

Meeting Minutes

City Council Neighborhoods Subcommittee Meeting

May 7, 2024 | 3:00 p.m.

City Hall 5th Floor Large Conference Room

175 S. Arizona Ave., Chandler, AZ



Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:01 p.m.

Roll Call

Subcommittee Attendance

Councilmember Angel Encinas
Councilmember Matt Orlando
Councilmember Jane Poston

Staff Attendance

Leah Powell
Amy Jacobson
Guy Jaques
Lauren Schumann
Andy Bass

David de la Torre
Kevin Mayo
Alexis Apodaca
Dawn Gingerich
LaTisha Gilmore

Discussion

1. Potential 2024 Code Amendments

LAUREN SCHUMANN, Principal Planner, introduced this item and presented information on potential code amendments for 2024.

MS. SCHUMANN noted that Council met in January 2024, discussing code amendments related to neighborhoods. In that meeting, Council requested additional information. The intent of the presentation is to fulfill council's request to the last meeting. The first item brought forth is the Affordable Housing Parking Requirements. Reevaluated parking requirements for multi-family housing units. In discussion with the Arizona Multihousing Association asked if the city would consider amending the code to come up with reduced parking reduction for developers providing affordable housing. Last year, the city approved a 157-unit affordable housing project with Gorman & Company.

KEVIN MAYO, Planning Administrator, shared information about the process of determining parking. Mr. Mayo said that we generally benchmark against other valley cities and cities across the country. There was limited data available from other comparable cities.

MR. MAYO referred to a cost burden report from the Department of Transportation that provided data regarding household income and the number of vehicles per household. Gorman & Company and Dominion data shows that East Valley affordable housing tenants have a different vehicular characteristic versus other areas of the valley, particularly Phoenix. Gorman and Dominion have advised to not use Phoenix as the model. As of last week, no other city has adopted affordable housing reduced parking numbers. The numbers provided in the presentation are representative of the current available data.

MS. SCHUMANN explained that a reduced parking requirement was proposed last year for units reserved for residents with an income of 31-80% Area Median Income (AMI). Studios to two bedrooms are required to have one parking space, and three to five bedrooms must have one and a half parking spaces. Senior housing for ages 55 and over would require .75 spaces per unit. For example, a 100-unit development would require 231 parking spaces by our current code, 113 parking spaces with the proposed parking reduction code changes, and 100 parking spaces if the development was for a proposed senior living site.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS asked about the correlation between income and parking spaces and affordable housing.

MR. MAYO answered that parking spaces have a cost tied to them whether they are surface, covered, or structure. Once you break under a certain percent of AMI, they do not generate that many cars, so instead of building more asphalt and it does not get used, we can either put more units on it or make it fit on a smaller parcel. The main reason is to help incent affordable housing and it is also an ask of the Multihousing Association.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS requested more data that explains this further.

MR. MAYO said he would provide the transportation cost burden annual report.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS noted that he is trying to better understand the correlation of the affordable housing and parking, especially with the likelihood that affordable housing would be multifamily and might have multiple vehicles. He asked if the reduction of parking is going to increase the number of affordable housing units while adding that he does not feel that we have a lot of data yet or enough experience with it.

MR. MAYO answered that the goal is to incent affordable builders to build affordable housing units in Chandler. If there is a development that wants to reserve a certain number of units, then the parking ratios would only apply to those units and the other units would be at the market rate.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS asked if the public housing units that we have would be accommodated and added to the number of parking units at Villas on McQueen.

LEAH POWELL, Neighborhood Resources Director, responded that there are 157 units for Villas on McQueen and 78 of those units will be transfers from public housing sites. An inventory was taken of the cars for those 78 units. Staff found that we do not need 78 spots for those 78 units as the number of cars came in below that number. There will be 157 parking spaces for the 157 units at Villas on McQueen.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if there was a ratio being used to compare parking and housing units and if we can determine that median number.

