City of Avondale

City Council Meeting

Link to Summary of Council Actions

Link to Meeting Minutes

City of Avondale

City Council Online Meeting

Friday, September 11, 2020

Summary of Council Actions

Mayor and Council

Kenn Weise, Mayor

Pat Dennis, Vice Mayor

Tina Conde, Council Member | Bryan Kilgore, Council Member

Veronica Malone, Council Member | Curtis Nielson, Council Member

Mike Pineda, Council Member

Administration

Charles A. Montoya, City Manager

Gina Montes, Assistant City Manager

Tracy Stevens, Deputy City Manager

Nicholle Harris, Interim City Attorney

Marcella Carrillo, City Clerk

Online Meeting

Join the meeting and view presentations: https://avondaleaz.zoom.us/j/3083557784

Using a Mobile Device? Download the Zoom Cloud Meeting App

Join the meeting with audio only: Call 301-715-8592 (meeting ID: 308 355 7784)

Summary of Council Actions

City Council Online Meeting
Notice & Agenda
Friday, September 11, 2020

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STRATEGIC PLAN RETREAT
4:30 PM

CALL TO ORDER BY MAYOR

1. **ROLL CALL BY THE CITY CLERK - MEETING CONVENED AT 4:33 PM**

2. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**
   Novak Consulting Group/Raftelis Team

3. **REVIEWED INPUT ON THE CITY'S STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK**
   Community Summit and City Council Feedback.

4. **REVIEWED INPUT ON THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS**
   - What is true today about Avondale that you hope will still be true in 10 years?
   - What is not true about Avondale today that you hope will be true in 10 years?

5. **DISCUSSED THE SUGGESTED FRAMEWORK**
   The consultant will share proposed modifications to the City's Strategic Plan that takes into consideration input received to date. City Council feedback and suggestions will be solicited to modify the framework.

6. **DISCUSSED AN AGREEMENT ON PROPOSED FRAMEWORK**
   Consultant will conclude the meeting by agreeing on a proposed framework to use for the City's Strategic Plan Update.

7. **NEXT STEPS**
   - Staff Retreat – October 29th
   - City Council Work Session – November
   - Completion – December

8. **ADJOURNMENT - Meeting adjourned at 5:36 p.m.**

Council Members of the City of Avondale will attend either in person or by telephone conference call. Individuals with special accessibility needs, including sight or hearing impaired, large print, or interpreter, should contact the City Clerk at 623-333-1200 or TDD 623-333-0010 at least two business days prior to the Council Meeting.

Los miembros del Concejo de la Ciudad de Avondale participaran ya sea en persona o por medio de llamada telefonica. Personas con necesidades especiales de accesibilidad, incluyendo personas con impedimentos de vista u oido, o con necesidad de impresion grande o interprete, deben comunicarse con la Secretaria de la Ciudad at 623-333-1200 o TDD 623-333-0010 cuando menos dos dias habiles antes de la junta del Concejo.

MINUTES OF THE AVONDALE CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF AVONDALE, ARIZONA
ONLINE MEETING
September 11, 2020

A **Strategic Plan Retreat** of the City Council of the City of Avondale, Arizona was convened at using the Zoom Cloud Meeting platform in open and public session at 4:33 p.m. All participants attended by phone or video.

Members Present: Mayor Kenn Weise; Vice Mayor Pat Dennis; Councilmembers Tina Conde, Bryan Kilgore, Veronica Malone, Curtis Nielson, and Mike Pineda.

Members Absent: None.

Other Municipal Officials Present: Charles Montoya, City Manager; Gina Montes, Assistant City Manager; Tracy Stevens, Deputy City Manager; Marcella Carrillo, City Clerk; Cindy Blackmore, Public Works Director; Jessica Blazina, Intergovernmental Affairs Administrator; Jeff Case, Fire Chief; Ken Chapa, Economic Development Services Director; Lindsey Duncan, Finance and Budget Director; Craig Jennings, Judge; Bryan Hughes, Parks and Recreation Director; Chris Lopez, Neighborhood and Family Services Director; Kevin Murphy, Development and Engineering Services Director; Dale Nannenga, Police Chief; Cherlene Penilla, Human Resources Director; Jeffrey Scheetz, Chief Information Officer; and Pier Simeri, Marketing and Public Relations Director.

