



**SUMMARIZED MINUTES**

**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE  
PROTECT AND PRESERVE SCOTTSDALE TASK FORCE  
REGULAR MEETING**

**Monday, September 13, 2023  
McDowell Mountain Ranch Aquatic Center  
15525 N. Thompson Peak Parkway  
Scottsdale, Arizona 85260  
4:06 p.m.**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The regular meeting of the Scottsdale Protect and Preserve Task Force was called to order at 4:06 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

**PRESENT:** Cynthia Wenstrom, Chair  
Raoul Zubia, Vice Chair  
Carla  
James Eaneman  
Nicholas Hartmann  
Jace McKeighan  
Daniel Schweiker  
Mark Winkleman (Virtual)  
John Zikias

**STAFF:** Gina Kirklin, Enterprise and Finance Director  
Sonia Andrews, City Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer  
Nick Molinari, Parks and Recreation Director  
Kelly Corsette, Communications and Public Affairs Director  
Ben Lane, City Clerk

**GUESTS:** Sara LaBatt, EMC Research  
Sianna Ziegler, EMC Research

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments.

### **1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Request approval of minutes of the August 30, 2023, Regular Task Force Meeting.

**Task Force Action:** Discussion and action

Vice Chair Zubia called for corrections to the minutes. Member Carla made a correction.

MEMBER MCKEIGHAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF AUGUST 30, 2023 AS AMENDED. MEMBER EANEMAN SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED 8-0 WITH VICE CHAIR ZUBIA AND MEMBERS CARLA, EANEMAN, HARTMANN, MCKEIGHAN, SCHWEIKER, WINKLEMAN AND ZIKIAS VOTING IN THE AFFIRMATIVE WITH NO DISSENTING VOTES.

Chair Wenstrom arrived immediately following the vote.

### **2. UPDATE ON POSSIBLE CITIZEN SURVEY IDENTIFIED IN APPROVED WORK PLAN**

Kelly Corsette, Communications and Public Affairs Director, with the assistance of other city staff and EMC Research, will lead a discussion on the research goals to prepare for a citizen survey as identified in the City Council adopted work plan.

**Task Force Action:** Information, discussion, and action

Kelly Corsette, Communications and Public Affairs Director, reintroduced Sara LaBatt, EMC Research, who reviewed the presentation slides, which provided an overview of a potential community survey.

Research Process Overview:

1. Gather information & define research goals
2. Develop survey instrument
3. Conduct survey and monitor data collection
4. Analyze results and develop recommendations
5. Present findings and recommendations
6. Assist with next steps

Next Steps: Survey Instrument Development:

- Following today's discussion, EMC will begin work designing the survey instrument
- The survey instrument will take into account today's discussion around research goals
- EMC will also review relevant background information, including:
  - September 5 Task Force Update to Council
  - 2023 NCS Community Survey Report
- The survey instrument will combine content specific to the research goals with established questionnaire design best practices and standard question scales
- Survey researchers use different types of standard question scales for different purposes.

## Discussion: Research Goals

- What are your goals for this research?
- What decisions will the survey results help inform? Who will rely on this research to make strategic decisions?
- What do you want to make sure you're getting out of the research? What are the most crucial questions about community sentiment for the survey to answer?
- What priorities do you hear the most about from residents through other input channels?
- Are there specific quality ratings, priorities, or attitudes you'd like to make sure are tested in the survey?
- Are there any specific hypotheses or assumptions around community priorities or fiscal attitudes you want to test in the survey?

In response to a question from Member Carla, Ms. LaBatt stated that the representative sample would consist of registered voters. After this process is concluded, the survey will be made available for responses from the general public as a separate set of data.

Task Force Members were invited to provide additional input on the research goal questions.

Member Carla stated the necessity of deciding between the term new tax versus renewal tax. Secondly, it is important to understand the public's knowledge that this will not increase any existing taxes. Other questions should be used to address possible confusion over the potential of having two questions on the ballot. It would also be helpful to collect citizen input on why they support a particular question. Specifically, it would be important to know whether prioritizing of the Indian Bend Park projects would make the voter more apt to favor the question. Questions regarding WestWorld rebranding and self-supporting do not belong on the survey. A more appropriate question would address support for funding infrastructure in WestWorld, Scottsdale's largest park.

