

MINUTES OF THE AVONDALE CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF AVONDALE, ARIZONA
ONLINE MEETING
November 1, 2021

A **Work Session** of the City Council of the City of Avondale, Arizona was convened using the Zoom Cloud Meeting platform in open and public session at 6:01 p.m. All participants attended by phone or video.

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

Members Absent: None.

Other Municipal Officials Present: Charles Montoya, City Manager; Cherlene Penilla, Assistant City Manager; Tracy Stevens, Deputy City Manager; Lindsey Duncan, Deputy City Manager; Nicholle Harris, City Attorney; Marcella Carrillo, City Clerk; Kirk Beaty, Public Works Director; Ken Chapa, Economic Development Services Director; Tony Corsi, Fire & Medical Director; Memo Espinoza, Police Chief; Keith Fallstrom, Interim Finance and Budget Director; Bryan Hughes, Parks and Recreation Director; Craig Jennings, Judge; Chris Lopez, Neighborhood and Family Services Director; Callie McGraw, Interim Human Resource Director; Dale Nannenga, Public Safety Chief; Marshall Pimentel, Intergovernmental Affairs Administrator; Abril Ruiz-Ortega, Court Administrator; Jeffrey Scheetz, Chief Information Officer; and Pier Simeri, Marketing and Public Relations Director.

Audience: Approximately ten members of the public were present.

1. ROLL CALL BY THE CITY CLERK

2. WESTMARC UPDATE

City Council received an update from Ms. Sintra Hoffman, President and Chief Executive Officer for WESTMARC, on the achievements of WESTMARC. This item was for discussion only.

Ms. Hoffman provided an overview of the region, which consists of 15 communities in the West Valley as well as WESTMARC's organizational structure and goals. Top factors in location decisions were listed, with the top factor being availability of a skilled workforce with other factors, including labor costs, available sites and quality of life. Several years ago, West Valley communities worked with Maricopa County Association of Governments (MAG) to collect data on the West Valley. From this came from the development of several message points. A consultant was hired to analyze the data and conduct interviews with stakeholders. Subsequently came the development of the West Valley Pipeline, a five-year workforce strategy, which is currently in the action phase. The targeted industries included advanced business services, advanced manufacturing, aerospace and aviation, health services, information technology, and transportation and logistics.

The West Valley has strong statistics in advanced business services, advanced manufacturing, and health services. Construction was added as a targeted industry this year. The West Valley Pipeline consists of three pillars: marketing, industry partnerships and outreach. Demographics for the West Valley include 1.7 million residents with average household income at \$75,000. The resident population is growing younger with the median age being 34.8 years. A review of major companies in the region was provided. West Valley assets were discussed, including attractions, sporting events and parks and recreation opportunities. West Valley mayors and leaders comprise a strong, supportive and cohesive group.

Ms. Hoffman provided an overview of the Greater Maricopa Foreign Trade Zone, which is a business attraction tool. Qualified manufacturing companies are provided with business property tax breaks. An outline of WESTMARC's initiatives and events were reviewed. Upcoming special initiatives include regional discussion on systemic racism, diversity and inclusion, regional homelessness planning, FAFSA awareness, and young talent identification and promotion.

Council Member Pineda highlighted opportunities that come with the membership. WESTMARC provides some of the heavy lifting, which frees City staff to act and strategically plan. Estrella Mountain Community College helps provide the workforce that coincides with the Avondale's live-work-play goals. Being a member of WESTMARC gives Avondale an opportunity to share information and be part of the conversation.

Council Member Conde thanked Ms. Hoffman for the presentation and thanked staff for participating on the WESTMARC boards and committees.

Council Member Kilgore thanked Ms. Hoffman for the presentation, highlighting efforts such as the Career Expo and brand exposure that WESTMARC provides.

Council Member Dennis stressed the need for continued focus on homelessness. The West Valley should continue to build strong coalitions in this area. Ms. Hoffman concurred, noting that dialogue in the future will include affordable housing while also addressing the misinformation and preconceptions of affordable housing.

Mayor Weise agreed that there should be a focus on those who have been priced out of the housing and rental markets, despite being employed. He has directed staff to look at development of more workforce housing. This is a proactive action toward homelessness, as opposed to the constant reaction to homelessness.

