

Minutes Technology, Economic & Community Development Council Committee December 16, 2011

Minutes of the Technology, Economic & Community Development Council Committee meeting held on Friday, December 16, 2011, at 10:00 a.m., in the 3rd Floor Conference Room, Tempe City Hall, 31 E. 5th Street, Tempe, Arizona.

Committee Member Present:

Councilmember Onnie Shekerjian, Chair

City Staff Present:

Brigitta Kuiper, City Clerk

Larry Schmalz, Principal Planner

Crista Alvey, Community Relations Intern

Micah Miranda, Economic Development Spec

Kris Baxter, Community Outreach/Mktg Coord II

Shelley Hearn, Community Relations Administrator

Grace Kelly, Energy & Grants Project Manager

Shauna Warner, Neighborhood Program Manager

Shannon Selby, Business Development Officer

Ken Jones, Finance and Technology Director

John Osgood, Deputy Public Works Director–Field Ops

Dave Heck, Deputy Finance & Technology Director - IT

Lisa Collins, Deputy Community Dev. Dir – Planning

Keith Burke, Social Services Manager

Guests Present:

Beth Fiorenza, Tempe Community Action Agency (TCAA) Neal Wepking, TCAA

Stephen Sparks (TCAA) Maksat Zholdybay

Councilmember Shekerjian called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. She asked meeting participants to introduce themselves.

Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances

None.

Agenda Item 2 – Review of Minutes

The October 21, 2011 minutes were accepted.

Agenda Item 3 – Sustainability, Economic Development and Technology – Committee items referred to Issue Review Sessions

Micah Miranda, Economic Development Specialist, provided an update on the Sustainability, Economic Development and Technology topics scheduled for an upcoming Council Issue Review Session (IRS). Presentation and discussion highlights include:

- Construction Recycling Program
- Energy conservation website for City employees: energy retrofit project schedule, list of improvement, buildings and anticipated savings
- Use of technology throughout the City and technological advancement in City operation.
- Website conversion to new content management system.

- Citizen Request Management System
- HVAC upgrades and controls
- Recycling efforts and recycle bank
- Storefront Improvement Program
- Exploring and expanding green waste compost programs

Councilmember Shekerjian noted that her Council colleagues need to understand the importance of technology when discussing the upcoming budget.

Agenda Item 4 – Update on Escalante Community Garden

Lisa Collins, Deputy Community Development Director – Planning, stated that several meetings have been held to discuss whether the Escalante Community Garden is a community garden or whether the garden is considered a function of the park. Councilmember Shekerjian stated that it is helpful to know what has and has not worked well in this community garden. Beth Fiorenza, Tempe Community Action Agency (TCAA) Executive Director, introduced Neil Wepking of TCAA, who provided an update on the Escalante Community Garden. Presentation and discussion highlights include:

- Arizona Hunger Issues
 - State of Arizona data supports the need for more food security.
 - Nearly 30% of Arizona families with children report food insecurity.
- Food Deserts
 - Defined by high poverty rates and low food access.
 - Areas that have low food security due to lack of resources; businesses that stock lower nutritional value foods.
- Why a garden is the answer:
 - 76% of Escalante neighborhood is rental housing.
 - 93% of Thew Elementary students are on the free or reduced lunch program. (The national average is 50%)
- Community Interest
 - The garden currently has 30 official members.
 - Contact list for events include 140 community members and is slowly expanding.
 - Since June 2011, members of the community and volunteer groups have worked over 1,100 hours in the garden.
- Community Events
 - Bi-monthly potlucks
 - Getting Arizona Involved in Neighborhoods (GAIN) block party
 - Corporate group projects
 - Summer youth activities
 - Fall planting sessions
 - Weekly cooking classes
 - After school programs
- Business Support
 - A grant for 100 fruit trees from Valley Permaculture was received.
 - Sunbelt rentals donated \$750 of store credit for equipment and tool rentals.
 - Sunflower Market has provided food scraps for the compost pile.
 - Singh Farms has donated 16 square yards of compost.
 - Home Depot donated rental equipment.
 - Phoenix fencing provided the fencing for the garden at no cost.
 - Humble Seeds donated seeds.
- Produce Output
 - 1st season: 400 lbs.
 - 2nd season: 1000 lbs.
 - Problems with heavy produce, such as watermelon

