

Meeting Minutes

City Council Special Meeting

October 18, 2021 | 1:00 p.m.
City Hall Training Rooms A and B
175 S. Arizona Ave., Chandler, AZ



Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Kevin Hartke at 1:03 p.m.

Roll Call

Council Attendance

Mayor Kevin Hartke
Vice Mayor Mark Stewart
Councilmember OD Harris
Councilmember René Lopez
Councilmember Christine Ellis
Councilmember Matt Orlando

Appointee Attendance

Josh Wright, Acting City Manager
Debra Stapleton, Assistant City Manager
Dawn Lang, Deputy City Manager/CFO
Kelly Schwab, City Attorney
Dana DeLong, City Clerk

Absent

Councilmember Terry Roe – absent/excused

Staff in Attendance

Matt Burdick, Communications and Public Affairs Director
Ryan Peters, Governmental Relations and Policy Manager
Micah Miranda, Economic Development Director
Cori Harris, Mayor and Council Communications Manager
Alexis Apodaca, Governmental Relations Coordinator

ASU Staff in Attendance

Melissa McCann, Director University City Exchange
Warde Nichols, Executive Director Government and Community Engagement
Duke Reiter, Executive Director University City Exchange
Aric Bopp, Executive Director Knowledge Enterprise
Lev Gonick, Chief Information Officer Smart City Architect
Ji Mi Choi, Vice President Knowledge Enterprise

Discussion

1. Welcome and Introductions

MAYOR HARTKE welcomed everyone to the meeting. Mayor Hartke said the City is proud of their vision to be a world class city that provides an exceptional quality of life. And through their commitment to residents and businesses, Council has put together five focus areas that drive the strategic planning process and objectives as they continue to look to the future. Council understands that the best way to advance these goals is through partnerships at all levels. Within the economic vitality focus, there is a strategic goal of partnerships with higher education, workforce development, and entrepreneurship programs. Mayor Hartke said there are a lot of jobs in Chandler and they want to strengthen the relationship with all of the educational institutions. Mayor Hartke hoped this meeting would serve as a launch point for future endeavors and cooperation between both organizations.

2. Discussion of Partnerships between Arizona State University and the City of Chandler

MICAH MIRANDA, Economic Development Director, said on the economic development side it is important to have a deep relationship with the colleges to create a pipeline of workers in the community. Mr. Miranda said prior to COVID-19 the ACIC was going well, and ASU did a phenomenal job bringing that facility up to what it should be. Mr. Miranda talked about the innovations and entrepreneurship that was happening in ACIC. Due to COVID-19 there has been a pause, but they want to relaunch the space. Mr. Miranda asked how ACIC could really be a destination in the Valley and how they could add additional programming. Mr. Miranda asked what they could do with an activation schedule and launch this in the next 60-90 days.

Jl MI CHOI, Vice President Knowledge Enterprise, thanked Mr. Miranda for his comments on the ACIC. Ms. Choi talked about the bankruptcy and ASU was able to buy out of the bankruptcy and it took about a year to get everything back up to code and running again. Ms. Choi said in November 2019 is when the maker space was relaunched and discussed the different community-based groups and partnerships using the space. In November 2019 people started signing up for memberships again and using the space and then March 2020 COVID-19 happened. In January 2020 they had six fulltime staff and in March 2020 those staff members could not work remotely. By April they began to lose some of the staff members. Ms. Choi said they are rehiring all of the staff.

MS. CHOI said they are continuing to work with Chandler Innovations and made the ACIC a step out space for Chandler Innovations clients. They pay \$86 a month and there are currently five companies working out of there. Ms. Choi said they are reconnecting with all of the organizations they previously worked with. Ms. Choi said they are using the maker space for a new program. There are two fulltime people left in that space and they are recalibrating how to bring the maker space back. They are now designing programs around the maker space. The idea is to work with K-12 stem teachers and teach them how to make different things and the beginnings of robots.

Ms. Choi said they have had a number of events through there with students and faculty. Ms. Choi said they are restarting the maker space as a studio model. An idea is to host studio nights as a pilot to start. They want to bring the space to be available and reactive the community interest.

MS. CHOI said there were many things about the maker space that were great but there were things that did not work. Ms. Choi said they need to create a welcoming culture to have people who work together. Ms. Choi said they want the culture to be a community practice and people are not clashing with each other who are working on a different type of product. Ms. Choi wants the City to be a part of the activation schedule.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO said he liked the new business model and asked if there was enough space as the classroom model takes off.

MS. CHOI said yes, for now.

COUNILMEMBER ORLANDO said he would love to see the classrooms come back as it drives the economics.

MAYOR HARTKE said the advantage of the current location is connecting people and is integral to downtown. Mayor Hartke asked if this would continue to be available to ASU students.