Audience: One member of the public was present.

1 ROLL CALL BY THE CITY CLERK

2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Novak Consulting Group and Raftelis Team were introduced:

- Julia Novak, Executive Vice President of the Novak Consulting Group / Raftelis
- Darin Thomas, Vice President of Raftelis
- Catherine Carter, Manager with the Novak Consulting Group / Raftelis

3. REVIEW INPUT ON THE CITY'S STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Ms. Novak stated that one of the objectives of the retreat is to review input received from City Council, department heads and the community. The goal is to find agreement in terms of the structure of the Strategic Plan via discussion of the straw man strategic framework. Important considerations include Council priorities and initiatives.

4. REVIEW INPUT ON THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

- What is true today about Avondale that you hope will still be true in 10 years?
- What is not true about Avondale today that you hope will be true in 10 years?

Mr. Thomas provided an overview of major themes, which covered the following questions: What is true of the City of Avondale today that you hope remains true in the next five years? What attributes may not exist now, but you would like to see them in the next ten years?

Themes for the five-year timeline include:

- Welcoming, family-friendly community
- Safe and diverse
- Sense of place, with great neighborhoods, small town feel, historic roots
- Thriving businesses and diverse living opportunities
- High level of service and infrastructure maintenance
- Quality staff and leadership

Themes for the ten-year timeline include:

- Residents will have more restaurants and entertainment opportunities
- Be more connected to other communities with high quality transportation options
- Diverse employment and industries
- Be resilient and focused on environmental stewardship, strong infrastructure
- Develop services to better support the homeless population and support affordable housing

Major themes identified by Council Members include: Growth (traffic flow, infrastructure), staffing and workforce, support for the homeless, varied development opportunities, public safety and affordable housing. An online community summit was held to gather input from citizens. One of the exercises included gathering feedback from participations to the City's current strategic initiatives. Participants were also asked to answer the aforementioned questions.

Themes for the five-year timeline include:

- Sufficient water supply and open space
- Approachable City staff and Council
- Safe, community feel
- Great amenities for all ages
- Sustained growth
- Reasonable cost of living
- Well-maintained, clean city

Themes for the ten-year timeline include:

- More mass transportation
- Expanded affordable housing
- Great jobs in the West Valley
- Robust programs to address homelessness
- More diverse businesses and employment opportunities
- Unique entertainment opportunities

Similar discussions were held with City staff, with staff members identifying significant issues facing the City as: continued growth, economic development, diversification of employment opportunities, safe and timely response to emergencies, opportunities for mixed-use entertainment district, development of outdoor amenities, and shifting needs as a result of COVID. There were common themes addressed between citizen, City Council, and staff input.

Ms. Carter addressed the five specific strategic initiatives:

1. Foster Sustainable Community Development: Avondale is committed to creating a sense of place, a community of residents and local businesses unified by pride and common values.

The question posed to Council was whether this is still appropriate and applicable to priorities moving forward. All Council Members who responded to the survey agreed that it is still applicable. There were some suggestions regarding rewording. Community input indicated that affordable housing is a concern. Other community comments addressed what it means to have the City built-out, keeping up with infrastructure, support for human services, sense of place, and support of small businesses in Old Town.

2. Create and Support Diverse Recreation and Entertainment Opportunities: Avondale provides residents with the ability to connect with amenities, businesses and their community, enhancing the opportunity to live, work and enjoy a healthy lifestyle.

Council agreed that this initiative remains relevant and should continue to be a focus. Rewording and shortening the statement was suggested by Council. Community feedback indicated that residents had an understanding that this is an initiative the City is focused on. They reported feeling as though things were improving and that the City was on a good track. They appreciate the investment in parks and open spaces. The community expressed appreciation for a variety of resources and amenities provided by the City. There were a few HOA-related comments, with participants interested in the opportunity to expand amenities in existing communities.

3. Advocate for and Support Community-Oriented Lifelong Learning Opportunities: Avondale will continue to foster an environment where education is a defining value and learning opportunities abound for residents of all ages.

Council suggested rewording the strategic initiative to: “Community Supported Lifelong Educational Opportunities,” and rewording the definition to: “Avondale will foster pipeline to employment and will influence youth and adult education.” Broadly speaking, community input indicated that the City should be using its resources to provide access to a large spectrum of learning opportunities that should be accessible and available to people of all ages. Libraries were suggested as a hub for such resources. Other suggestions included new programs for seniors, social opportunities, and leveraging the Read-On Avondale Program to expand community partnerships in early childhood education.

4. Encourage and Support Creative Innovation in Development and Service Delivery: The City will continue to serve as a model of innovative, efficient and responsive government.

The Council discussion involved how residents can be encouraged to be part of innovation. One Council question was whether this strategic initiative is understandable and relatable to the general public. There was a rewording suggestion for the definition around the idea that the City will investigate all avenues to innovate, be efficient, and deliver responsive government. Community input included very positive comments regarding City staff. They felt staff was impressive, accessible, and responsive to concerns. Other comments expressed the need for inclusion and accessibility to City services. Participants wanted more communication on opportunities for partnerships, collaboration, and communication between different groups.

5. Create a Connected Community: The City will work directly and closely with our citizens to devise and implement programs that work

The Council discussion included that implementation should involve consistent communication, to ensure citizens are informed, and sharing of updates on a regular basis. There was a rewording suggestion for the definition: “The City will provide many resources to engage our citizens and provide programs for all stages of growth.” Community comments were related to transportation, Wi-Fi connectivity, and accessibility to fiber optics infrastructure. There were also suggestions of connectivity related neighborhood gatherings and mass transit.

5. DISCUSSION ON THE SUGGESTED FRAMEWORK

The consultant will share proposed modifications to the City’s Strategic Plan that takes into consideration input received to date. City Council feedback and suggestions will be solicited to modify the framework.

Ms. Novak said the proposal for Avondale’s strategic planning framework includes seven outcome areas, the five already reviewed plus two additional categories: Public Health & Safety and Natural Resources & Open Space. The process revealed that people value the natural amenities in the City as well as the feeling of safety in the community. Ms. Novak described the initiatives as the “big buckets” of things that must go well in order for the community to advance towards Council’s vision.

Ms. Novak asked for Council’s input on adding the two new strategic outcomes. There was consensus on the appropriateness of the additions.

Mayor Weise inquired if connectivity would be explained further, as the community comments showed that there were different interpretations on the definition of connectivity. Ms. Novak stated that would be clarified within the definitions.

Ms. Novak listed the suggested outcomes, along with suggested definitions of success:

1. **Creative and sustainable community development: Avondale is committed to creating a sense of place, a community of residents and local businesses unified by pride and common values.** This language in this initiative was not changed.

2. Diverse recreation and entertainment opportunities: Avondale provides residents with the ability to connect with amenities, businesses and their community, enhancing the opportunity to live, work and enjoy a healthy lifestyle. The language was revised as follows: **Avondale provides residents with the ability to connect with amenities, businesses and their community, enhancing the opportunity to live, work and enjoy a healthy, active, and affordable lifestyle.** The change was in response to much input regarding an affordable lifestyle. Vice Mayor Dennis agreed that one of the key items of input from citizens was the desire for affordability. Mayor Weise agreed, especially with Avondale having the hottest market in the State.

3. **Community-oriented lifelong learning opportunities: Avondale will continue to foster an environment where education is a defining value and learning opportunities abound for residents of all ages.** This language in this initiative was not changed. Council Member Nielson stated that he sat on a school board meeting on Tuesday night, where they drafted a resolution to ensure that the community, parents, and children work together to increase education and lifelong learning. This is an ideal opportunity for the City and the Littleton School District to work together. Mayor Weise asked Council Member Nielson to provide some language to be incorporated into this initiative. He further encouraged all Council Members to forward any desired language changes.

4. Innovative program and service delivery: The City will continue to serve as a model of innovative, efficient and responsive government. Ms. Carter noted that this initiative was slightly changed for consistency. The language was revised as follows: **Avondale will continue to serve as a model of innovative, efficient and responsive government.**

5. Create a connected community: The City will work directly and closely with our citizens to devise and implement programs that work. This was revised to speak to infrastructure its regional nature. The language was revised as follows: **Avondale will work directly and closely with our communities to develop programs and infrastructure that connect residents to the City's resources, the region and each other.**

The two new initiatives were presented.

6. **Support public health and safety: Avondale is a City where all people feel safe and secure, relying on trusted public and community-based resources.** Feedback from the community included high marks for Avondale's public safety departments and stressed the importance of safety and security.

