

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Mayor Shimoni called the Special Meeting of the Flagstaff City Council held February 21, 2019, to order at 11:01 a.m.

NOTICE OF OPTION TO RECESS INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431.02, notice is hereby given to the members of the City Council and to the general public that, at this regular meeting, the City Council may vote to go into executive session, which will not be open to the public, for legal advice and discussion with the City's attorneys for legal advice on any item listed on the following agenda, pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431.03(A)(3).

2. ROLL CALL

NOTE: One or more Councilmembers may be in attendance telephonically or by other technological means.

PRESENT:

VICE MAYOR SHIMONI (telephonically)
COUNCILMEMBER ASLAN (telephonically)
COUNCILMEMBER MCCARTHY (telephonically)
COUNCILMEMBER ODEGAARD (telephonically)
COUNCILMEMBER SALAS (telephonically)

ABSENT:

MAYOR EVANS
COUNCILMEMBER WHELAN

Others present: City Manager Barbara Goodrich; City Attorney Sterling Solomon.

3. FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Ms. Goodrich introduced the City's Federal Lobbyists Bob Holmes and Ana Ma who reviewed the City's federal priorities and the agenda for the upcoming Washington D.C. trip.

Mr. Homes stated that the City should focus on local priorities and parochial concerns such as the Rio de Flag, 4FRI, and DACA. Mr. Holmes then provided updates on the following items:

RIO DE FLAG

Rio de Flag received \$1.3 million in FY 2018 work plan funding in May to complete 100% design. The Notice to Proceed (NTP) for the 100% design was issued on August 24, 2018 and it is expected to be completed in approximately 20 months. The City and the Corps have formalized an agreed to timeline with milestones. Commanding General of the Army Corps of Engineers,

Lieutenant General Todd Semonite, and District Commander, Colonel Aaron Barta, and key Corps staff will be touring and meeting with City officials on Wednesday, October 17, 2019. The goal for fiscal year 2019 work plan funds is to complete the Lower Reach up to the confluence which is estimated to cost approximately \$40 million.

Deputy City Manager Shane Dille stated that the focus of the upcoming trip to Washington D.C. will be to join voices with the General's Office to get the desired allocation for the work plan.

Council agreed that the Rio de Flag should be the primary focus for the D.C. agenda.

FOURTH STREET PROJECT

The City has worked diligently to land a BUILD (formerly TIGER) grant for this project in the amount of \$11.75 million. The project has continually gained momentum most recently landing on ADOT's Five-Year Plan.

Councilmember Odegaard stated that the City has been advocating for a long time on the project and have been passed over so many times, he asked if they should continue to advocate or look for another project. Mr. Holmes recommended sticking with the project until it is funded because if they leave it now it will take another decade to get back to where they are today. The City is getting close and is ready to go with support from ADOT.

Council agreed to make the Fourth Street Project the second priority on the list for the lobbying trip.

FLAGSTAFF AIRPORT

Pulliam Airport continues to receive ample funding. Just last week, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) awarded \$1 million in Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funds to purchase an airport rescue vehicle that will replace two much older vehicles (14 and 30 years old). In addition, the airport used a SCADAP grant to lure United to fly into Flagstaff that will hopefully reduce ticket prices.

Mr. Holmes suggested that the third priority be Forest Health, behind the Airport. There will still be meetings with the FAA but that Forest Health should be a top priority.

Councilmember Odegaard stated that there are a lot of exciting things happening at the Airport and it is a good message to the community that Council continues to do everything it can to make it successful.

Councilmember Salas agreed and stated that she would like to continue to pursue the AIP request in 2020 along with advocating for Forest Health.

Council agreed to place Forest Health as priority three followed by the Airport.

SKILLED NURSING FACILITY FOR VETERANS

In 2015, the State Legislature appropriated \$10 million for a 50-bed Veterans' Home in Flagstaff. The City set aside acreage at McMillan Mesa for the Veterans' home. Earlier this year, Congress included enough funding to provide the remaining \$3 million for the home and increase the size of the facility to an 80-bed facility. Next year, ground will be broken for this new facility.

URANIUM MINING

Toward the end of President Obama's term, the Interior Department issued a moratorium on uranium mining in and around the Grand Canyon. There was concern that the Trump Administration would lift this moratorium. Last month, Secretary Zinke issued a vague statement saying that the Department of Interior would not lift the uranium moratorium.