MR. MAYO responded they normally draw their findings from a huge pool of data, however, that data is very limited here in the valley. The number produced was based on data currently available.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON asked if the city regulates the size of the housing unit based on the number of people living in an affordable housing unit.

MS. POWELL answered yes, under public housing the city adjusts bedroom sizes based on the family and if that family grows or shrinks, those units are adjusted, keeping in mind that there may be a wait list. Additionally, there are ratios considered that include age, gender, etc.

AMY JACOBSON, Housing and Redevelopment Senior Manager, added that public housing tenants must register their vehicles. Additionally, there are assigned parking spots for public housing tenants as well as visitor and handicap parking spots.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON asked if an affordable housing project has a similar breakdown of units set aside for partially leased and affordable housing like the private sector and would we be expecting that affordable housing to double considering the market.

MS. POWELL responded that it depends on the funding source. Some funding sources have specific regulations.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON asked if it was possible that we would end up with more people in affordable housing units.

MS. JACOBSON added that income qualifications are based on the household, so there would not be an increase in the number of people living in one household.

MS. POWELL added that if there are units where an application is required, the tenant must identify everyone in the household and meet the income qualifications.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked about the percentage of parking spots filled at our current senior housing sites.

MS. JACOBSON responded that not all the senior parking spots are currently being used.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS expressed his concern by noting that he does not feel comfortable moving forward with this amendment without more data at this time.

COUNCILMEMBERS ORLANDO and POSTON expressed a similar sentiment.

The consensus of the Subcommittee was not to proceed with this proposed code amendment at this time.

GUY JAQUES, Neighborhood Preservation Senior Manager, introduced the presentation on potential code amendments on property maintenance regarding inoperable vehicles. The goal of the amendment is to limit the number of inoperable or project vehicles in a backyard area screened by a substantially opaque fence.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked how many people we cite for inoperable vehicles.

MR. JAQUES said he does not have the data in front of him, however, there were nine cases reported regarding inoperable vehicles in rear yards this year, in 2022 there were seven cases, and in 2021 there were eight cases.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if there are code violations associated with inoperable vehicles.

MR. JAQUES responded yes and that residents usually keep inoperable vehicles for projects.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if there are safety concerns tied to this code violation.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON brought up the concern from residents, stating that if one cannot physically see the inoperable vehicles, why do we care about the issue.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO shared his concern with noise and potential hazards and how we are enforcing that.

MR. JAQUES responded that code enforcement does not have a noise ordinance as that falls under the Police Department.

MS. POWELL noted that if there is suspicion that this is a home-based business, then the code inspector assigned to that case will refer the case for further investigation.

MR. JAQUES added that this code violation is typically found in traditional neighborhoods.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if we are moving forward with a recommendation of two vehicles and opaque fencing.

MR. JAQUES said yes and stated that we would be amending a code that was in place before 2021.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS asked Mr. Jaques to further explain how code enforcement officers enforce this code violation.

MR. JAQUES answered that if a code enforcement officer is unable to view from normal height level and they are not able to establish a code violation, they do not have any evidence to move forward which makes the case unfounded, thus resulting in a closed code case.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON expressed concern about the blanket statement of the code violation and noted that residents with block fences might have an advantage. She asked if a resident with a chain linked fence could have two vehicles in their backyard.

MS. POWELL clarified that residents with a chain linked fence are permitted to have inoperable vehicles in the backyard if it meets the definition of a screen.

MR. JAQUES added that there are no codes that address operable vehicles.

MS. POWELL also noted that operable vehicles must be registered and show no signs that they are inoperable.

The consensus of the Subcommittee was to amend the previously proposed code language to address inoperable vehicles and opaque fencing to meet requirements of the City Code.

MR. JAQUES moved the presentation forward and introduced Resolution No. 5361 addressing Extended Use of Temporary Signage. He explained that we are currently unable to address temporary sign code violations.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON asked if we hear complaints from residents about temporary signage.

