

## MINUTES

### 1. Call to Order

Mayor Daggett called the Special Meeting of the Flagstaff City Council held October 22, 2024, to order at 3:01 p.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 special meeting, the City Council may vote to go into executive session, which will not be open to the public, for discussion and consultation 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

Present: Mayor Becky Daggett  
Vice Mayor Austin Aslan  
Councilmember Deborah Harris  
Councilmember Khara House  
Councilmember Lori Matthews  
Councilmember Jim McCarthy  
Councilmember Miranda Sweet

Staff Present: City Manager Greg Clifton; City Attorney Sterling Solomon

### 3. Pledge of Allegiance, Mission Statement, and Land Acknowledgement

The Council and audience recited the pledge of allegiance, Councilmember House read the Mission Statement of the City of Flagstaff, and Vice Mayor Aslan read the Land Acknowledgement.

#### MISSION STATEMENT

*The mission of the City of Flagstaff is to protect and enhance the quality of life for all.*

#### LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*The Flagstaff City Council humbly acknowledges the ancestral homelands of this area's Indigenous nations and original stewards. These lands, still inhabited by Native descendants, border mountains sacred to Indigenous peoples. We honor them, their legacies, their traditions, and their continued contributions. We celebrate their past, present, and future generations who will forever know this place as home.*

### 4. Proclamation: National Homelessness Awareness Month

Mayor Daggett read and presented the proclamation.

5. **Proclamation:** Native American Heritage Month

Councilmember Matthews read and presented the proclamation.

6. **Open Call to the Public**

*Open Call to the Public enables the public to address the Council about an item that is not on the prepared agenda. Comments relating to items that are on the agenda will be taken at the time that the item is discussed. Open Call to the Public appears on the agenda twice, at the beginning and at the end. The total time allotted for the first Open Call to the Public is 30 minutes; any additional comments will be held until the second Open Call to the Public.*

*If you wish to address the Council in person at today's meeting, please complete a comment card and submit it to the recording clerk as soon as possible. Your name will be called when it is your turn to speak. You may address the Council up to three times throughout the meeting, including comments made during Open Call to the Public and Public Comment. Please limit your remarks to three minutes per item to allow everyone an opportunity to speak. At the discretion of the Chair, ten or more persons present at the meeting and wishing to speak may appoint a representative who may have no more than fifteen minutes to speak.*

Associate and Comprehensive Planner Elsa Erling addressed Council and announced that the Regional Plan was now available online for a 60-day public review and encouraged community participation through comments and upcoming related events.

Malisa Szclkiwicz addressed Council and spoke on beautification efforts in the Southside neighborhood, thanked the Council for pausing the noise ordinance discussion to better understand zoning issues, and raised concerns about trash blocking a local mural.

Alexander Shenkin addressed Council and provided an update on FLOW, a Flagstaff-based company with local support.

Dennis Givens addressed Council and advocated for increased mental health resources, better accessibility and awareness for people with disabilities, more inclusive job opportunities, improved sidewalks and snow removal, and extended bus hours; he also invited the community to a democracy celebration at Bushmaster Park.

Senior Deputy City Manager Shannon Anderson addressed Council and recognized Economic Vitality Director Heidi Hansen for receiving the Joe and Marie Rolle Spirit of Northern Arizona University Award.

7. **LIQUOR LICENSE PUBLIC HEARINGS**

*Applications under Liquor License Public Hearings may be considered under one public hearing and may be acted upon by one motion unless otherwise requested by Council.*

Mayor Daggett opened the public hearing on both applications.

Sergeant Nick Almendarez introduced the applications noting no concerns.

Councilmember McCarthy inquired about regulations prohibiting liquor establishments near schools, asking whether the rules also applied to universities. Sergeant Nick Almendarez clarified that the restriction only applied to K-12 schools.

There being no public comment, Mayor Daggett closed the public hearing.

Councilmember McCarthy expressed his view that serving liquor on the Northern Arizona University campus was inappropriate.

**Moved by** Councilmember Jim McCarthy, to forward both applications to the state with a recommendation for denial.

Motion failed for lack of a second.