MS. CHOI said they would like to see that, but they are trying to navigate what it would look like. Ms. Choi said it is an interesting challenge right now as they need to hire staff in order to have a safe environment. In the past they had a lot of students from the Mesa campus because their maker space closed earlier and this one was open later so there was overflow. Ms. Choi said this is an ASU issue not a Chandler issue.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS asked about the digital space.

MS. CHOI said the digital creative studio gives people a chance to understand what it means to do a podcast or shoot videos. Ms. Choi said they are working closely on the three-sided model of content control, media platforms, and users and how people are able to monetize their social media accounts. This space gives people a chance to experiment with that and create a community of practice.

MAYOR HARTKE said they have opened The Makery in the library and does not see competition in this but sees it as complimentary.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS asked how the City is involved with ASU on this space.

MR. MIRANDA said it is a City owned facility that ASU leases.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS said there was something that was thriving and then the City did not shut down but ASU shut down and the constituents could not use this space. Councilmember Ellis asked what assurances there are so the City could continue to be a partner.

MS. CHOI said the concern was that it was an unprecedented health issue. All of the employees are ASU employees, and some people were onsite and some could work from home. Ms. Choi said they are still navigating reopening and did not have the answer yet. Ms. Choi said it was important to be fair to all of the employees and to follow the same protocol for everyone. Ms. Choi said she would be open, if a shutdown happens again, to have City employees that manages it. Ms. Choi said Chandler Innovations was able to access the space.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS said it was very limited and they need to find how to move forward.

MAYOR HARTKE said they had full access to the space, not the tools. Mayor Hartke said he understood not having ASU staff there.

MELISSA McCANN, Director University City Exchange, said their office works with external partners to bring together an idea of regional planning options. Ms. McCann said all the Council's focus areas are embedded in the way they work on projects with the City and other organizations. Ms. McCann said they currently work with other municipalities to work on quality of life and address certain urban planning initiatives. In that collective they are usually leveraging other industry partnerships and nonprofits in the community to help be part of the process or solution. In the past they have leveraged research partners in the University. Ms. McCann said they are currently the facilitator for the river revitalization project in Maricopa County for the Salt and Gila Rivers. They are working with the different tribes and cities on the project and are bringing resources to the project and facilitating meetings. Ms. McCann said they are also working with Phoenix on creating an arts and culture district in downtown Phoenix. Ms. McCann said there is a strategic vision that is embedded in their office and work with many partners on grant opportunities and private sector resources. It may not always relate to a physical environment but may impact it.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS asked about the partnership with the City of Phoenix.

MS. McCANN said they engaged in a visioning session with the City to come up with an idea around existing institutions in the downtown and how to complement those to add dynamic activities and develop what was missing. Ms. McCann said they developed a vision concept and that created discussion with other arts and culture community organizations and a campaign to reach out larger art institutes for traveling exhibits. Ms. McCann said they are still working on this initiative.

VICE MAYOR STEWART said clearly ASU is committed to the customer experience. Vice Mayor Stewart said he would like to see a partnership with ASU on studies regarding sustainability projects. This creates a direct conduit between the City and ASU.

MS. McCANN said a lot of their work is centered around urban resilience and sustainability such as heat mitigation. Ms. McCann said they may be able to bring in partners to the conversation that are not currently. Ms. McCann said they are working on an urban forestry initiative and have leveraged a number of community organizations, parks department, and schools. ASU has a carbon offset program that gives a stipend for planting trees.

MAYOR HARTKE said there are Councilmembers interested in planting more trees and they are learning more about low water use plants.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO said there are a lot of things they can do such as solar and building colors. Councilmember Orlando said he would like to brainstorm some ideas to bring to Council.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS said he would like to see Chandler more lively and felt there was not enough art in Downtown Chandler. The City is doing a light study to make the Downtown more lively. Councilmember Harris he wanted to see more creative spaces and more inviting spaces.

MAYOR HARTKE said staff would discuss with Council on what options the City has to put their best foot forward.

ARIC BOPP, Executive Director Knowledge Enterprise, said they want to support the Arizona Commerce Authority, Greater Phoenix Economic Council, and local economic development communities to make Arizona an attractive place for companies to locate. Mr. Bopp said they work with a lot of projects and they are often the first people from ASU to interact with a company. Mr. Bopp said they assist companies in choosing a location and may bring the utility companies to the table as well. Mr. Bopp said they wanted to ensure all of their resources are at the table to really show why Arizona is the best place to be and not another state. In addition, ASU has several real estate innovation zones that would be developed over time and wanted to find good tenants for those zones. Mr. Bopp said some days Mr. Miranda and Mr. Bopp are working together to get a tenant and other days they are competing against each other. Mr. Bopp said ASU is there to support economic development in Chandler. Last year, they touched 319 different projects and hosted about 43 prospect visits and located about 11 projects in the innovation zone portfolio and 13 projects in the Valley. Mr. Bopp said they want to create meaningful job opportunities for Arizona residents.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO said he wanted to ensure jobs were in Chandler and thanked ASU for their support.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS asked when there would be an ASU annex in Chandler so they could keep their dollars in Chandler.