Council Member Nielson recommended career outreach to high school students. Ms. Hoffman stated that they do have an education committee and they are discussing visiting schools to have career professionals provide an overview of a variety of potential career choices for students.

Vice Mayor Malone noted the rapid growth in the West Valley and asked how often key information is updated. Ms. Hoffman stated that they update all relevant data on an annual basis. Communication with MAG is ongoing, in order to identify changes in commute

patterns. Vice Mayor Malone asked about the possibility of getting statistics specific for the City of Avondale. Ms. Hoffman stated that they just received a grant that will allow subscription to a database to provide specific information by community and zip code.

In closing, Ms. Hoffman noted that WESTMARC is part of the Executive Committee of business leaders that is putting together a campaign strategy for proposition 400.

3. TRANSIT UPDATE

City Council received an update from Public Work's staff on the current state and proposed future of Avondale's Public Transit program. This item was for discussion only.

Harold Siquenza, Deputy Director of the Public Works Department, stated that the Maricopa County Association of Governments (MAG) recently completed an Avondale/Goodyear transit study to review the current state of transit services in the region. The current Federal Transit Administration urbanized zoned area designation will no longer apply to the Avondale/Goodyear urbanized area (UZA) starting in October of 2022. The 2020 census showed that the urbanized area now exceeds the population threshold for a small UZA and will likely move into the larger Phoenix/Mesa UZA. This means that Avondale will no longer receive federal funding assistance for operations moving forward; however, there is a current pool of unused federal assistance within the Avondale/Goodyear UZA that can be utilized. MAG hired a consulting firm to perform the transit study, which provided various recommendations that included a range of services and capital investments the City can implement to enhance transit services. The study not only looked at the Zoom circular, but reviewed other transit services, including fixed routes, paratransit, and express bus. Over the past few months, all public transit-related programs have been consolidated into the new Transit Division within Public Works.

The study revealed the following facts regarding the Zoom bus circular:

- North Avondale has low ridership
- Dysart corridor has better performing ridership
- Southeast Avondale has low ridership
- Customers pay 50 cents per ride, making it the only circular in the region that charges a fare

The consultant recommended a streamlined route to focus on high ridership segments, removal of the fee aspect, evaluation of the schedule of operation and potentially reducing the number of buses, to pilot a micro transit program in the north and northeast where current Zoom bus ridership is very low, to start in July 2022 and to be branded as Zoom on demand.

Micro transit is a hybrid model combining fixed routes and services such as Uber and Lyft. It features on-demand scheduling for pick-up and drop-off (virtual stops), which are predefined locations on the app. There are limited service zones generally within city limits. There is flexibility to add virtual stops and zones and services for special events. Vehicles include SUVs, vans and sedans. Proposed service areas were reviewed.

In terms of costs, Avondale's portion of the Zoom circulator is \$3.6 million, of which federal assistance of \$1.7 million is received. American Rescue Act funding has been received for this year in the amount of \$228,000 and \$22,000 in fare revenue is anticipated. The Zoom circular cost to the City is approximately \$1.6 million and is currently budgeted for Fiscal Year 2022. Costs should come down with reduction in the circular to approximately \$2 million and the City will continue to request federal funding at a 50/50 split. For the micro transit pilot program, the proposal is to use the current fund balance within the transit fund in the amount of \$800,000 with no additional ask from the General Fund. Moving into 2024, further reduction in Zoom bus service is anticipated at a potential cost of \$1 million with 50/50 federal government share. An expansion of micro transit is also anticipated in other areas of the City, with those costs to increase to approximately \$2 million with a requested 50/50 federal share. Other cities, such as Tolleson, are interested in the micro transit pilot and could be a potential partner. Next steps were reviewed.

Mayor Weise commented that he would like to proceed in partnership with other interested adjacent cities. He is open to testing a free fare system but believes it is important for riders to have a small stake, even for a very modest amount. For the areas in the northern part of the City in terms of ridership, it is important to look at the dominant communities, including Rancho Santa Fe, Garden Lakes and Crystal Gardens. These are single family communities where almost every home has at least one car, which explains why ridership is low. Ridership has the potential to increase as the City grows its recreation and entertainment products on Avondale Boulevard and McDowell Road. It makes little sense to run buses where ridership is very low. Micro transit solves this problem.

In response to a comment from Council Member Dennis, Mr. Siquenza stated that micro transit has some similarity to the older Dial-a-Ride concept, but has more of an Uber/Lyft feel in terms of the app. ADA requirements would have to be included as a component. For the pilot program, they are looking for a turnkey solution, which would mean an outside vendor would provide vehicles and drivers. Converting the actual Dial-A-Ride program to micro transit is not currently included in the overall proposal. Matt Dudley, Transit Manager, confirmed that such a conversion is not planned. Paratransit trips total only approximately 114 per week in the City. Avondale is currently in discussions with the City of Phoenix regarding paratransit and ADA requirements.

Council Member Dennis asked about the cost for micro transit services. Mr. Dudley stated that the Nelson\Nygaard study recommended that the first six months be free; however, the choice is up to the City. Los Angeles charges \$1 per trip with other cities at \$4 to \$5.

In response to a question from Council Member Dennis, Mr. Siquenza stated that generally, micro transit trips stay within city boundaries. Multiple zones and/or destination areas can be created within the City, if desired. Council Member Dennis asked whether the 50-cent fare has impacted ridership. Mr. Siquenza confirmed that it has been a barrier to entry, as riders are not able to use their Valley Metro Regional monthly pass for fare and do not always have cash on hand.

Council Member Conde said she was in favor of the creation of destination points. She also stressed the importance of addressing the needs of seniors, low-income, and student riders. In response to a question from Council Member Conde, Mr. Siguenza stated that micro transit vehicles can accommodate bike storage; however, research would need to be conducted with the providers to confirm availability.

Mr. Montoya noted that the community is growing significantly and there is a need to retain flexibility not only for The BLVD and the hospital corridor, but also for Alamar and special services for the racetrack. Issues to be worked out include the collection of fares, as mechanisms may not be available in micro transit vehicles, and customers may need to purchase fare at City Hall.

Council Member Kilgore reminisced on when the Zoom transit service was originally voted on. He spoke about his experience on committees, noting about how the youth had a new opportunity for transit to school with the creation of the Zoom transit service. He spoke about his personal experiences with frequently riding the bus in his youth. He is open to the conversations on either charging a fee or taking away the fee. He spoke positively on the effort to get people to ride the bus and he concurred with the comments from the other Council Members regarding the seniors and the destination spots.

Council Member Nielson commented about recently meeting a visually impaired woman who currently walks one mile to catch the bus. He stressed the need to get the word out regarding available services and it would also be helpful to have the Zoom bus go to Garden Lakes Parkway. He supports giving micro transit a try. Mayor Weise agreed that micro transit provides more flexibility. It is also important to look at what MAG is doing with the Prop 400 extension, which will provide funding for future technologies.

Mayor Weise noted that Neighborhood and Family Services staff can assist the woman Council Member Nielson spoke about.

Council Member Pineda said he would like to get to the root cause for the low ridership. As micro transit is introduced, it is important to gather data in terms of entertainment and recreation needs versus medical needs. He preferred a fee be charged initially to ensure the riders are not surprised with a fee later in the future.

Vice Mayor Malone agreed with Council Member Pineda regarding the fee and Council Members Conde and Dennis regarding the destination points. She asked whether the City would continue to outsource the program after the six-month trial period. Mr. Siguenza stated that there are multiple options, including a turnkey solution or a City-owned approach. In response to a question from Vice Mayor Malone, Mr. Dudley stated that currently no other cities in the County are operating micro transit programs. Flagstaff recently began a program and Lake Havasu City has a partnership with Uber. Arlington, Texas started with micro transit several years ago. In response to a question from Vice Mayor Malone, Mr. Siguenza clarified that the program will be a full-year pilot with a first review in six months. Goodyear and Tolleson are interested, but those discussions are ongoing.

Vice Mayor Malone inquired about the app being used in other cities. Mr. Siguenza stated that the micro transit providers provide the application, software, and platform with the City's marketing and branding. Vice Mayor Malone suggested that the app include a portal to accept payments. Mr. Siguenza confirmed that the app includes the ability to pay for fares. The City will determine the fee schedule.

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Council, Vice Mayor Malone moved to adjourn the Work Session meeting; Council Member Conde seconded the motion.

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

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

A **Regular Meeting** of the City Council of the City of Avondale, Arizona was convened using the Zoom Cloud Meeting platform in open and public session at 7:44 p.m. All participants attended by phone or video.

Mayor Kenn Weise led the Pledge of Allegiance, following a moment of silent reflection.

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

Members Absent: None.

Other Municipal Officials Present: Charles Montoya, City Manager; Cherlene Penilla, Assistant City Manager; Tracy Stevens, Deputy City Manager; Lindsey Duncan, Deputy City Manager; Nicholle Harris, City Attorney; Marcella Carrillo, City Clerk; Kirk Beaty, Public Works Director; Ken Chapa, Economic Development Services Director; Tony Corsi, Fire & Medical Director; Memo Espinoza, Police Chief; Keith Fallstrom, Interim Finance and Budget Director; Bryan Hughes, Parks and Recreation Director; Craig Jennings, Judge; Chris Lopez, Neighborhood and Family Services Director; Callie McGraw, Interim Human Resource Director; Dale Nannenga, Public Safety Chief; Marshall Pimentel, Intergovernmental Affairs Administrator; Abril Ruiz-Ortega, Court Administrator; Jeffrey Scheetz, Chief Information Officer; and Pier Simeri, Marketing and Public Relations Director.

Audience: Approximately ten members of the public were present.

1. ROLL CALL AND STATEMENT OF PARTICIPATION BY THE CITY CLERK

2. UNSCHEDULED PUBLIC APPEARANCES

None.

3. PRESENTATION ITEMS

a. PROCLAMATION - HONORING ROSALINDA BAYARDO

City Council presented a proclamation to Rosalinda Bayardo on the occasion of her retirement after fifteen years of dedicated service to the Avondale community.

Craig Jennings, Municipal Judge, expressed appreciation for Ms. Bayardo's service and gave an overview of her time at the City. Abril Ruiz-Ortega, Court Administrator, thanked Ms. Bayardo for her work and professionalism during her time at the City. Ms. Bayardo spoke words of appreciation to her co-workers and to the City. Mayor Weise read the proclamation into the record.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

Items on the consent agenda are of a routine nature or have been previously studied by the City Council at a work session. They are intended to be acted upon in one motion. Council members may pull items from consent if they would like them considered separately.

Mayor Weise asked if any Council Member wished to have an item removed from the Consent Agenda. Vice Mayor Malone requested agenda items 4a, 4b, 4c, and 4g be pulled for separate consideration. Having no additional requests from Council, motion was made by Vice Mayor Malone, seconded by Council Member Nielson, to approve the Consent Agenda with the exception of agenda items 4a, 4b, 4c, and 4g.

Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously 7 to 0.

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

a. BUDGET ADJUSTMENT FOR VARIOUS POSITIONS

This item was pulled from the consent agenda for further discussion. Item is listed below in more detail.

b. BUDGET ADJUSTMENT FOR DONNIE HALE PARK IMPROVEMENTS

This item was pulled from the consent agenda for further discussion. Item is listed below in more detail.

c. RESOLUTIONS 1091-1121 AND 1092-1121 - FULTON HOMES ACCLAIM MAINTENANCE IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO. 24

This item was pulled from the consent agenda for further discussion. Item is listed below in more detail.

d. ORDINANCE 2057-1121 - ACCEPTING DONATION OF REAL PROPERTY FOR A PUBLIC SEWER LIFT STATION AT PARKSIDE

City Council adopted Ordinance 2057-1121, authorizing the acceptance of real property located approximately 1,050 feet south of Clarendon Avenue and 2,600 feet west of 99th Avenue in the Parkside development and authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

e. ORDINANCE 2058-1121 - ACCEPTING DONATION OF REAL PROPERTY FOR A PUBLIC SEWER LIFT STATION AT FULTON HOMES ACCLAIM

City Council adopted Ordinance 2058-1121, authorizing the acceptance of real property located approximately 350 feet north of Thomas Road and 2,100 feet west of 99th Avenue in the Fulton Home Acclaim development and authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

f. ORDINANCE 2059-1121- ABANDONMENT OF EL MIRAGE ROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY

City Council adopted Ordinance 2059-1121, authorizing the abandonment of El Mirage Road right-of-way from Illini Street to 3,100 feet south of Illini Street, and authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

g. ORDINANCE 2060-1121 - ABANDONMENT OF 10TH STREET RIGHT-OF-WAY FOR TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PARCEL

This item was pulled from the consent agenda for further discussion. Item is listed below in more detail.