**Moved by** Councilmember Deborah Harris, **seconded by** Councilmember Lori Matthews to forward both applications to the state with a recommendation for approval.

**Vote:** 6 - 1

NAY: Councilmember Jim McCarthy

- A. **Consideration and Action on Liquor License Application:** Christopher Wilke, "Rolle Activity Center", 304 E Pine Knoll Dr., Series 05 (Government), New License
  - B. **Consideration and Action on Liquor License Application:** Christopher Wilke, "Lumberjack Stadium", 824 S. San Francisco St., Series 05 (Government) New License
8. **Adjournment**

The Special Meeting of the Flagstaff City Council held October 22, 2024, adjourned at 3:33 p.m.

## WORK SESSION

### 1. Call to Order

Mayor Daggett called the Work Session of the Flagstaff City Council held October 22, 2024, to order at 3:33 p.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 work session, the City Council may vote to go into executive session, which will not be open to the public, for discussion and consultation 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. Former Courthouse Redevelopment Discussion

Mr. Clifton provided background on the project under discussion, noting that it had been in internal planning for an extended period and previously brought before Council prior to the summer recess. At that time, Council provided direction regarding aspects of the procurement process. A competitive solicitation was conducted as a result. Mr. Clifton expressed appreciation for all staff involved, emphasizing that the project had been a rewarding effort and one that staff were enthusiastic to see move forward.

Planning Director Michelle McNulty and Community Investment Director Dave McIntire provided a PowerPoint presentation that covered the following:

FORMER COURTHOUSE REDEVELOPMENT  
VICINITY MAP  
FRAMING THE RFP  
PROPOSAL  
PROPOSAL -- CONCEPTUAL FLOOR PLANS  
PROPOSAL -- CONCEPTUAL ELEVATIONS  
INPUT SEEKING

Councilmember Sweet stated that, in general, she was supportive of utilizing alleyways for activation. After walking the alleyway in question, she noted there was a better way to redirect pedestrian traffic

and, with that understanding, she was supportive of continuing to explore the proposal.

Vice Mayor Aslan asked how tall the proposed building would be in comparison to the nearby Residence Inn. Ms. McNulty responded that the building would be approximately three stories taller than the Residence Inn.

Councilmember Matthews clarified that the building would be seven stories tall and asked whether that was within the city's current code. Ms. McNulty confirmed it was. She explained that the project could be developed using either conventional zoning or the transect zoning approach, both of which would allow the proposed height. She added that transect zoning required additional setbacks for each story, which helped protect the viewshed and reduced overshadowing of surrounding buildings.

Councilmember McCarthy asked about the allowable height in the area and noted that the proposed hotel was not as tall as zoning would permit. He inquired about the projected height under the preliminary plans. Ms. McNulty clarified that 50 feet was allowed by right, and with a Conditional Use Permit (CUP), there was no specified height limit. The proposal was for a seven-story building, which would be approximately 70 to 87 feet tall.

Mr. Shane Shumway spoke on behalf of the development team, noting his family has operated businesses in Arizona for five generations and currently employs 15 people in Flagstaff. He confirmed that the height under the transect zone was within legal limits at 87 feet, compared to 55 feet for the Residence Inn.

Mayor Daggett asked if vacating the alley would allow the building to physically overhang or occupy that space. Ms. McNulty clarified that the vacated alley would be converted into an outdoor civic space, not used for building construction.

Councilmember McCarthy expressed that he was comfortable with converting the alley into a civic space. He added that it would be beneficial if a grocery store could be included in the development. Ms. McNulty emphasized that alley vacation had not yet been confirmed as necessary, but staff wanted to provide Council with early awareness and gather feedback.

Councilmember House asked about utility impacts in the event the alley was vacated. Ms. McNulty responded that utility lines in the alley would need to be relocated if it were vacated.

Councilmember Matthews asked about the 265 parking spaces proposed for the development and whether they would be turned over to city parking. Ms. McNulty explained that the project included a total of 315 parking spaces, 265 as part of the building and 50 on the ground floor, with only 15 spaces designated for turnover to ParkFlag.

