



SUMMARIZED MINUTES

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

**4:00 p.m., Monday, December 18, 2023
Community Design Studio
7506 E. Indian School Road
Scottsdale, Arizona 85251**

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Scottsdale Protect and Preserve Task Force was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

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

STAFF: Kelly Corsette, Communications and Public Affairs Director
Ben Lane, City Clerk
Sherry Scott, City Attorney
Nick Molinari, Parks and Recreation Director
Stephanie Tippett, Parks and Recreation Manager

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Wenstrom called for corrections to the minutes. Member Carla provided two changes.

MEMBER EANEMAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 6, 2023 AS AMENDED. VICE CHAIR ZUBIA SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED 9-0 WITH CHAIR WENSTROM, VICE CHAIR ZUBIA AND MEMBERS CARLA, EANEMAN, HARTMANN, MCKEIGHAN, SCHWEIKER, WINKLEMAN AND ZIKIAS VOTING IN THE AFFIRMATIVE WITH NO DISSENTING VOTES.

2. UPDATE ON CITIZEN SURVEY

Sara LaBatt, EMC Research, began with an overview of the research. EMC Research worked with City of Scottsdale staff and the Protect and Preserve Scottsdale Task Force on a research effort designed to understand community priorities related to the Preserve as well as the current opinions of Scottsdale residents around the City's fiscal environment.

The research involved two phases and included 1,733 Scottsdale voters and residents:

- 🕒 A statistically valid survey, open only to invited Scottsdale voters using random sample methodology
- 🕒 A public, open participation feedback tool in which any interested Scottsdale resident could participate

Part 1 of the two-phased research project included telephone and online surveys of registered Scottsdale voters. A total of 400 interviews were conducted. Part 2 involved an opt-in online questionnaire open to Scottsdale residents and included 1,333 interviews.

Key findings of the voter survey include:

- 🕒 Voters are optimistic about Scottsdale's direction and the overall quality of life in the City.
- 🕒 Voters see City parks and the McDowell Sonoran Preserve as a contributor to Scottsdale's high quality of life and most are willing to invest tax dollars to maintain them.
- 🕒 There is some tax sensitivity, with approximately 4 in 10 voters expressing hesitancy regarding the City's use of tax dollars.
- 🕒 A majority of voters believe the City needs additional funding to maintain, improve, and operate parks, recreational sites and facilities and they rate many aspects as high priorities for funding.
- 🕒 Voters respond positively to the overall idea of funding the Preserve and other Scottsdale parks and recreation facilities without increasing the tax rate. Most voters also see the more specific mechanisms of replacing an expiring tax and expanding the allowable uses of another tax as good ideas, but enthusiasm declines after they learn more about the specifics.

Key findings of the public open participation feedback include:

- 🕒 Overall, the open participation respondents hold similar sentiments to voters and are positive about the quality of life in Scottsdale. Similarly, this group sees the value in parks and facilities and believes they should be supported by taxes.
- 🕒 Respondents to the open participation research were more likely to express uncertainty when rating the conditions of the Preserve and City parks.
- 🕒 Priorities for open participation respondents were largely similar to voters' opinions.
- 🕒 Like voters, those who participated in the open participation research are in favor of maintaining parks and facilities and believe funding them through replacing and expanding the existing taxes is a good idea. However, when exposed to more information about mechanisms, support softens.

Demographics of survey participants were reviewed and results of the various specific survey questions were discussed.

Key conclusions included:

- 🕒 Both voters and the residents who responded to the open participation research see City parks and the McDowell Sonoran Preserve as contributors to Scottsdale's quality of life, and recognize the value of investing in open space and parks facilities.
- 🕒 Both groups understand the need for funding to maintain, improve, and operate parks and recreational sites and facilities and express a willingness to fund parks and the Preserve through tax dollars.
- 🕒 While enthusiasm declines when voters and residents hear more details about the specifics of possible funding mechanisms for parks and the Preserve, both groups endorse the idea of funding maintenance and improvements without raising taxes.

Member Carla referenced the trust factor of respondents north versus south in using tax dollars and asked whether the results indicate a marked difference. Member Zikias pointed out that Slide 46 indicates, "Voters who say they distrust the City to spend taxes responsibly show less intense positivity towards the potential funding mechanisms and more negatively overall." The north showed 90% positive and south showed 85% positive. Ms. LaBatt noted this is not a statistically significant difference.

3. POSSIBLE BALLOT LANGUAGE CONSIDERATIONS

Ben Lane, City Clerk, stated that State law requires that elections involving assessment of transaction privilege taxes be held in November of even numbered years. The next date meeting this criterion is Tuesday, November 24, 2024, which is also the City's general election date. Ballot items include Mayor and three Councilmembers, possible tax measure as recommended by the Task Force, possible City ballot measure, other federal, state, county and judicial races and ballot measures.

Election responsibilities include:

- 🕒 City
 - Candidate matters
 - Campaign finance
 - Publicity pamphlet

- Drafting ballot language
- 🕒 County
 - Voter registration
 - Creating/printing ballot
 - Early and in-person voting
 - Tabulation

State law prohibits the use of City resources to influence the outcome of an election. Informational pamphlets that present factual information in a neutral manner are allowed, as are routine City communications. The City may also report on official actions of the governing body. Upcoming key dates were reviewed.

Ballot language requirements:

- 🕒 Full text
 - Official title: Brief explanation of what measure is doing
 - Descriptive title: Summary of principal provisions of measure; not to exceed 50 words
 - Yes/no statements
- 🕒 Tagline text
 - Summary not to exceed 50 words
 - Yes/no statements
 - If sufficient space on ballot, tagline text is printed with reference to where the full text can be found

Considerations when drafting ballot language:

- 🕒 Incorporate Task Force feedback
- 🕒 Meeting statutory requirements
- 🕒 Understandable, clear wording
- 🕒 Address specific areas of need
- 🕒 Effective and expiring dates to be determined

Draft ballot language: Full text (official title): A proposal to extend and reduce the City's expiring 0.20% transaction privilege and use tax rate for an additional 30 years to continue funding for the development, improvement, and maintenance of the City's Preserve, parks, and recreational facilities.

Draft ballot language: Full text (descriptive title): Authorizes the City Council to extend and reduce the rate of the current 0.20% transaction privilege and use tax, expiring in 2025, to 0.15% for 30 years to fund the development, improvement, and maintenance of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve and City parks and recreational facilities as determined by City ordinance.

Draft ballot language: Full text (yes/no):

- 🕒 A "YES" vote shall have the effect of authorizing the City to extend and reduce the expiring transaction privilege and use tax rate for 30 years, effective July 1, 2025, for the expanded purpose of developing, improving, and maintaining the McDowell Sonoran Preserve and City parks and recreational facilities as determined by City ordinance.
- 🕒 A "NO" vote shall have the effect of denying the City the authority to extend and reduce the expiring transaction privilege and use tax rate for the expanded purpose of developing,

improving, and maintaining the McDowell Sonoran Preserve and City parks and recreational facilities.

Draft ballot language: Tagline text (summary): Shall the City’s current 0.20% transaction privilege and use tax rate, which expires in 2025, be reduced to 0.15% for an additional 30 Years (expiring xxx) to further fund the development, improvement and maintenance of the City’s preserve, parks, and recreational facilities as determined by City ordinance?

Draft ballot language: Tagline text (yes/no):

- ⌚ A “YES” vote shall have the effect of authorizing the City to extend and reduce the expiring transaction privilege and use tax rate for 30 years, effective July 1, 2025, for the expanded purpose of developing, improving, and maintaining the McDowell Sonoran Preserve and City parks and recreational facilities as determined by City ordinance.
- ⌚ A “NO” vote shall have the effect of denying the City the authority to extend and reduce the expiring transaction privilege and use tax rate for the expanded purpose of developing, improving, and maintaining the McDowell Sonoran Preserve and City parks and recreational facilities.

Next steps include:

1. Staff to review Task Force feedback and possibly revise ballot language and draft related ordinance
2. Staff to provide draft ordinance and final recommended ballot language for Task Force consideration
3. Task Force to send recommended ordinance and ballot language to Council for consideration
4. City Council will consider final ordinance and ballot language

Task Force members posed questions and suggestions regarding the draft ballot language full text (official title), including:

- ⌚ Consider removing superfluous words such as, “a,” and, “the,” to allow more impact of critical language.
- ⌚ The descriptive title should include reference to extending and reducing the tax rate from 0.2 to 0.15%.
- ⌚ The 50 word limit is in reference to total words as opposed to total characters.
- ⌚ Revise the language so that the word “development” and “Preserve” are not both contained in the same sentence. Also consider removing the word “development” and replacing it with “protection.”
- ⌚ Provide consistency in the use of “continue” in the first draft ballot and “further funding.”
- ⌚ Reverse the order of the phrase “extend and reduce” to “reduce and extend” in all instances.
 - Sherry Scott, City Attorney, commented that the language must be precisely accurate. This includes the fact that the tax will not be reduced before it is extended. In fact, the tax must first be extended before it can be reduced.
 - The City’s legal staff will be responsible for ensuring that final language passes legal muster.
- ⌚ Recommend “extend and continue” language.
- ⌚ Recommend “extend and reduce” language.

After discussion, there was consensus to approve the Official Title language read by Chair Wenstrom as follows: “To extend and reduce the City’s expiring 0.2% transaction privilege and use tax rate to 0.15% for an additional 30 years to fund the protection, improvement and maintenance of the City’s Preserve, parks and recreational facilities.”

After discussion, there was a consensus to approve the Descriptive Title language read by Chair Wenstrom as follows: “Authorizes the City Council to extend and reduce the rate of the current 0.20% transaction privilege and use tax, expiring in 2025 to 0.15% for 30 years to fund the protection, improvement and maintenance of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve and City parks and recreational facilities as determined by City ordinance.

After discussion, there was a consensus to approve the “Yes/No” vote language read by Chair Wenstrom as follows:

“A “YES” vote shall have the effect of authorizing the City to extend and reduce the expiring transaction privilege and use tax rate from 0.20% to 0.15% for 30 years, effective July 1, 2025, for the expanded purpose of protecting, improving, and maintaining the McDowell Sonoran Preserve and City parks and recreational facilities as determined by City ordinance.

“A “NO” vote shall have the effect of denying the City the authority to extend and reduce the expiring transaction privilege and use tax rate for the expanded purpose of protecting, improving, and maintaining the McDowell Sonoran Preserve and City parks and recreational facilities.”

After discussion, there was a consensus to approve the Tagline language read by Chair Wenstrom as follows:

Shall the City’s current 0.20% transaction and use tax rate, which expires on June 30, 2025, be reduced to 0.15% for an additional 30 years to fund the protection, improvement, and maintenance of the City's Preserve, parks and recreational facilities as determined by City ordinance?

“A “YES” vote shall have the effect of authorizing the City to extend and reduce the expiring transaction privilege and use tax rate from 0.20% to 0.15% for 30 years, for the expanded purpose of protecting, improving, and maintaining the McDowell Sonoran Preserve and City parks and recreational facilities as determined by City ordinance.

“A “NO” vote shall have the effect of denying the City the authority to extend and reduce the expiring transaction privilege and use tax rate for the expanded purpose of protecting, improving, and maintaining the McDowell Sonoran Preserve and City parks and recreational facilities.”

4. PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLANNING PROGRESS

Nick Molinari, Parks and Recreation Director, introduced Stephanie Tippett, Parks and Recreation Manager, who provided the update. The planning kicked off in July of 2023, and entails a comprehensive look into the Parks and Recreation system, including park facilities, programs, service standards and models for providing services. The result will be a long-range plan

spanning 10 to 15 years. Significant public outreach has already commenced, including a virtual surveying tool, website launch and stakeholder and user group focus groups, surveys, formal interviews with City staff and Council members and committees. Meetings with the Mayor’s Youth Council are scheduled for January. The parks and facilities inventory and assessment has begun. The outreach process has yielded 61,454 touchpoints thus far. Outreach events were discussed. Online outreach efforts have resulted in 1,431 respondents, 523 interactive map comments, 238 big idea shares and 205 budget game respondents. Top four favored facilities and/or amenities in descending order include: Aquatic facilities, multiuse path, indoor exercise facilities and indoor track.

Features residents would like to see included in the park system include:

- 🕒 Community gardens/passive recreation areas
- 🕒 Disc golf
- 🕒 Indoor playground
- 🕒 BMX park features
- 🕒 Adaptive and inclusive playgrounds
- 🕒 Greenbelt/bike path extension in North Scottsdale
- 🕒 Pump track
- 🕒 Destination playgrounds
- 🕒 Off-leash dog parks
- 🕒 Pickleball
- 🕒 Splash pads (more, larger)
- 🕒 Indoor recreation opportunities

Emerging themes include:

- 🕒 Maintain the parks, reinvest in existing parks, specifically Indian Bend Wash parks
- 🕒 Implement asset management program and life cycle replacement guidelines to avoid future aging infrastructure issues
- 🕒 Indoor recreation opportunities and rental spaces are lacking, resulting in a limitation of the types and frequencies of programs that can be offered

It is anticipated that the master planning process will wrap up by late spring/early summer, followed by submission to City Council for formal adoption.

In response to a question from Member Carla, Mr. Molinari stated that in terms of equity mapping, the Preserve is differentiated from City parks. The equity mapping exercise performed by the consultant considers the amenities within master planned communities.

5. IDENTIFICATION OF POSSIBLE FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The following were identified:

- 🕒 Update on presentation to City Council
- 🕒 Update on revised ordinance

6. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, being duly moved by Vice Chair Zubia and seconded by Member Zikias, the meeting adjourned at 6:04 p.m.

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

NAYS: None

SUBMITTED BY:

eScribers, LLC