MR. JAQUES stated that we have data regarding bandit signs. He noted that there are code inspectors assigned to pull temporary bandit signs as well. Additionally, staff are not allowed to address campaign signs after May 27 this year.

MS. POWELL said that with the sign enforcement process, staff will work with businesses to do an education campaign within 30 days of Council action.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS asked if businesses are required to follow protocol for a grand opening. He followed up with the question on how they can get a permit and for how many days.

MR. JAQUES responded that businesses can apply for a permit 30 days within a 6-month period. Staff checks to see if there is a permit on file.

The consensus of the Subcommittee was to lift the moratorium on temporary signage. Along with lifting the moratorium, Code Enforcement would be allowed to follow their proposed education plan after the Chandler City Council 2024 General Election.

2. Comprehensive Housing Plan

MS. POWELL introduced the next presentation on the comprehensive housing plan.

MS. JACOBSON explained the definition of housing and the housing continuum.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if housing inventory is decreasing or increasing.

MR. MAYO responded that the housing inventory is currently static. Additionally, funding sources are not releasing the funds.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked how the depreciation of the land affects the second loan.

MR. MAYO responded that the total value of the project must increase.

MS. JACOBSON continued the presentation.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked why we need 17,000 housing units.

MS. JACOBSON clarified that we need 17,000 housing units to be able to meet existing affordable housing needs.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS referred to slide 20 of the presentation and asked if the affordable units listed were only from 2018 to 2024.

MS. POWELL clarified that the data provided on slide 20 of the presentation was from before 2018.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if this includes scattered sites.

MS. POWELL stated that the number does not include scattered sites as the city's Public Housing Authority provides 303 units which consists of 163 family units, 37 senior units, and 103 single-family homes.

MR. MAYO transitioned the presentation to discuss permitting processes and timelines, including actions and strategies related to affordable housing locations.

MS. POWELL transitioned into information regarding the Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA), Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV), and Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) actions and strategies as well as current happenings.

MS. JACOBSON explained that there is a supply gap for existing units and existing households able to afford those units.

MS. POWELL highlighted the elements of a comprehensive housing plan in addition to a timeline for next steps.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked what we do with the comprehensive housing plan.

MS. POWELL responded that it goes into our other guiding documents, such as the General Plan. It helps with conversation regarding future land use, redevelopment, and locations for future sites. It also provides more guiding principles for the future, especially with developers.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked what about a piece of property that needs to be redeveloped. For example, a property analyzed in the Four Corners Study.

MS. POWELL responded that it establishes the intent of what we are aiming toward.

MS. POWELL resumed the presentation and highlighted the steering committee and stakeholders.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked what we are doing in the short term.

MS. POWELL said that in the short term, we are assessing the direction for the land that we currently own and for future areas that we do not currently own. The intention is that the Comprehensive Housing Plan will serve as a guide.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked to elaborate on the non-profit entity related to Villas on McQueen.

MS. POWELL explained that because we are owners in the Villas on McQueen, the city had to form a nonprofit corporation entity called Chandler Housing and Community Services. Under that entity, Villas on McQueen CHCS, LLC, was created to have the ownership and managing piece of the new development. For Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) deals, we need to have a non-profit in place.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON suggested proactivity to get developers involved in our comprehensive plan. She also suggested getting the developer and business community involved in the steering committee and stakeholders' group.

MS. JACOBSON added that we must look at the process holistically and consider affordability to all income levels.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS asked if we have a toolkit for developers to follow with our top requirements in what we would like to have developed.

MR. MAYO suggested drafting a policy to give to our frequently used developers.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked what if we set aside a certain amount of funds to offset the cost of the project.

MS. JACOBSON added that through the Public Housing Authority, the city can issue project-based vouchers to offset the cost.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked how we can become a catalyst for building affordable housing and explore that idea as we move forward in creating a Comprehensive Housing Plan. This includes long and short-term plans.

The consensus of the Subcommittee was to move forward in the development of a Comprehensive Housing Plan .

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:51 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. G. Amore", written over a horizontal line.

Recording Secretary