h. FINAL PLAT - FULTON HOMES ACCLAIM PHASE 1A - APPLICATION PL-21-0069

City Council approved a request by Ms. Tricia Baird, EPS Group, Inc., approving a Final Plat for Fulton Homes Acclaim Phase 1A, approximately 39.94 net acres located at the northwest corner of Thomas Road and 99th Avenue. Consistent with the Preliminary Plat approved by City Council on January 19, 2021, the proposed Final Plat will create 143 single-family residential lots, thirteen (13) common area open space/landscaping tracts, a future well site tract, and a sanitary sewer lift station tract, and dedicate easements as needed to serve the future development.

i. ALAMAR PHASE 3 – PRELIMINARY PLAT – APPLICATION PL-21-0128

City Council approved a request by Mr. Frank Koo, Wood, Patel & Associates, Inc., for approval of a Preliminary Plat for Alamar Phase 3, a proposed 345-lot single family subdivision on approximately 110.6 gross acres located approximately 1,400 feet north of the northeast corner of El Mirage Road and Southern Avenue.

j. ONE ARIZONA DISTRIBUTION OF OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS AGREEMENT

City Council approved the participation in the One Arizona Opioid Settlement and authorized the City Attorney to execute the One Arizona Distribution of Opioid Settlement Funds Agreement.

THE FOLLOWING ITEM WAS PULLED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA TO BE VOTED ON SEPERATELY:

a. BUDGET ADJUSTMENT FOR VARIOUS POSITIONS

City Council considered a request to authorize two new full-time equivalent (FTE) positions to include a Transit Manager, convert a Lead Planner position into two Project Coordinator positions, and authorize a budget adjustment in the amount of \$137,200 from the Unanticipated Resource appropriation to fund the Transit Manager position.

Vice Mayor Malone asked whether someone is already in the lead planner position. Jodie Novak, Assistant Director of Development and Engineering Services, stated that they had what was called a division lead planner, formerly staffed by Ken Galica. That position is currently vacant. They are interested in reclassifying the position to two new positions, which would be the project coordinators.

Vice Mayor Malone asked whether vacancy savings are for the department only or as an overall City vacancy savings. Deputy City Manager Lindsey Duncan stated that the vacancy savings are within the Development and Engineering Services for this fiscal year. In response to an additional question by Vice Mayor Malone, Lindsey Duncan, Deputy City Manager, stated there have been anywhere between six to eight vacant positions within the department at any given time.

Vice Mayor Malone moved to Motion to approve Agenda Item 4a; Council Member Dennis seconded the motion.

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

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

b. BUDGET ADJUSTMENT FOR DONNIE HALE PARK IMPROVEMENTS

City Council considered a request to: (a) approve funding for the Donnie Hale Park improvements; (b) approve a budget transfer of \$400,000 from the contingency appropriation; and (c) authorize the City Manager and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

Vice Mayor Malone asked about the timeline for the last renovations to Donnie Hale Park. Bryan Hughes said there were some renovations to the restroom structure approximately two years ago. The playground is about 10 to 12 years old. In response to a question by Vice Mayor Malone, Mr. Hughes explained the basketball court has some lighting; however, it is not complete, and the plan is for new LED lights.

Vice Mayor Malone asked about the quantity of additional ramadas. Mr. Hughes said there will be up to a total of three shaded picnic ramadas with an increase in picnic tables.

Vice Mayor Malone asked how the move of funding from Mountain View Park will affect that park's renovation budget. Mr. Hughes stated that the Mountain View project is not scheduled until next year and at that time, they will be able to apply ARPA funds to complete the project.

Vice Mayor Malone asked whether they are still planning to install a splash pad at 111th Avenue behind the bus stop. Mr. Montoya stated that they are unable to install a splash pad at the site due to the lack of drainage or piping. The City is continuing to look for suitable locations in the area.

Vice Mayor Malone moved to Motion to approve Agenda Item 4b; Council Member Pineda seconded the motion.

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

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

c. RESOLUTIONS 1091-1121 AND 1092-1121 - FULTON HOMES ACCLAIM MAINTENANCE IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO. 24

City Council considered a request to: (a) approve a Petition for Formation; (b) adopt Resolution 1091-1121, declaring its intention to form the City of Avondale Maintenance Improvement District No. 24, Fulton Homes Acclaim, providing for the assessment; (c) adopt Resolution 1092-1121, declaring its intention to order

the improvements within the newly established maintenance improvement district, providing for the assessment, declaring an emergency; and (d) authorize the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

Vice Mayor Malone asked whether Avondale would be forming its own board for this item. Mr. Novak stated that maintenance improvement districts are common for single family subdivisions, noting there is no separate board. The maintenance improvement district is usually on the agenda with a plat; however, in this case, it is running separately for this subdivision.

