



City of Avondale Public Meeting Documents

 [**Link to Summary of Actions**](#)

 [**Link to Meeting Minutes**](#)



Neighborhood and Family Services Commission Meeting
Online Meeting
Wednesday, February 10, 2021 6:00 p.m.
Summary of Action

A **Regular Meeting** of the Neighborhood and Family Services Commission of the City of Avondale, Arizona convened using the Zoom Cloud Meeting platform in open and public session at 6:01 p.m. All participants attended by phone or video.

Commission Members in Attendance: Jeffrey Rich, Jerome Brownlee, Oliver Morrison, Michelle McMullen, Dawn Gerundo, Hilary McKillip, Alternate Nellie Goetz, Alternate Maxine White

Commission Members Excused: Gloria Solorio

Commission Members Absent: Fabian Prado, Lisa Osborne

City Staff and Guests in Attendance:

Assistant Neighborhood & Family Services Director Edith Baltierrez, Neighborhood Revitalization Manager Sandy Lopez, Housing & Community Development Manager Marsha Chavez, Assistant Development Services & Engineering Director Jodie Novak, City Clerk Marcella Carrillo, Administrative Assistance Paula Swenson

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| 1. Call to Order | 6:01 PM |
| 2. Review and Approval of the November 18, 2020 Meeting Minutes | Approved |
| 3. Election of 2021 Officers | Tabled |
| 4. Specific Area Plan for Old Town, Cashion and Las Ligas/Rio Vista | Discussed |
| 5. Draft 2021 Annual Action Plan | Approved |
| 6. Future Agenda Items | Discussed |
| 7. Announcements | Discussed |
| 8. Call to the Public | None |
| 9. Adjournment | 6:59 PM |



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MEETING MINUTES

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City Staff and Guests in Attendance: Assistant Neighborhood & Family Services Director Edith Baltierrez, Neighborhood Revitalization Manager Sandy Lopez, Housing & Community Development Manager Marsha Chavez, Assistant Director Development & Engineering Services Department Jodie Novak, City Clerk Marcella Carrillo, Administrative Assistant Paula Swenson

1. Call to Order

The Neighborhood and Family Services Commission meeting was called to order by City Clerk Marcella Carrillo at 6:01 p.m.

2. Review and Approval of the November 18, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Jeffrey Rich made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Mr. Oliver Morrison seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously with an Aye by Members present.

3. Election of 2021 Officers

Ms. Swenson inquired if there was a motion to nominate someone on the Commission or volunteer themselves to serve as Chairperson or Vice Chair. Ms. Carrillo explained the role of the Chairperson to the Commission. For this Commission, we need two volunteers. A motion was made by Mr. Brownlee to table this item until the next scheduled meeting and a second was made by Ms. White. This item was tabled agreed to be tabled with an Aye by Members present.

4. Specific Area Plan for Old Town, Cashion, and Las Ligas/Rio Vista

Ms. Jodie Novak introduced the Specific Area Plan for Old Town, Cashion and Las Ligas/Rio Vista. Ms. Novak discussed how Neighborhood & Family Services focuses on part of the marketing and growth of the downtown, Old Town area of Avondale. The Development & Engineering Services Department Planning Division regulates land use and zoning within the city. As part of a larger city initiative from our city leadership, there was a goal to look at the three oldest neighborhoods in the City of Avondale. We want to make sure that they're considered important assets to the City of Avondale. Ms. Novak described the construction and growth going on within the community. Within these three neighborhoods of Old Town, some refer to the areas as Historic Avondale, or Cashion. The Las Ligas and Rio Vista

