of labor and material costs versus benefits of using organic herbicides, and, industry information about inorganic chemicals.

Compact of Mayors on Climate Change

John Kane, Chair of the Tempe Sustainability Commission, noted the importance of formalizing Tempe's commitment to sustainability broadly and holistically. The Compact of Mayors was launched at the 2014 United Nations Climate Summit as the largest coalition of city leaders to address climate change by pledging to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and track progress. Regionally, Phoenix, Arizona; Austin, Texas; Santa Fe, New Mexico; and Reno, Nevada, have joined the Compact. The Compact of Mayors' participants engage in the following four phases: 1) register commitment on one of the Compact's reporting platforms (nominal fee for software); 2) perform an inventory using a shared metric to assess the current impacts of climate change in the city; 3) set reduction targets and establish a system of measurement; and, 4) establish a strategic action plan showing how the city will deliver on its commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change, within three years.

Don Bessler, Public Works Director, reviewed cost estimates and stated that the City could possibly procure services through Arizona State University as a lower cost option for the inventory phase. The City would have up to three years to meet the series of requirements to comply with the Compact, allowing the City to plan and budget for future costs of implementation. Mr. Bessler explained how the Compact aligns with the City Council priorities, specifically through creating a sustainable and healthy community, and the City Manager's Strategic Initiative. The Compact gives the City a common platform to identify best practices, measure the City's success, and report through a collaborative of other cities to gain insight into the cumulative effect that cities have on their global condition.

Councilmembers and Mr. Bessler discussed the creation of a Strategic Climate Action Plan, and the role of municipalities to create a stewardship model and resiliency. City Council would determine the goals and timeline to achieve the targets for greenhouse gas emissions reduction, based on consultation with experts in the field.

Vice Mayor Woods stated that he spoke with Mayor Mitchell who is in support of joining the Compact.

Based on the discussion, the City Council conveyed support for joining the Compact of Mayors, and consulting with City of Phoenix staff to learn about their participation in the Compact.

Future Agenda Items

Councilmembers agreed to add the following item for discussion at a future Issue Review Session (IRS): Multi-Family Residential R-3 zoning and property rights. Judi Baumann, City Attorney, stated that options will be provided to the City Council prior to the next Work Study Session. Councilmembers Granville and Kuby expressed interest in forming and participating in a working group.

Call to the Audience

Philip Yates, Tempe resident and President of the Riverside Neighborhood Association, discussed Item 4B1, Student Housing Assessment, and asked about the private industry estimates indicating sufficient demand to build 26,000 new units to accommodate students in Arizona State University's Tempe, Mesa, and Downtown Phoenix campus market, as referenced in the memorandum.

Councilmember Arredondo-Savage clarified that this figure was derived from a study conducted in 2013. The information on student housing market demands will be updated.

Committee of the Whole Items

Items ready for City Council Direction or Status Update

None.

New Items for City Council Consideration

Student Housing Assessment

Councilmember Arredondo-Savage stated that she, Mayor Mitchell, and Councilmember Navarro are requesting to establish a working group to review current and future student housing market demands to determine the best course of action in managing new multi-family housing developments. The timeframe and staff resources are estimated at 30 hours.

Councilmembers discussed options for student housing; the need to examine National League of Cities best practices, and traffic and parking impacts; and, the importance of knowing the current and potential demand for Arizona State University (ASU) housing plans before considering future development. The Community Development Department and ASU are identified as stakeholders who should be engaged with this process.

Based on the discussion, the City Council agreed to move the item forward for study.

Items in Progress – updates as needed

Kid Zone Program Expansion

Councilmember Schapira stated that he, Councilmember Navarro, and Mayor Mitchell attended working group meetings and participated in a webinar regarding childhood education. The feasibility study to implement a pilot preschool program began last week. Councilmember Schapira and staff will be attending the Annual Conference of the Early Childhood Social Impact Performance Advisors this month in Denver, Colorado, to learn about approaches implemented by other municipalities. If the current preschool programs provide sufficient data during the feasibility study, a pilot program may not be necessary. Councilmember Schapira noted that he expects to provide another update in August, 2016.

Birchett Park, ASU/Tempe Gateway

Councilmember Navarro stated that he has requested that staff explore ways to transform Birchett Park into a gateway to downtown Tempe, and to enhance the area due to the future addition of the Tempe Streetcar.

Councilmember Granville noted that he and Councilmember Navarro have worked with Public Works staff on the potential for a zero cost temporary use for the Arizona Department of Transportation Retention Basin (referred to as "The Pit"), while considering a long-term plan for the future development of this site.

Items Scheduled for Periodic Review

No discussion.

Mayor's Announcements/City Manager's Announcements

None.

Future Meeting Date:

June 16, 2016, at 4:00 p.m., City Council Chambers, Tempe City Hall, 31 E. Fifth Street, Tempe, Arizona.

The meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

I, Brigitta M. Kuiper, the duly-appointed City Clerk of the City of Tempe, Maricopa County, Arizona, do hereby certify the above to be the minutes of the City Council Work Study Session of June 2, 2016, by the Tempe City Council, Tempe, Arizona.

_____
Mark W. Mitchell, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Brigitta M. Kuiper, City Clerk