7. **Protect natural resources and open spaces: Avondale recognizes the value of its natural resources and promotes environmental sustainability and conservation in its operations and activities.** Council Member Nielson commented that setting this as a stand-alone initiative, clearly communicates the City's commitment to the natural resources' environment. Vice Mayor Dennis suggested inclusion of City lands in the language. Ms. Carter suggested the following revision: "…in its operations, activities and planning."

6. AGREEMENT ON PROPOSED FRAMEWORK

Consultant will conclude the meeting by agreeing on a proposed framework to use for the City's Strategic Plan Update.

Ms. Carter summarized that there is agreement on the framework. A workshop with City staff is scheduled for October regarding implementation of initiatives within each of the outcome areas. It would be helpful to gather Council comments and feedback regarding new topics or issues they would like to have considered.

Vice Mayor Dennis suggested looking at specifics on affordable housing and how this can be enacted in the community. Topics of importance would include how Avondale invests in affordable housing and ensuring that it is available into the future. It would also be helpful to address the varying perspectives of Avondale residents. For example, Old Town residents have expressed feeling left behind in terms of infrastructure and other areas. She also suggested looking at the long-term resolution ideas for homelessness in the City.

Council Member Malone stated that the community should be looked at as whole. She acknowledged that some older neighborhoods are falling behind. Before the pandemic, the City was in the midst of good conversation and engagement with older communities in terms of desired improvements. It is important that they do not lose momentum, despite COVID. She also addressed the importance of addressing homelessness.

Council Member Conde agreed with Vice Mayor Dennis and Council Member Malone's comments. It is also important to educate and empower residents in terms of local government processes, such as how Board & Commission and Council meetings run. It is important to engage people in the process.

Council Member Pineda suggested looking more closely at private/public partnerships opportunities such as infrastructure and development projects. In terms of transportation, he would like to see more consideration for modes such as walking and biking.

Council Member Kilgore commented that the COVID-19 pandemic exposed a vulnerability in the nation in terms of entertainment and entertainment revenues. The financial losses impacted many cities because they put a lot of emphasis on large gatherings through entertainment venues. Avondale should ensure it has revenue sources that can still generate income through any pandemic or disaster. The City should focus on economic engines and resources that will continue, such as grocery stores or tech companies. The pandemic also increased the demand for quality tech and the City

should focus on having technical resources and assets. He noted the importance of having technical resources to ensure sustainability for the future. He noted the City would not be able to assist with the homeless or other issues if the proper funding is not being generated.

To summarize, Mayor Weise stated having a more diverse employment base, instead of just relying on just one thing. Council Member Kilgore said yes, while also bringing in technology businesses and assets that will sustain Avondale through a pandemic or natural disaster.

Council Member Nielson said he spent last weekend in Las Vegas, and he concurred with the importance of staying away from one focused area such as entertainment. He suggested an avenue for communicating to residents what development plans are upcoming for specific areas of the City. It is also important to get families and kids involved in City Council meetings.

Mayor Weise commented that the pandemic also exposed failings in the school system. The City should be more involved with the school districts in terms of forming partnerships. He noted that some at-home students did not have access to laptops or Wi-Fi; this is an opportunity for such partnership.

Council Member Nielson suggested the public safety departments visit the schools during the lunch hours to increase their interaction with the students. Council Member Malone commented that both fire and police have built strong relationships with the school district.

7. NEXT STEPS

- Staff Retreat – October 29th
- City Council Work Session – November
- Completion – December

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Council, Vice Mayor Dennis moved to adjourn the Strategic Plan Retreat; Council Member Nielson seconded the motion.

Upon vote, the motion was carried unanimously 7 to 0.

Council Member Conde	Aye
Council Member Kilgore	Aye
Council Member Malone	Aye
Council Member Nielson	Aye
Council Member Pineda	Aye
Vice Mayor Dennis	Aye
Mayor Weise	Aye

Meeting adjourned at 5:36 p.m.

_____
Kenneth Weise, Mayor

CERTIFICATION AND ATTESTATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Strategic Plan Retreat of the Council of the City of Avondale held on the 11th day of September 2020. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held, and that the quorum was present.

_____
Marcella Carrillo, City Clerk