

MINUTES
REGULAR WORKSESSION
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF YUMA, ARIZONA
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS - YUMA CITY HALL
ONE CITY PLAZA, YUMA, ARIZONA
January 14, 2020
6:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Nicholls called the Regular City Council Worksession to order at 6:00 p.m.

Councilmembers Present:	Shelton, Morris, Watts, Knight, Shoop, and Mayor Nicholls
Councilmembers Absent:	McClendon
Staffmembers Present:	City Administrator, Philip A. Rodriguez Director of Parks & Recreation, Debbie Wendt Arts & Culture Program Manager, Lindsay Benacka City Engineer, Jeff Kramer Various department heads or their representatives City Attorney, Richard W. Files City Clerk, Lynda Bushong

I. ART CENTER UPDATE

Wendt introduced **Benacka** to present an update on the Art Center programs and future activities. **Benacka** began by stating the Art Center's mission, which is a vision for all members of the community to live creative lives by being a part of the arts.

Why Art?

- Community Investment and Economic Impact
- Youth Engagement and Arts Education
- Arts Matter in Arizona
- Yuma Art Center Annual Impact

Art Means Business – over \$265,000 in revenues collected in FY 2019

- Rentals
- Ticketing – YumaShowTickets.com
- Artwork Sales
- Other Revenue and Financial Impact

Yuma Art Center Facilities

- Historic Yuma Theatre
- 270 Main Street – Black Box Theatre
- Galleries and Gift Shop

Programs and Events

- Educational Programs
- Signature Events
- Community Engagement
- Special Opportunities in FY 2019

State and Federal Involvement

- Arts Advisory and Action Committee
- Legislation
- Arizona Commission on the Arts
- Arizona Creative Communities Initiative

Jaime Dempsey, Executive Director of the Arizona Commission on the Arts (Arts Commission), spoke about the exceptional quality and amount of programming available in Yuma, and the Arts Commission's commitment to encourage private funders to look at the great work that is happening in Yuma.

Discussion

- The Black Box Theatre is an alternative event space that is a good venue for private events and productions that are too small for the 643-seat Historic Yuma Theatre (**Watts/Benacka**)
- Art displays are promoted to travelers through the Yuma Visitors Bureau; local murals, galleries, and artists are prominently featured in the 2019-2020 Official Visitors Guide (**Shoop/Benacka**)
- Because of the insurance requirements for the art on loan to the Art Center, it would not be possible to display the art anywhere other than at the Art Center (**Shoop/Benacka**)

II. TREE AND SHADE MASTER PLAN

Naomi Leeman, Planning Consultant with the Department of Community Development, presented an overview of the Tree and Shade Master Plan as follows:

What is the plan?

- The purpose of the plan is to create a healthier, more livable, and prosperous Yuma by investing in the care and maintenance of the urban forest and shade structures.
- Guidance for this plan comes from the Conservation, Environment, and Energy element of the General Plan, which calls for a plan to guide the overall management and preservation of the tree canopy and to promote walkability and mitigate heat island effect.
- It is also mentioned in the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space element, and the Transportation element calls for some of the features that are found within this plan.
- Several major cities nationwide and many other Arizona cities – Phoenix, Tucson, Avondale, Scottsdale – all have tree plans of a similar nature.

Who will use this plan?

- To make a measurable increase in Yuma's urban tree canopy, the City will need action from the public; there is no way the City can accomplish this goal alone.

How was the plan developed?

- This plan was developed as a partnership between the City and the public.

Why do we need trees?

- Trees in the urban environment provide numerous health, safety, environmental, and economic benefits.
- A study funded through the Arizona Department of Forestry & Fire Management in 2015 found that the 198 trees in Smucker Park provide a benefit of \$12,127 each year.

Existing conditions

- Yuma's current tree canopy coverage is 3.5%
- The City maintains about 7,500 trees, or approximately 8% of Yuma's urban forest

Public input

- Planning Task Force – 26 active members met monthly to guide the development of the plan
- Community meeting – approximately 50 attendees
- Online information – draft of the plan available online for public review and comment
- Public survey – 445 respondents replied to the online survey, and over 500 copies of the survey were distributed to 5th grade students from five different schools, one from each school district.

Creating a shared vision

- The vision set in the plan is to double Yuma's tree canopy from 3.5% to 7% by planting approximately 100,000 trees; the maximum tree canopy recommended for desert cities is about 15%.
- Tree planting opportunity areas are in streets and rights-of-way, parks and open spaces, and on private property.
- Tree planting prioritization – walkability, safety, equity, and aesthetics

Review and update policy

- Community tree projects – based on recommendations from the Task Force, 20 unique tree planting and outreach projects were developed to implement the goals of the plan
- Trees for Yuma Consortium is being formed to spearhead urban forestry efforts throughout Yuma
- Policies and Procedures
- Funding
- Outreach & Education
- Measuring & Tracking Success

Leeman introduced Planning Task Force members: **Suzanne Cooper**, **Mark Headington**, and **Frank Saldaña**, who spoke about their participation on this task force and the importance of trees to the community.

Discussion

- This plan does not change any of the City's laws regarding trees, nor has the Planning Task Force recommended any changes at this time (**Mayor Nicholls/Leeman**)
- Local tree-related businesses and professionals were invited to participate on the Planning Task Force (**Shoop/Leeman**)

- A recommended plant list was created during the update of the City's Landscape Regulations, and that list is available to the public (**Watts/Leeman**)
- The planting of appropriate trees and plants, especially native trees and plants, is encouraged whenever possible (**Watts/Headington**)
- It is as important to preserve existing trees as it is to plant new trees (**Shelton/Headington**)
- Current landscape regulations require that a tree be planted on developed lots that are 5,000 square feet or larger (**Morris/Leeman**)
- The study of the trees at Smucker Park utilized the i-Tree calculator to determine the economic benefit of the trees based on the type, size, location, and other factors (**Morris/Leeman**)
- The Tree City USA designation shows the City's commitment to providing trees for the community and also provides opportunities for the City to apply for grants (**Morris/Leeman/Wendt**)
- There currently is not an estimate regarding additional staff needed to reach the goal of 100,000 trees in 10 years, however this may be brought to City Council in the future (**Morris/Wendt**)
- Curb extensions would allow additional space for trees, but would not necessarily require wider roads or larger rights-of-way (**Morris/Leeman**)
- With approximately 40,000 households in the City, it would take only two trees per household within residential areas to nearly meet the 100,000 tree goal (**Morris/Leeman**)
- City Council should proceed cautiously due to the potential costs of this plan (**Morris**)
- Plans implemented by the City do not necessarily need to be funded by the City, and private sector involvement should be encouraged (**Mayor Nicholls**)
- Shade structures are not included in the tree canopy coverage for this plan, but they do reduce the trees required in parking lots based on the Landscape Regulations (**Mayor Nicholls/Leeman**)

III. REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA OF JANUARY 15, 2020

Motion Consent Agenda Item B.13 – Job Order Authorization: 8th Street and Castle Dome Intersection Improvements (execute a job order with SWP Contracting & Paving in the amount of \$1,150,241.89) (Engineering)

Mayor Nicholls declared a conflict of interest on Motion Consent Agenda Item B.13, turned the meeting over to Deputy Mayor Knight, and left the dais.

Discussion

- This Job Order Authorization is a continuation of the roadwork that was done by the Arizona Department of Transportation and will complete the repaving of 8th Street to the Pacific Avenue Athletic Complex (**Watts/Kramer**)
- The developer of the property at 8th Street and Castle Dome has contributed \$279,800 towards these improvements rather than completing improvements as part of their development which would then need to be removed in order to complete this project (**Watts/Kramer**)

Mayor Nicholls returned to the dais.

IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion (Knight/Watts): To adjourn the meeting to Executive Session. Voice vote: **adopted** 6-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Lynda L. Bushong, City Clerk

APPROVED:

Douglas J. Nicholls, Mayor

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