Councilmember McCarthy stated that while it is an important issue, now is probably not the right time to push the issue. Mr. Holmes stated that there are some doable things with uranium, the ask can be that there are over 500 sites that have been identified that have never been cleaned up and the federal government has an obligation to clean them before starting others.

Councilmember McCarthy added that it will also be important to advocate for additional regulations on the transport of uranium.

Councilmember Aslan stated that there have been conversations with Grand Canyon Trust and their upcoming trips to Washinton D.C. to push for a ban on uranium mining around the Grand Canyon. The City will be providing copies of resolutions that support this effort to aid in their advocacy. Mr. Holmes stated that Congressman Grijalva will be going to the Grand Canyon to discuss the introduction of his bill to ban uranium mining and make the 20-year moratorium permanent. Because things are moving positively already, he suggests the City focus a majority of their efforts on the items previously discussed and include information about other issues important to Flagstaff within the briefing books provided.

STRENGTHEN URANIUM TRANSPORT STANDARDS

There is no federal rulemaking, legislation, nor proposals in Congress, that would strengthen uranium transport standards.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE FEE INCREASE

Last year, the Interior Department issued a proposed rule that would have increased fees at 17 of the largest national parks by \$75 to address the maintenance backlog at national parks. Flagstaff (through a letter during the comment period) objected to these increased fees and the Interior Department ultimately abandoned this proposal to increase Park Service fees.

GAS TAX

Congress continues to search for revenue to fund the highway trust fund. The gas tax, with increased fuel efficiency, hybrid and electric vehicles. is becoming a less viable option to fund the trust fund. Congress and the Administration are searching for other options to fund it such as user fees, but no proposal has gained momentum. Congress must reauthorize Surface Transportation reauthorization bill, known as the FAST Act, by September 30, 2020, so this issue will heat up next year.

Mr. Holmes suggested taking the gas tax off the list because there has been zero interest.

CARBON FEE AND DIVIDEND LEGISLATION

There are multiple pieces of legislation in Congress that would address carbon fees in the effort to combat climate change. However, the Trump administration and the majority in Congress remain opposed to these fees as "taxes" and unnecessary. There is very little chance of legislation passing in the near future.

TRANSFER OF FEDERAL LANDS

There is a move afoot to transfer federal lands from western states that, as part of the "Enabling Act" to become states, were forced to give millions of acres to the federal government back to the states. This proposal is very popular among western Republicans but doesn't have sufficient backing by a majority in Congress. It is highly unlikely that this proposal will make it out of Congress.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

When the Council came to DC in March, we met with Peter Kahn of HUD, who head the Fair Market Rents (FMRs) for the Department. He has since visited with City officials in Flagstaff to

discuss this ongoing issue. They continue to work with him and his staff to resolve this issue of critical importance to the City.

In addition, Section 8 Public Housing vouchers have been consistently increased since sequestration that hurt the program's funding. In FY 2018, Congress provided an additional \$450 million for this program for an estimated 56,000 new housing vouchers.

DEFERRED ACTION FOR CHILDHOOD ARRIVALS (DACA)

During the last year of President Obama's term, he instituted DACA to protect children who were born to illegal immigrants but who have lived and grown up in the U.S. In March 2017, President Trump announced an end to the program. It has been caught up in litigation since then. Currently, Homeland Security is processing applications and renewals for DACA recipients.

MEDICAID INSTITUTIONS FOR MENTAL DISEASES EXCLUSION

Congress has recently pushed an IMD exclusion bill through Congress specifically to address the opioid epidemic and the Administration has encouraged and allowed waivers for states for IMD exclusion. Thus far, 12 states have substance use disorder (SUDs) waivers and another 13 have applied. The bill has passed the House and the Senate is expected to pass it in the next two weeks and send it to the President for his expected signature.

Mr. Holmes suggested removing the IMD off the list because it was addressed last year.

Councilmember McCarthy indicated that he would like to keep the Amtrak issue of removing the line that runs through Flagstaff on the radar. It is important that Flagstaff not lose this route. Mr. Holmes indicated that there was discussion with legislators last year and the effort to remove the line was not successful. It is something that they will continue to watch in case it becomes an issue in future sessions.

Mr. Holmes then reviewed the draft schedule for the upcoming trip to Washington D.C.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

5. ADJOURNMENT

The Special Meeting of the Flagstaff City Council held February 21, 2019, adjourned at 12:18 p.m.

MAYOR

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK