



**NEIGHBORHOOD ADVISORY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
HEARINGS FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD ENHANCEMENT PARTNERSHIP
PROGRAM**

One Civic Center Boulevard, Community Development meeting room 1
7447 E. Indian School Road, Scottsdale, AZ 85251
Wednesday, January 28, 2015

PRESENT: Michael Gonzalez, Chairman
Todd Becker, Vice-Chairman
Jennifer Fabiano
Joe Meli
Garrett Redd

ABSENT: Jordan Ledbetter
Kevin Walling

STAFF: Greg Bestgen, Staff Representative

Call to Order/Roll Call

Chairman Gonzalez called the meeting of the Neighborhood Advisory Commission to order at 5:02 p.m. A formal roll call confirmed the members present as stated above.

Public Comment

No members of the public wished to speak.

1. Approve December 10, 2014 Draft Summary Meeting Minutes

COMMISSIONER MELI MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF DECEMBER 10, 2014. COMMISSIONER BECKER SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED BY A VOTE OF FIVE (5) TO ZERO (0). COMMISSIONERS LEDBETTER AND WALLING WERE ABSENT.

2. Election of Officers

COMMISSIONER MELI MOVED THAT CHAIRMAN GONZALEZ CONTINUE AS THE CHAIR OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD ADVISORY COMMISSION. COMMISSIONER BECKER SECONDED THE NOMINATION, WHICH CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS ACCLAMATION.

COMMISSIONER MELI MOVED TO THAT VICE CHAIR BECKER CONTINUE AS THE VICE CHAIR OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD ADVISORY COMMISSION. THE NOMINATION CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS ACCLAMATION.

3. Discussion and Possible Action on 2014 Annual Report

Mr. Kevin McKee, the Mayor's new assistant, stopped by the meeting and introduced himself.

Mr. Greg Bestgen, Staff Representative, reviewed the draft annual report. He noted that the sunset review with the City Council Audit Subcommittee is coming up in April. He elaborated on the factors the auditors consider.

Commissioner Meli asked whether the Commissioners agreed that the annual funding is adequate for the NEP. Chairman Gonzalez pointed out that last year the Commission was unable to disburse all of the funding. Mr. Bestgen clarified that not all the applicants who were approved were able to complete their projects. The Commission had approved the disbursement of almost the total funds in the program. One HOA was offered an extension to October 30, 2014 but was still unable to complete their project.

Commissioner Meli noted that the Commission has been trying to raise awareness of the program. If more neighborhoods participated the funds might be insufficient. Chairman Gonzalez summarized that the more applicants that complete the process, the more funds the program could use. Commissioner Meli said as they move forward part of their mission is to increase awareness in the community.

Commissioner Meli suggested the Commission could request funding to be allocated to communicating the program to the public. Chairman Gonzalez agreed to the Commission being more proactive and trying to get people to complete applications so that they can give funds to communities that really need it. Commissioner Redd opined that the Commission has done a good job of raising awareness. They have done everything they set out to do, apart from airing a program on Channel 11.

Commissioner Meli asked what would the metric be to show that they have increased awareness. He suggested that the most telling measurement is the number of applications received.

Chairman Gonzalez said the Commission has made a concentrated effort to publicize the NEP using available City resources. The difficulty is that many of the neighborhoods with the greatest need do not have an organizational structure to complete the application process. Mr. Bestgen agreed that the application process is cumbersome.

Commissioner Meli said he wanted to mitigate any negative audit report based on their mandate being complied with. He wants the auditors to be aware that the Commission has to work with a process that is not necessarily streamlined enough for some communities. If the process can be improved this might boost the Commission's compliance with its mandate.

Chairman Gonzalez commented that if people are not interested enough to complete an application, that begs the question why help them. This is not a handout. Commissioner Meli noted there are a lot of moving parts in an HOA board. He believes the Commission is on the right path and should not be judged by simply looking at the projects which were or were not completed.

Vice-Chair Becker suggested noting in the annual report that they plan to promote the program through Channel 11. Mr. Bestgen said he would add a note that they plan to look for additional resources to publicize the program as he is aware of other avenues that are becoming available including Nextdoor.com.

Commissioner Fabiano recalled the Commission had discussed plaques to identify successful projects.

Commissioner Meli suggested that having the Chair speak at a Council Meeting is one way to raise awareness of the program. Mr. Bestgen said the most effective way to achieve this would be to address Council at a meeting where related items are on the agenda. He added that it is a positive sign that City Council directed the Neighborhood Advisory Commission to oversee the Spirit Awards. He recalled in the past that the Commission was tasked with reviewing the ice cream truck ordinance.

Mr. Bestgen summarized that he would add to the report that the Commission is looking at resources to publicize the NEP and Spirit Awards and also to increase public awareness of the mission of the Neighborhood Advisory Commission.

COMMISSIONER MELI MADE A MOTION TO SUBMIT THE ANNUAL REPORT AS AMENDED TO CITY COUNCIL. COMMISSION FABIANO SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED BY A VOTE OF FIVE (5) TO ZERO (0). COMMISSIONERS LEDBETTER AND WALLING WERE ABSENT.

4. Planning, Discussion and Possible Action on NEP Projects and Spirit Awards

Mr. Bestgen said many cities require signatures of 50 percent of neighbors that will be affected by a project to sign a petition, but Scottsdale requires 80 percent. Commissioner Redd commented that it is extremely difficult to get 80 percent of residents to respond. Other Commissioners concurred.