neighborhoods have been around for a long time and there is a lot of vacant land in the areas. Some of this land is privately owned. This Plan is the city's long-term vision, it sets a vision for the city to focus on these areas. It promotes economic development and growth with the hope that property owners will come in and develop their properties, while we look at what we can do to benefit the neighborhoods with amenities such as enhanced streetscapes, artwork and so forth. This Plan has also been presented to our Planning Commission as well as our City Council. The goal is to look at redevelopment opportunities with the vacant land. It does not necessarily mean that we change what somebody is already doing on their property. However, they may be a business or buildings that they want to do adaptive reuse or upgrade. The Plan encourages new development and businesses to economically thrive because they either have commercial or industrial properties already present. The Las Ligas area has vacant land that is predominantly zoned residential. The Plan focuses on gateway intersections and key focus areas. Gateway intersections could have identification to highlight these areas, we are looking to identify the locations so that people know that they are being welcomed to Old Town or Cashion or Las Ligas. Other placemaking ideas include landscaping and decorative lights or artwork, or improvements to the fronts of buildings. We are looking to create an entry identifier so people know they've arrived, especially to those commuting back and forth to other cities. We want them to know that these are important places to the city for the long-term. Focus areas would encourage development in residential, commercial, industrial, and parks and open space. Ms. Novak showed a map indicating these key focus areas and gateway intersections.. Ms. Novak described three vacant lots on Hill Drive that the city acquired in the past. The lots are vacant and have been for quite some time. The lots were purchased in the past with federal funding as they were dilapidated. They were cleaned and continue to be maintained by the city. The city developed a townhouse project in the past on Hill Street. An idea is to do another similar project on Third Street and Hill Drive where two of the vacant lots are on the southeast corner; or perhaps a little commercial use on the corner with the current townhomes that surround it. However, due to how these properties were purchased, they will likely be single-family homes. Ms. Novak discussed possible enhancements on Western Avenue, including the parks. There is discussion of a Farmer's Market or a splash pad. Ms. Novak discussed the boundaries of the Old Town Avondale Business District (OTAB). An idea for this area is for business owners to convert their single family home into a commercial use. Maybe a flower shop, coffee shop, hair salon or boutique. There is room to expand the area increasing the boundary on the north side of Western and expand it further south of Western. The goal would be to create it similar to an area near downtown Glendale. In order to do that, you property owners would need to convert their homes to meet commercial building codes and ensure ample parking. This OTAB expansion would need to go through the Commission and Council for a zoning amendment to be approved. Ms. Novak discussed a city-owned lot in Cashion that has a concept for park with amenities for children and families such as a splash pad. There is a city bus stop on 111th Avenue that would remain at the site, as it is part of our bus transit route. Several vacant lots in the three areas were purchased in the last few years by private land owners and there has been new single family development. Ms. Novak discussed specific signage such as wayfinding signs to showcase the key areas so that residents and tourists would be able to find places of interest. Ms. Novak described façade improvements to businesses along Western and how that can enhance the area. The Pasta Factory on Western is a good example of a façade renovation. We are hoping that more businesses on Western Avenue may be interested in doing similar improvements. String lights running across Western Avenue is desired, staff received feedback to consider adding them. We are also looking at the streetlights on Central Avenue to possibly bring the same type of lamp onto Western Avenue. Ms. Novak explained that she will continue with her presentations to the Planning Commission next week to vote on and then it will go before Council for final adoption on March 22.

Mr. Brownlee thanked Ms. Novak for her interest in the areas and presentation so that people can understand what it could look like. Mr. Brownlee inquired is there was a central theme to create? Ms. Novak stated that there was not anything in mind but our Marketing and Public Relations department is

creative and may come up with suggestions. We will most likely do some community outreach to figure out what to do. It could be something to tie into the history, a larger city theme, colors or incorporating the Avondale logo. Ms. Goetz inquired about the types of studies that would be looked at in terms of some of the design elements. Is that something that you look at to see what has been successful locally or within the state? Ms. Novak stated that they often do a lot of research and benchmark first locally what other cities have done. We don't want to match what other cities do because we want to be unique and use our own creativity within. We also go online and communicate with anyone in cities outside of Arizona to see what they've done and how successful they were. It's a matter of which ones the city is comfortable with and what kind of funding we have to work with.

Ms. White discussed traffic issues close to the railroad tracks and the possibility of a roundabout. She would like to see more of those in hopes that people slow down and take in some of the beauty. Ms. Novak stated that people tend to recognize the term, roundabout, as a traffic tool to slow down and/or mitigate traffic but it can also be used as a sense of arrival to know that you're in a special place. Council would like us to do a traffic study to make sure that it would work at the intersection so that it would not back traffic up to the south. We would also look at other intersections along Western and Central Avenues. We are proposing in upcoming budget allocation for a study.