Member Eaneman shared a lesson learned, which is that the strategy is dictated by the environment and the players. During the City Council meeting, many questions and viewpoints were offered to the Task Force. Some Council Members stressed fiscal responsibility. Inflation remains a national issue and there are ongoing economic concerns. Next year is an election year and the likelihood of bold initiatives from candidates seeking office or seeking to retain office is statistically low. The Task Force must have the information necessary to answer the Council's questions and the Task Force must know what the voters are thinking.

Member Eaneman asked about a potential timeline for finalization of the survey.

Ms. LaBatt reviewed the draft timeline:

- September:
  - Information gathering
  - September 13 Meeting: Discussion of Research Goals
  - Survey instrument development
  - Late September: Progress update provided to Task Force
- October-November:
  - Data collection for representative sample survey
  - Data collection for open participation survey
  - Begin analysis

- December:
  - Complete analysis and report of findings
  - Present findings to Task Force
  - Presentation date to be scheduled

Member Hartmann said it would be helpful to know the ratio of voters who would support a question that contains WestWorld and public art versus a question that would exclude them. There was some Council input which was favorable toward public art. Member Carla commented that the survey will have a limited number of questions and should not include elements that have not been recommended to Council. She was not in support of including questions about art.

Chair Wenstrom asked for the estimated number of questions included on the survey. Ms. LaBatt stated that it is difficult to generalize, as some questions take longer to answer. The budget is for a 15-minute survey, which is standard in the industry and typically consists of 40 to 50 questions. In general, the survey will include questions on: Quality ratings, importance or priorities, attitudes (agree or disagree) related to taxes and demographics.

Member Carla commented that previous questions on the McDowell Sonoran Preserve have identified wildlife and nature as the highest priorities, followed by recreation and other aspects. It would be helpful to see whether this mindset has changed and whether recreation has increased in priority. Member Zikias noted that the community survey includes questions related to parks and the Preserve and suggested that this data be used to answer such questions, particularly in light of the fact that the number of questions for the new survey will be limited. Mr. Corsette confirmed that in previous community surveys, some questions related to the Preserve were included, however they were not included in the most recent community survey. He questioned the value of the information to the Task Force. Member Carla commented that such questions provide insights as to a sense of community ownership. Member Schweiker added that the results of the survey are very important in structuring a successful campaign.

Member Zikias addressed the fact that the City has the second lowest city tax rate and questioned whether this is well-known among residents and could be incorporated into the survey. In terms of the Preserve, attitudes are as important as usage. Member McKeighan added that it would be helpful to know whether some residents avoid parks due to current park conditions and would use them more if they were in better condition.

Member Carla noted the importance of highlighting public safety aspects.

Member Zikias cited the recent Diamond fire and suggested adding a survey question that cites potential fire dangers and whether respondents find it important to protect open spaces via fire prevention methods. Chair Wenstrom commented that fire mitigation was addressed during the City Council presentation. While this specific question might not be appropriate, it may be helpful to ask a question regarding how citizens feel about fire mitigation, particularly in terms of urban interfaces with wildland.

Member Winkelman commented that the question regarding the old tax versus a new tax is obvious and that no one is interested in calling it a new tax. One critical element is to address specific projects versus categories of items. This includes consideration for tying the language to current projects that must be completed versus general language regarding taking good care of the Preserve and the parks. It might be helpful to also gauge input regarding the length of the tax term. Among the public, there is a certain level of anger regarding the Bond 2019 program,

however it is difficult to know whether this is widespread or just coming from a vocal few.

Member Carla recommended including survey questions to address a new versus renewal of the tax, particularly as two Council Members have expressed the requirement that it be described as new. They will want to see any proposed alternative backed up by survey results.

### **3. TASK FORCE WORK STUDY SESSION**

The work study session provides an opportunity for Task Force members to discuss topics and information previously presented to the Task Force along with the Task Force's potential recommendations to the Council. The Task Force will have an in-depth discussion and may provide additional direction to staff. As part of this item, but without limitation, Chair Wenstrom, with the assistance of Vice Chair Zubia, will lead the Task Force members in discussion of the following topic related to the Task Force Work Plan.

- 4.1 Discussion and possible action on the Protect and Preserve Scottsdale Task Force presentation and message given at the September 5th City Council work study and the feedback that was received.

**Task Force Action:** Information and discussion, and possible recommendations to staff

Member Carla asked for clarification on how the Task Force is dealing with Parks. In reviewing the Council presentation, it appeared there may be confusion in terms of the amount being requested. Gina Kirklin, Enterprise and Finance Director, stated that the numbers are still being evaluated at this time. The dollar amounts will be shared with the Task Force in due time. Member Carla stated that there was agreement to avoid the mistakes of the past in terms of cutting back too much on maintenance.