- What has been growing in the Garden:
 - 26 types of fruits and vegetables
- Future Plans
 - Continue working with Thew Elementary to create a curriculum combining environmental stewardship, nutrition, and ecological concepts.
 - After school programs.
 - Maximize production in available space in the garden.
 - Working with Valley Permaculture Alliance to provide tours and workshops.
 - Create a farmers market.
- Current Needs
 - Secure tool shed
 - Truck
 - Assorted hand tools
 - Volunteers
 - Financial donations
 - TCAA is eligible for the Working Poor Tax Credit and donations can be designated for the Escalante Community Garden.
- How to get involved
 - Blog “The Escalante Community Garden”
 - Facebook
 - Flyers
- Addition discussion highlights:
 - Having connections with non-profit organizations and other community gardens helps with program expenses.
 - The garden is a park function, not a private zoning matter.
 - It would be helpful to document the process for development a community garden.
 - Community gardens are handled differently, depending upon the jurisdiction; structured versus non-structured; function of a park versus a private zoning function.
 - As the pilot program evolves, additional language could be added to the ordinance; perhaps referencing chickens.
 - Public education regarding food resources has been an important program component.
 - The neighborhood takes ownership of the garden.
 - Proximity to Thew School provides students a learning opportunity.
 - Tempe Community Action Agency has a good working relationship with the City.
 - The garden provides a venue for community events.
 - Homeless individuals in the park involve themselves with the garden; they provide oversight.
 - Staff was asked to present this information to the City Council at an upcoming Issue Review Session; include suggestions for future community gardens.
 - Staff is scheduling a garden lease renewal for an upcoming formal Council agenda.

Agenda Item 5 – Update on Construction Recycling Program

John Osgood, Deputy Public Works Director – Field Operations provided an update on the Construction Recycling Program. Presentation and discussion highlights include:

- This is a voluntary program.
- The pilot project is being used to develop criteria so the program can eventually be expanded; perhaps extend the program to the private sector.
- Public Works staff has met with a general contractor to discuss a sustainability plan; this process reduces contractor waste.
- The goal is to separate materials on site; lessens the contamination of materials.
- Perhaps initiate a pilot construction recycling program in conjunction with the East Valley Bus Operations and Maintenance facility remodel and expansion
- Staff has developed a site plan for placement of containers.

- The signage plan will explain sustainability expectations.
- Standard recycling will be available on-site for newspaper and plastic materials.
- A Recycling Coordinator will oversee this process to ensure materials are placed in their proper containers.
- Project goals include:
 - To develop criteria for construction recycling requirements for potential incorporation into Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects contract language and into the private development process.
 - Measure recycled tonnage by category.
 - Achieve a minimum diversion rate of 75%. Industry standards are between 50-75%; staff is striving for a higher diversion rate.
 - Document the recycling activity through data collection and photographs.
- City is providing refuse containers (roll offs and bins).
- Program costs and potential revenues will be included in the final report.
- Next Steps:
 - Public Works, Engineering and Solid Waste can incorporate these requirements into CIP projects.
 - This program could be incorporated into the building permit application process.
 - Voluntary compliance is preferable to mandating this program; a program evaluation should be conducted to determine the level of program participation
 - Staff will develop costs and metrics to provide additional information to encourage voluntary compliance.
 - Staff will meet with developers to seek their participation and assistance in promoting the program.
 - Staff was asked to present a program update in 6 months to the Committee.

Agenda Item 6- Neighborhood Revitalization Program

Lisa Collins, Deputy Community Development Director – Planning, introduced and Larry Schmaltz, Principal Planner. Mr. Schmaltz provided an update on the Neighborhood Revitalization Program. Presentation and discussion highlights include:

- The Neighborhood Revitalization Program is federally funded by a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the HOME Program.
- With shrinking budgets and staff, the program focus is to target specific areas that need assistance.
- Program criteria when considering a neighborhood for inclusion into the program include a combination of the following:
 - Within eligible CDBG census tracts
 - Within established redevelopment areas
 - Areas with higher foreclosure rates
 - Areas with higher incidents of code violations
 - Areas with higher incidents of criminal activity
 - Proximity to high quality transit service
 - Opportunities to remove slum and blight
 - Areas in which staff is already active
- The Escalante and Victory Acres neighborhoods are program candidates.
- Two Requests for Proposals (RFPs) are pending for vacant land in the Escalante and Victory Acres neighborhoods for affordable housing.
- The interdepartmental work team is involved in this process.
- Staff was asked to provide a program update at an upcoming Issue Review Session.