In response to a question from Council Member Dennis, Ms. Novak confirmed that the City does require a maintenance improvement district for platted subdivisions with HOA tracks.

Vice Mayor Malone moved to approve Agenda Item 4c; Council Member Conde seconded the motion.

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

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

g. ORDINANCE 2060-1121 - ABANDONMENT OF 10TH STREET RIGHT-OF-WAY FOR TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PARCEL

City Council considered a request to adopt Ordinance 2060-1121, authorizing the abandonment of a portion of N 10th Street right-of-way located between Riley Street and Western Avenue to create a parcel for Transitional Housing and authorize the Mayor or City Manager, City Clerk and City Attorney to execute the necessary documents.

Vice Mayor Malone inquired on the process and if public meetings have been held, Mr. Montoya stated that the transitional housing came before Council earlier this year for additional funding of \$600,000. The City has advertised for a company to assist with building the project. One individual submitting a proposal with no formal meetings on the project.

Vice Mayor Malone asked for clarification on what qualifies as transitional housing. Mr. Montoya stated that it would be for Avondale residents who currently reside in the City to receive services of transitional houses for three to six months to be determined by Neighborhood and Family Services.

Vice Mayor Malone moved to approve Agenda Item 4g; Council Member Dennis seconded the motion.

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

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

5. REGULAR AGENDA

a. PUBLIC HEARING - SIERRA ESTRELLA ENERGY STORAGE FACILITY – CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT – APPLICATION PL-21-0116

City Council held a public hearing and considered a request by Ms. Carolyn Oberholtzer, Bergin, Frakes, Smalley & Oberholtzer, for approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to allow an unstaffed, walled, open-air battery energy storage facility on approximately 11.5 acres of undeveloped/vacant property located west of the northwest corner of Avondale Boulevard and Broadway Road, immediately east of the Rudd (electrical) Substation. The subject site is located approximately 1,350 feet north of Broadway Road and approximately 1,900 feet west of Avondale Boulevard. The property is zoned Diamond P Ranch Planned Area Development (PAD) which allows for electrical energy storage and battery energy storage adjacent to public utility substations subject to City Council approval of a Conditional Use Permit.

Jodie Novak, Assistant Director of Development and Engineering Services, provided an overview of the property location, history, and surrounding uses. In 2018, there was a minor PAD zoning amendment, which allowed a private utility company to serve a public facility (SRP Rudd Substation), upon Council approval of the CUP. The facility will store energy obtained from the adjacent Rudd substation during times of off-peak usage. It would reintroduce that stored energy to the grid during periods of peak usage. It will include a walled-in facility that houses battery packs which store energy. It will also have a switch yard, which will deliver the power to the facility in conjunction with the Rudd substation. There will be drive aisles for access as well as landscape buffers. The site plan and landscape plan were reviewed. The Planning Division has reviewed the request and finds it is consistent with the General Plan and serves as a nice transition between the existing electrical substation and future developments in the area. It complies with the zoning ordinance in terms of setbacks, landscape and lighting. All public meetings and notifications have been completed. The Planning Commission voted to approve the CUP.

Council Member Dennis commented on the importance of fire suppression and fire department training on the fire hazards. Ms. Novak stated that public safety personnel are familiar with these facilities. The fire marshal reviewed this project and no concerns have been raised. Mr. Montoya stated that the fire department should already be trained

in these mechanisms through the mutual aid and training standards; however, they will be put through training at least in terms of a walk-through and any specific needs as determined by the fire marshal.

In response to a question from Council Member Conde, Ms. Novak stated she believes this will be the first of such storage facility in Avondale she does not believe they impact water usage. In response to a question by Council Member Conde, Ms. Novak stated that staff is not aware of any noise impacts that would disrupt or disturb the area. Council Member Conde asked about the appearance of the 70-foot tower. Ms. Novak stated that towers are part of the switch station, which is consistent with and shorter than some of the power towers already present at the Rudd substation. The battery storage packs have a maximum height of nine feet.

Council Member Kilgore inquired if the trees around the facility will block the view or provide a buffer, Ms. Novak stated that the double row of landscaping on the north, east and south sides will be on the exterior of a ten-foot masonry block wall. As the trees grow, they will continue to provide a visibility buffer for views into the facility from any future development in the area. Council Member Kilgore inquired if the trees would help prevent erosion in terms of being beneficial to the soil and the surrounding land. Ms. Novak stated the tree species to be planted has not yet been identified; however, for purposes of density, evergreens work well being planted between 15 to 20 feet apart and six feet away from the wall to ensure damage is not made to the wall.

Council Member Pineda stated that the presence of the Rudd station itself is a factor for residents considering moving into the Alamar area. It would be more beneficial if the business model were designed to benefit the residents via offset or lower electrical costs.

Carolyn Oberholtzer with Bergin, Frakes, Smalley & Oberholtzer, stated that SRP and all public utilities have a mandate to increase renewable energy supplies by 100 percent by 2070. As such, they are issuing proposals for companies to come in and provide battery storage as adjacent to the existing substations as possible. This parcel is primely situated adjacent to the Rudd substation. The substation is not attractive; however, the battery storage facility will be providing the ten-foot walls and landscape buffers. The battery packs will not be seen and there is no traffic or noise generation from the property. The battery storage facility will facilitate the power redundancy into the grid toward meeting renewable energy standards. There is a tremendous investment in these facilities at approximately \$1 million per megawatt. At full buildout, the facility will supply power to 150,000 homes at 250 megawatts. At the 250-megawatt full capacity, there is a \$250 million investment. As batteries continue to be replaced, the investment will continue to be made in the City, including the resulting sales tax dollars.

Mr. Montoya stated that the City is attempting to locate facilities such as these in lower impact traffic usage areas. Other proposed locations have been rejected because they do not fit in the proposed areas.

Council Member Nielson inquired as to the type of battery and the fire suppression methods used. Ms. Oberholtzer stated that water is the best fire suppression method for the lithium ion battery storage packs. The previous model of having the equipment stored indoors has been replaced with an outdoor storage model, which decreases fire potential. The systems are internally cooled and monitored and cells can be shut down remotely to prevent fires. Should a fire occur, mitigation includes multiple onsite fire hydrants. Site planning efforts will include close communication with the fire department.

Vice Mayor Malone asked about specific training for Avondale firefighters for this type of facility. Mr. Montoya stated that any necessary training will take place as the project moves through site design. The Avondale fire department is adequately trained, as they must be prepared to function within the mutual aid agreement throughout Maricopa County. Vice Mayor Malone asked about evacuation routes in the area in response to a potential explosion. Mr. Montoya stated that over the past 18 months, Assistant Fire Chief Rooney has been working on emergency plans Citywide, which is also coordinated with the State and Maricopa County.

Mayor Weise opened the public hearing and did not receive any requests to speak.

Mayor Weise cited a recent article which highlights facilities such as these being opened around the country in response to mandates for renewable electricity. There will likely be additional facilities in Avondale. It would be helpful for the Council to have discussions in terms of the next 20 years of sustainability and battery technology. Having gone through all the property channels, he is in favor of the project.

Vice Mayor Malone asked for the cited article be sent out to City Council.

Council Member Dennis moved to approve Application PL-21-0116 Sierra Estrella Energy Storage, a request for a Conditional Use Permit to allow a battery energy storage facility in the Diamond P Ranch Planned Area Development (PAD) zoning district, subject to two (2) conditions of approval listed in the staff report; Council Member Nielson seconded the motion.

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

Council Member Conde	Aye
Council Member Dennis	Aye
Council Member Kilgore	Aye
Council Member Nielson	Aye
Council Member Pineda	Aye
Vice Mayor Malone	Abstain (a vote in the affirmative)
Mayor Weise	Aye

6. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Council, Council Member Dennis moved to adjourn the Regular Meeting; Council Member Nielson seconded the motion.

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

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.



Kenn Weise (Jan 25, 2022 14:04 MST)

Kenn Weise, Mayor

CERTIFICATION AND ATTESTATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Work Session and Regular Meeting of the Council of the City of Avondale held on the 1st day of November 2021. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held, and that the quorum was present.



Marcella Carrillo, City Clerk

January 24, 2022

Date Approved by City Council