Councilmember Matthews pointed out that the project was previously sold to the public as one that would provide more parking. She expressed concern that the expectation may not be met. Ms. McNulty acknowledged the concern and explained that if Council was not satisfied with the number of public spaces, the matter could be revisited. She emphasized the need to understand priorities and tradeoffs. If more public parking was desired, staff would need guidance on how that impacted the overall development.

Councilmember Matthews reiterated her concern about the public's expectations and questioned the justification for needing 300 spaces in total. She stated that it was important to remain aligned with what was communicated to the community.

Council indicated their support of the alley.

Mr. McIntire addressed the ongoing discussions about parking, acknowledging that the original hope was for more public parking availability. However, the number of uses within the development affected how much space was available. He noted they were working on alternative designs that may include additional spaces turned over to ParkFlag, but any increase in public parking would come at a tradeoff, less housing or fewer hotel rooms, which could impact the overall viability of the project. He added that ParkFlag continued to actively seek additional parking opportunities downtown, emphasizing it was not

the end of efforts to provide more parking in the area.

Mr. Shumway shared that the development included approximately 80 apartment units, primarily studios and one-bedroom units with a few two-bedrooms, and about 150 hotel rooms. Regarding parking, he noted that it was a difficult challenge, especially as they must still provide parking for the existing Residence Inn, the potential grocery tenant, apartment residents, and hotel guests. With that demand, the 315 parking spaces met their needs, leaving only 15 spaces for ParkFlag. He argued that downtown needed customers, and while parking could support that, it was the presence of amenities and residents that truly drives vibrancy. Reducing the number of residential or hotel units could allow for more public parking but may require tapping into dedicated parking funds.

Councilmember Matthews voiced support for the overall concept, especially for increasing downtown density and housing, but stressed the importance of honoring commitments made to the community, specifically, public parking that was previously promised.

Councilmember Harris asked if the 15 spaces would be paid parking and requested that future proposals included the original language used to communicate with voters for better context. Mr. McIntire responded that no specific number of parking spaces was promised in the initial Council materials or RFP, though parking was addressed in general terms.

Mr. Clifton affirmed that parking was always expected to be a central discussion. He stated the city intended to uphold its commitments to the public but clarified that those commitments did not specify centralized parking. The idea was always to disperse parking throughout downtown, integrated with other uses. While there was reference to parking in public materials, no lockbox funds had been used, and the city remained committed to facilitating the discussion with transparency and honesty around tradeoffs.

Councilmember House asked about the parking standard in city code, and Ms. McNulty replied that it was approximately 1.5 spaces per residential unit, depending on whether conventional or transect zoning was used.

Mr. Shumway stated that their internal standard was a 1:1 ratio of parking spaces to apartment units, which they believe met the need.

Councilmember House expressed comfort with the current number of parking spaces, considering community values such as multimodal access and reducing car dependency. She supported the potential for increasing ParkFlag spaces without expanding the total parking supply.

Councilmember Sweet voiced excitement about the project and asked about current parking at the site, employee permits, and whether spaces were lost with the Downtown Connection Center (DCC). She also inquired about the city's broader efforts to find parking solutions.

Mr. McIntire stated that there were 90 spaces in the current surface lot, which became public only after courthouse demolition. They were now used for employee and pay-to-park. The DCC plans included 75--100 surface spaces and the potential for a garage after the completion. He mentioned discussions with developers about partnering for additional downtown parking, particularly with Flagstaff Shelter Services and other future owners. However, he acknowledged tradeoffs, including the loss of spaces and the importance of activating downtown through strategic development.

Councilmember Sweet asked if downtown business owners had been engaged and whether they supported the project. Downtown Business Alliance Executive Director Hunter Herbert responded that the project has only recently become public, so direct outreach had not yet occurred. However, he noted that it aligned with catalytic projects identified in the Downtown Vision Plan. He emphasized the importance of public-private partnerships for parking and the desire for downtown vibrancy.

Vice Mayor Aslan expressed excitement about the project and how it fit into the downtown vision. He shared concerns about building height but supported increased density. He challenged the assumption that public parking must be in one location and requested clear communication to the public. He also asked how confident the team was in securing a grocery tenant, expressing skepticism based on other

vacant big-footprint spaces around town. He supported parking structures that could be convertible in the future and emphasized the need for housing that supported families. He cautioned against giving the impression that the development was just another hotel or student housing, warning it could generate public pushback. He inquired about any communication with the Rodway Inn. Mr. McIntire explained that additional parking development was likely to occur on the north and east edges of downtown and near the DCC. He stated the grocery use appeared viable from an economic development perspective.

Mr. Shumway added that the planned grocery space was 17,000 square feet, a size suitable for a small grocer. Though they did not yet have a letter of intent, they were actively pursuing tenants. He emphasized the units were intended for young professionals, not students, and they were open to evaluating unit mix. He stated that demand existed for hotel rooms and downtown conference space. They had not yet engaged with Rodway Inn but were willing to do so as the project progresses.

Mr. Herbert confirmed that now that the project was public, broader community engagement could begin.

Councilmember Harris expressed overall support for the project and conference space. She shared that her son lived contentedly in an efficiency unit in downtown LA and emphasized the importance of including an affordable grocery option. She cautioned against losing civic space at the DCC site and emphasized the importance of visitor access and the need to consider shuttle options. She also noted downtown may not be suited to families with children due to lack of play space.

Councilmember Matthews noted that average occupancy was closer to 50%, suggesting there may be room to adjust parking numbers accordingly. However, she stressed that snow and winter weather make mobility challenging and reinforced the need to follow through on promises made to the public about parking availability.

Mr. Clifton addressed the DCC and civic space conversations, noting the many competing priorities in that area. He emphasized that the DCC had been designed to accommodate a future parking garage if resources were available. He reiterated that the civic plaza remained part of the vision and had not been removed. He emphasized improved access through features like the pedestrian underpass and the importance of a vibrant, connected downtown core.

Mayor Daggett thanked Mr. Shumway for committing to market research before finalizing investment. She asked whether grocery parking would be open to downtown visitors, suggesting a possible model where the first two hours were free. She suggested staff from the Housing Section speak with the team about unit mix, noting studios and one-bedrooms were currently the greatest housing need. She expressed support for the vibrancy the project could bring, while acknowledging the many details yet to be finalized.

Ms. McNulty noted that concerns about building height remained, and staff would continue negotiating elevations and design elements.

Vice Mayor Aslan closed by stressing the importance of how the project was framed to the public. He warned that many would assume it was student housing, so it was essential to proactively frame the narrative around young professionals and community vibrancy.

### **3. United States Department of Agriculture Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Grant Update: Community Food Systems Assessment**

Food Systems Coordinator Natalie Pierson introduced partners Eileen Horn with New Venture Advisors, and Summer Grandy with Flagstaff Family Food Center, together they provided a PowerPoint presentation that covered the following:

COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEMS ASSESSMENT  
DISCUSSION OVERVIEW  
OUR TEAM AND PARTNERS  
PURPOSE OF THE USDA GRANT PROJECT

ASSESSING AND GROWING A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEM  
 2024 COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEM ASSESSMENT  
 COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEM ASSESSMENT PROCESS  
 WHAT MAKES UP FLAGSTAFF'S FOOD SYSTEM?  
 AG LANDSCAPE AND FOOD PRODUCTION  
 LOCAL FOOD CHANNELS OF NORTHERN ARIZONA  
 ACCESS TO COMMUNITY GARDENS IN FLAGSTAFF, ARIZONA  
 FOOD SYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURE  
 FOOD SYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURE OF NORTHERN ARIZONA  
 FOOD RETAIL ENVIRONMENT  
 FOOD RETAIL LOCATIONS IN FLAGSTAFF, ARIZONA  
 FOOD CONSUMPTION AND HEALTH  
 FOOD ACCESS  
 OVERALL FOOD INSECURITY IN NORTHERN ARIZONA (2021)  
 CHILD FOOD INSECURITY IN NORTHERN ARIZONA (2021)  
 PERCENTAGE OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS NOT RECEIVING SNAP BENEFITS (NORTHERN AZ)  
 FOOD WASTE AND RECOVERY  
 PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS  
 STAGE 1  
 WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Councilmember House raised questions about the underutilization of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and asked whether resources could be shared through the city's social media to improve awareness and access. Ms. Peirson confirmed that efforts were underway in collaboration with Coconino County Public Health, the Family Food Center, the Sustainability Office, and other partners to develop and distribute SNAP outreach materials. Councilmember House also inquired about the potential for public fruit tree areas or foraging spaces, which, while not a specific theme in the recent community survey, aligned with strong community interest in self-provisioning and food sovereignty.