Member Carla commented that based upon the presentation to Council, it appears that the parks that will receive improvements are the Indian Bend Wash parks. The Task Force previously discussed the importance of providing improvements in other City areas to facilitate a sense of ownership. Chair Wenstrom clarified that numbers are available for all the different areas, however, the main focus area of the presentation was the Indian Bend Wash Park area, as this topic was a point of interest specifically identified by the Council originally. This does not limit the intent of addressing other parks in the City. Sonia Andrews, City Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer, added that the conversation is driven by projects and areas that can be supported via studies or other evidence of funding needs.

Chair Wenstrom invited comments and input regarding the presentation to Council. Member Zikias commented that Council seemed to be very interested in seeing specific lists of projects to be completed, particularly in the parks. While he supports providing specifics, he recommends a cautious approach to being overly specific with exact dollar requests, which can be affected down the line by inflationary and other factors. Chair Wenstrom noted the importance of identifying specific costs for projects, so that residents have a level of comfort with the line items presented and that they are confident in receiving what they voted for. Ms. Andrews will certainly figure in inflation costs and other potential economic impacts. Member Eaneman stated that during the Council presentation, the discussion included references to the Bond 2019 program and that approved programs were ultimately altered, which contributed to cost increases and failure to complete certain projects.

Member Zikias commented that there seemed to be conflict with Council in terms of naming the proposal a new tax or a continuing tax and a temporary versus permanent tax. There was emphasis regarding the need to consider voter input on this topic.

Member Carla stressed the need to gauge the favorability among the public regarding new tax or continuing tax verbiage. It was clear from the Council discussion that there will be two questions on the ballot, however both will be under the umbrella of protect and preserve Scottsdale's open spaces. The first will mostly like be to address the 0.2 percent recommendations and the second will address the 0.15 percent, including the ongoing Preserve care. The survey will have to gauge the confusion level of having two questions on the ballot regarding taxes. Splitting them up will most likely result in the failure of the 0.2 percent. Ms. Andrews stated that having two questions is one option, however, staff is still considering an approach that would limit the ballot to one question. In terms of the remaining fund balance of the 0.15 percent, there is an option of paying off the debt. The Bond 2019 program is funded by property taxes. The growth in property tax is limited by the assessed property value of 5 percent. The growth in property tax does not mirror inflation, it is much smaller. The projects addressed by the Task Force are not funded by property tax, but by a sales tax. Typically, sales tax revenues are higher as inflation increases.

Member McKeighan commented that the Council discussion included frequent comments on specific projects. It will be difficult for the Task Force to project projects for 20 to 30 years. Member Hartman said it would be helpful for the Treasurer to provide guidance on how to negotiate a balance between project specificity and being general enough that there is funding for unpredicted projects. Ms. Andrews stated that the information for voters can include both specific projects as well as language to allow the City to swap projects for similar needs, based on Council discretion. The language could allow sale tax funding to be use for similar projects. The City Attorney will be helpful in drafting the appropriate language. Nick Molinari, Parks and Recreation Director, commented on the ability to identify specific projects as well as phasing them over a specific period of time. Member Schweiker commented that language that includes ambiguity on specific project funding could lead to loss of votes in southern Scottsdale.

#### **4. IDENTIFICATION OF POSSIBLE FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

The Task Force may request proposed topics for future agendas, but the Task Force may not discuss, deliberate, or take legal action on any matter in the "Identification of Possible Future Agenda Items" unless the specific matter is properly noticed for legal action. Additionally, the following previously requested items may be placed on a future agenda:

- Review of draft language proposed by Task Force Members
- Discussion on the differences between an ordinance and a financial policy

**Task Force Action:** Information and discussion, and possible recommendations to staff

The following items were identified:

- Follow up discussion regarding options on the 0.15 percent
- Discussion regarding the potential for increased Task Force meeting frequency, length of meetings and remaining tasks and goals

#### **5. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, being duly moved by Chair Zubia and seconded by Member McKeighan, the meeting adjourned at 5:49 p.m.

AYES: Chair Wenstrom, Vice Chair Zubia, Members Carla, Eaneman, Hartmann, McKeighan  
Schweiker, Winkleman and Zikias.

NAYS: None

SUBMITTED BY:

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