MR. BOPP said he would defer to other staff members regarding that.

MAYOR HARTKE said it was a process and they have never gone out like Mesa for a bond to secure something like that.

VICE MAYOR STEWART said he heard about the seven innovation zones and said there could be an opportunity to create an innovation zone in the Price Corridor.

MR. BOPP said some of the innovation zones are owned by the cities they are located in and it would be a possibility to have an innovation zone in Chandler as long as it makes sense.

VICE MAYOR STEWART said there are some incredible organizations to put some wind behind that to make it happen.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO said there has always been the desire innovate and see what they could actually do to support that.

COUNCILMEMBER LOPEZ said it was great to see the relationship. Councilmember Lopez talked about the Valley area and how others view Arizona and how to show what Arizona is actually like.

LEV GONICK, Chief Information Officer Smart City Architect, said before COVID-19 the technology community got together to discuss being connected amongst all the cities and leverage core competencies in each area. Mr. Gonick said this is an ongoing collective that is important. From that connective, they put together a regionwide Broadband Task Force as there is unprecedented federal stimulus dollars and broadband is on the table for investment opportunities. They are working to help connect the underserved and under connected residents in the Valley and there is a series of initiatives underway and is a requirement of some of the grants. Broadband is not a nice to have which was shown during the pandemic and there is uneven growth in the Valley. Mr. Gonick said at one of the innovation zones there is a series of technology partners and AWS with ASU has set up a cloud innovation center to address water management, pedestrian and cityscapes, and mapping tools regarding broadband.

COUNCILMEMBER LOPEZ talked about broadband providers and that there are Cox connections throughout all of Chandler and the City is doing well. They do have a program for lower income households to get broadband at a lower cost or free. Councilmember Lopez asked if those programs were being leveraged across the Valley.

MR. GONICK said the Valley is their largest customer and they would love to work with ASU. Cox is another tenant in the Sky Song facility to work on the internet of things. Cox said they do not know how to engage the community to let them know the program is available so they are looking to ASU help them work with the local community.

COUNCILMEMBER LOPEZ thought it would be good to work with the schools.

MR. GONICK said in many cities about a third of the households do not have broadband at home and there are opportunities to get them that. Mr. Gonick said broadband is a necessary investment and it is part of everyone's everyday life. Mr. Gonick said if they can engage students to work on these types of projects during their academic journey they are more likely to stay in the area. There are just under 100,000 IT professionals in the Valley and they need to increase that pipeline of talent and keep them in the region to get to the next tier of 200,000 to 250,000 IT professionals.

COUNCILMEMBER LOPEZ departed at 2:11 p.m.

COUNCILMEMBER HARRIS talked about the CUSD technology programs and ASU should have a pipeline of students as well as Chandler Gilbert Community College. Chandler is a city of innovation, and they want to find a great way to produce the next generation of IT professionals. There needs to be more conversations about certificate programs and wanted to see how to partner with different entities to close the gap. Councilmember Harris thanked ASU for the conversation regarding these issues.

COUNCILMEMBER ELLIS said when COVID-19 happened it opened the door for us to see where there are problems. Councilmember Ellis asked if the City was part of the Broadband Task Force. Councilmember Ellis asked about having an ASU Annex so they can keep moving forward.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO thanked ASU and they have had numerous meetings over the years. The City just did a facilities study and a bond item for municipal buildings. Councilmember Orlando said there is land downtown, and they could look at modeling something for the downtown area for a partnership. There could be an anchor in downtown Chandler to address some issues around energy, education, and environment and if they do not address these, they would not be successful in their goals. Councilmember Orlando asked to consider a small steering committee to see what could be possible.

MAYOR HARTKE thanked ASU for the updates and seeing how they could mobilize some urban planning concepts. There are a lot of partnership opportunities.

MS. CHOI said they would bring these items back to ASU leadership to increase ASU's presence in Chandler.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 2:22 pm.

ATTEST: *Dana R. DeLong*
City Clerk

Kevin Hartke
Mayor

Approval Date of Minutes: December 6, 2021

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Special Meeting of the City Council of Chandler, Arizona, held on the 18th day of October 2021. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

DATED this 6th day of December 2021.

Dana R. DeLong
City Clerk