Mr. Bestgen said one successful applicant last year had advised him that their survey could be made available to other applicants. A group of five volunteers had canvassed the entire neighborhood by going door to door to collect signatures. Chairman Gonzalez said he considers this one of the big success stories because the whole neighborhood was involved. However in non HOA neighborhoods it is far more challenging.

Mr. Bestgen noted that the idea of giving public funds to HOAs will always be questioned. The City Attorney was concerned when the last two applications went through. He said that any HOA projects that are not directly on the right of way are more open to questioning. Chairman Gonzalez agreed that HOA projects should be confined to projects that are visible from the street.

Mr. Bestgen shared that he receives several calls each month from HOAs inquiring about common area projects which are on the interior of the community. Commissioner Meli said the sweat equity portion of the NEP is crucial and is designed to encourage neighbors to come together and participate in improving their own neighborhood. Chairman Gonzalez said increased curb appeal is the value to the City as a whole.

Mr. Bestgen said the City Attorney's Office may recommend looking at the gift clause in relation to the money in the NEP. There have been some changes in the legislation that could affect the program.

Vice-Chair Becker suggested drafting a case study from a successful project showing the application and before and after photos to guide potential applicants. Mr. Bestgen said he has a file that applicants can consult. Some very polished and sophisticated applications may discourage potential applicants who are just getting started.

Mr. Bestgen noted that Council would probably like to see more neighborhood projects, since the HOAs should be planning for their needs. The difficulty is that the neighborhood applications are so challenging for the applicants to organize. Mr. Bestgen said a neighborhood project can only succeed with support. One person cannot bring a project to fruition.

Chairman Gonzalez said the target market is smaller, older HOAs. Mr. Bestgen agreed that the Commission has mostly approved projects from that group of applicants.

Commissioner Meli said Scottsdale cannot allow its communities to become degraded. The Commission is trying to raise the level of every community's quality so that the whole City benefits.

Mr. Bestgen suggested adding a one-page white paper about the benefits of the NEP to the report for Councilmembers' benefit. Chairman Gonzalez said the Commission cannot help every neighborhood in Scottsdale and cannot help neighborhoods that are not motivated to help themselves. However if the Commission can help some neighborhood associations or smaller groups to improve curb appeal, that will encourage others to do likewise. He wants Council to know that the money is being spent wisely and where it is best invested in the City. It is important to provide a white paper or executive summary so Council can quickly grasp the big picture.

Commissioner Meli said it is certain that without the Commission and the NEP no neighborhoods would receive this type of help and encouragement.

COMMISSIONER MELI MOVED TO DIRECT THE CHAIR TO PREPARE A WHITE PAPER PURSUANT TO THE DISCUSSION TO ILLUSTRATE THE EFFECTIVENESS AND USE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD ADVISORY COMMISSION. VICE-CHAIR BECKER SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH

CARRIED BY A VOTE OF FIVE (5) TO ZERO (0). COMMISSIONERS LEDBETTER AND WALLING WERE ABSENT.

Mr. Bestgen said the Spirit Awards is now in the PNZ Link, which is a newsletter emailed to those who sign up to subscribe to it. City Council has a focus on the revitalization of the McDowell Corridor. He noted that anyone can nominate properties in that area for the Spirit Awards even if they themselves live outside of that area.

Vice-Chair Becker inquired about plaques for award recipients. Mr. Bestgen said the concept was well received and will likely be implemented as part of the Spirit Awards.

Commissioner Fabiano argued that plaques should also be provided for NEP projects. Chairman Gonzalez said the Commission had discussed having temporary signs that could be erected while NEP projects are in progress and then moved to the next site after completion. He remarked that some NEP projects would not be suitable for plaques. Commissioner Meli noted that these could be prepared at relatively little expense and would have a long life span. Mr. Bestgen undertook to pursue this with Mr. Keagy.

5. Annual Ethics Refresher Training and Signing of Commission Forms

Mr. Bestgen thanked everyone for having returned their signed forms acknowledging that they viewed the ethics refresher video.

6. Planning, Discussion and Possible Action on 2015 Work Plan

Chairman Gonzalez said he feels they should update the Gantt chart so that everyone can see all of their goals.

Mr. Bestgen asked if the Commissioners wanted any staff presentations related to the work plan.

Commissioner Redd said he is satisfied with the goals. The next step is to schedule action items.

Mr. Bestgen said at the next meeting Ms. Christy Hill will present an update on the Spirit Awards. Chairman Gonzalez said they need to work closely with her and receive monthly updates, either in person or via written report.

7. Staff and Commission Updates, Comments, Future Agenda Items

Commissioner Meli requested a future agenda item regarding the signs for NEP projects in progress, including guidance on the design and wording. Mr. Bestgen undertook to research whether an NEP logo already exists and if not to have the graphic designer draft one for Commission approval. Commissioner Meli said the sign should include contact information as a form of public outreach. Mr. Bestgen suggested wording along the lines of "Neighborhood Enhancement Partnership Program sponsored by the Neighborhood Advisory Commission" with a website. The Commissioners concurred that this would be acceptable. Commissioner Fabiano

commented that the Commission's activities are all anonymous and this is one way to raise their profile.

Ms. Christy Hill will provide an update on the Spirit Awards.

Chairman Gonzalez requested a progress report on the two NEP projects recently approved by City Council.

Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, being duly moved and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 6: 24 p.m.

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