Agenda Item 7- Regional 311 Update

Shelley Hearn, Community Relations Administrator, provided an update on a Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) Regional Committee meeting. Presentation and discussion highlights include:

- Staff is pursuing rights to the 311 phone number, which must be authorized by MAG.
- A MAG Committee has been formed to consider using this type of phone number system on a regional level.
- The use of 311 will make the process of contacting the City of Tempe easier for customers.

- The first few committee meetings have focused on educating different communities in what 311 can do to improve customer service.
- Brainstorming sessions have been held to consider what technology could be used to improve the overall system.
- There are no program models of this nature in the country. The committee would be responsible for developing a model program.
- This program will increase call volumes.
- Several cities are interested in this concept.
- There are partnering opportunities for small cities.
- There have been challenges associated with the startup of this project.
- Phoenix is chairing the committee.
- This program allows staff to track data and provide a higher level of customer service.
A presentation was given on the regional 311 system at an International City/County Management Association conference.
- In January 2012, staff will engage communities that have not committed to join in this regional program. Cost concerns remain a factor.
- Phoenix is moving forward with this program.

Agenda Item 8 – New Website Update

Shelley Hearn, Community Relations Administrator, provided an update on the City's new website. Presentation and discussion highlights include:

- The Regional 311 project is a component of the new City of Tempe website.
- A website transparency component will be called "My Tempe". This webpage will provide information to the public such as financial documents. Staff is compiling a list of documents/information that will be included on this webpage.
- A Town Hall tool has been purchased and will be available to question/poll the public. The vendor will review comments prior to posting. Inappropriate comments are returned to the customer for an opportunity to edit.
- Data is tracked.
- Customers that comment are required to provide their personal information (name/address) to the vendor; one comment per question/per customer will be allowed.
- There was a recent change made to the website homepage.
- Staff will provide Council with an update when the website is ready to be launched.
- The regional 311 phone number will be included in marketing materials for this website.
- Staff was commended for pursuing programs that improve customer service, especially in light of the challenging economic times.
- A procedure is in place to address calls that are meant for the emergency 911 phone number.
- 311 reduces the number of calls placed incorrectly to 911.
- Call center hours are 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- After hours, the calls vary by the department and by need.

Agenda Item 9 - Update – Geeks Night Out

Kristina Baxter, Community Outreach/Marketing Coordinator II, and Amanda Nelson, Community Outreach Marketing Supervisor, provided an update on Geeks Night Out. Presentation and discussion highlights include:

- Geeks Night Out was created from the concept of "Science of Fun: What's the science behind all of the fun that you have?"
- On-site there will be MOM and POP – mammogram and prostate cancer screenings; blood services takes blood donations; driving under the influence (DUI) and fire suppression science; Education Recycling Information Center (ERIC), and a water display.
- Investors will jury ideas from entrepreneurs with the potential of funding projects of interest.
- Sunflower Market is hosting "The Science of Food" – how food travels from the garden to the table.

- The event is scheduled on February 16, 2012 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.; a costume contest is included as well as a phasers vs. lightsabers trivia event.
- ASU Venture Catalyst has donated \$2,750 in sponsorship funding.
- The Phoenix Business Journal is also sponsoring the event and will advertise the event at a discounted price. The Journal has agreed to host the success panel.
- 5 companies have agreed to participate in the job fair. Jobs are for highly skilled individuals.
- There will be partnership opportunities for businesses.
- This event is being marketed to the University of Advancing Technology, University of Phoenix and Arizona State University.
- Staff will seek potential sponsorship with DeVry University.

Agenda Item 10- Future Agenda Items

- WIFI Request for Information (RFI) update - Dave Heck
- ASU Sky Song/ASU Venture Catalyst – Kris Baxter
- Angel Investor Boot Camp update
- Das Haus Exhibition

Agenda Item 11 – Future Meeting Date

The next meeting is scheduled for January 27, 2012 at 10:00 a.m.

Agenda Item 9 – Announcements

Councilmember Shekerjian wished meeting attendees Happy Holidays.

The meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Reviewed by: Amber Wakeman

Brigitta M. Kuiper, City Clerk