Ms. Gerundo inquired if the parks and locations for families and residents of Avondale would include access to Wi-Fi. It has recently been done in some of the major parks in Avondale. Ms. Novak stated that the city has an initiative to try and get Wi-Fi in as many places as possible. Ms. Novak stated that if the Commissioners had any other questions to feel free to contact her.

5. Draft 2021 Annual Action Plan

Ms. Chavez described the Drafted 2021 Annual Action Plan. The Annual Action Plan (AAP) is an extension of the Five-Year Consolidated Plan. This plan assigns funding to specific activities based on actual allocation of funds each year within the Consolidated Planning cycle. We come up with activities to carry out and then assign dollar amounts to each of those for that year. Ms. Chavez described the Consolidated Plan.

Ms. Chavez presented the chart of activities and amounts proposed for each activity through CDBG funding for 2021-2022. Ms. Chavez indicated if there were questions to feel free to reach out to her or Paula. This draft plan is in the works and will be officially out to the public for about 30 days in a comment period in late March. During that timeframe, it will go to Council during a works session. It will go back to Council in early May for their approval and a submission in mid-May to HUD will follow. Ms. Carillo stated that this item is a public hearing. No members of the public were present in the room or online. Ms. Carillo's email was open for any public comments and none were received so the hearing opened and closed at 6:45 p.m.

Ms. Goetz inquired about non-profit funding for development, if that was being sought after. Ms. Goetz inquiry was specific to foundations as she works with a few different ones with animal welfare work and they have an environmental development section in their foundation. Ms. Chavez indicated that the city works with a variety of grants and we have some grants in place but nothing foundation-related that she was aware of. Ms. White asked if the city was provided full funding last year based upon our request. Ms. Chavez stated that the amount Avondale receives is based on a pre-determined formula from HUD and is based on census results, population, etc. We received additional funding last year from the Cares Act. That funding is considered separate from all of this. Ms. McKillip inquired how people are selected for housing repair. Ms. Chavez responded that the program is based on applications submitted. Ms. McKillip inquired if there was a priority or listing. Ms. Chavez responded that we keep a list based on applicants

completing all required paperwork. Ms. Baltierrez clarified that the program operates on a first-come, first-service basis and there is an application process for qualification. Ms. McMullen inquired if the money allotted is a program where if you aren't able to use it, you lose it; or can you move it to another area? Ms. Chavez explained that there is a specified timeframe for use but it's not immediate. We have several years to spend the funds and can use some in one year and continue into the next year. We still have to go through the annual action process and officially decide where the money should go. There is a process to move money and public participation is required to do that. A substantial amendment is required to ask the public to make changes.

6. Future Agenda Items

Ms. Baltierrez stated that future agenda items would include introduction of new Neighborhood & Family Services employees and potentially an update from the Avondale Libraries and Economic Development.

7. Announcements

Ms. Baltierrez announced the President's Day holiday closure. City offices will be closed on Monday. Public Works will work on a modified schedule for sanitation, recycling and bulk trash pick-up. Specifics are notated on the city's website. Our Avondale Youth Advisory Commission and Junior Service Learning Club and Local Edge are hosting a citywide business scavenger hunt through the months of February and March to help market local businesses and encourage all to shop and buy local. This also will increase awareness in Avondale's Youth programming. More information is located on the city website if you are interested in participating. The Avondale Youth Advisory Commission is also hosting a Career Speaker Series through zoom on Tuesday, February 23 and Thursday, February 25 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Pre-registration is required. These are free events and can be attended on one or both days. Please visit the website for more information. The library is launching a virtual battle of the bands. Three schools will be selected to showcase in the event and there will be prize money awards for first, second and third place. Entries will be accepted March 1 through March 21st and the winners will be announced on April 15. Schools will submit videos of their performances and go through a judging process for the prizes.

There were no other updates except to note that we will not meet during the month of May due to the Memorial Day Holiday. Our next scheduled meeting is June 30.

8. Call to the Public

No members of the public were on the call.

9. Adjournment

Mr. Brownlee made a motion to adjourn; the motion was seconded by Mr. Rich. The motion passed unanimously with an Aye by Members present. The meeting adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

Signature of approval:


Jerome B. Brownlee Jr. (Jul 1, 2021 18:50 PDT)

Jul 1, 2021

Chairperson

Next meeting, 6:00 p.m. – Avondale City Hall – June 30, 2021