Councilmember House asked if edible landscapes or community gardening opportunities could be incorporated into future public park developments. Staff responded that it was already happening in several areas, including the establishment of a new food forest at Bushmaster Park and community gardens at multiple city locations, such as the Hal Jensen Recreation Center. The efforts aimed to integrate food access with public spaces, and the city was interested in expanding such programs based on community feedback and available resources.

Councilmember Matthews shared that while she enjoyed the therapeutic and social benefits of gardening, her personal experience showed it was costly and yielded little food, making it unlikely to solve food insecurity. Drawing on her background running a transitional housing program, she emphasized the value of food education. Many residents did not know how to use food from food banks, often relying on convenience foods. By cooking meals and sharing simple recipes, she helped demonstrate how to prepare nutritious meals with limited resources--suggesting that basic cooking education could greatly support food-insecure communities.

#### **4. Update on the Red Gap Ranch Water Pipeline Feasibility Study**

Water Resources Manager Erin Young introduced Kevin Black, Brad Hill, and Doug Smith who together provided a PowerPoint presentation that covered the following:

RED GAP RANCH PROJECT UPDATE  
 PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED  
 CITIZENS APPROVE FUTURE WATER SUPPLY BOND ELECTION  
 TODAY'S PRESENTATION  
 CITY COUNCIL AUTHORIZED THE PURCHASE OF RED GAP RANCH FOR \$7.9M FOR ITS  
 WATER SUPPLY IN 2005  
 REGIONAL PLANNING  
 OVERVIEW  
 CITY OF FLAGSTAFF PLANNING

POPULATION DEMAND PROJECTIONS  
PROJECT HISTORY  
HISTORICAL TIMELINE  
PHASE 1 SELECTED ALIGNMENT (APRIL 2009)  
SOUTHERN ALIGNMENT ALTERNATIVE (2011)  
SEGMENT 1 REVISIONS FOR I-40 CORRIDOR (2016)  
SEGMENT 3 CULTURAL RESOURCE (2019)  
ALIGNMENT FOR PHASE II STUDY (2021)  
ADOT COORDINATION  
ADOT COORDINATION ITEMS  
RIGHTS OF WAY  
LAND OWNERSHIP RESEARCH  
PHASE II DESIGN  
PIPELINE SIZING, MATERIALS, AND BACKFILL  
PUMP STATIONS  
ELECTRICAL SUPPLY -- TYPICAL PUMP STATION  
SOLAR POWER  
PUMP STATION SITE CONSIDERATIONS  
CONTROL SCHEMES  
WATER TREATMENT PLANT CONSIDERATIONS  
COMPARATIVE WATER QUALITIES  
TREATMENT PROCESS CONSIDERATIONS -- SULFATE AND TDS  
WATER TREATMENT PLANT LOCATION  
ENVIRONMENTAL AND PERMITTING  
ENVIRONMENTAL SCOPE  
FUTURE STEPS  
OPINION OF PROBABLE CONSTRUCTION COST (OPCC)  
ASSUMPTIONS  
SCHEDULE  
REPORT COMPLETION SCHEDULE

Vice Mayor Aslan stated his appreciation for the continued dialogue around the Red Gap Ranch (RGR) water supply project. He noted the importance of having RGR as a backup resource but emphasized that such infrastructure investment should only proceed if the city was serious about eventually using it. He stated that he was not concerned with the current pace of the conversation but hoped red flags could be avoided. He raised environmental concerns, including the use of diesel fuel to power water pumps and suggested exploring more carbon-neutral options. He also voiced concern about the environmental implications of brine disposal and supported the idea of treating water earlier in the process, especially if there were users along the proposed pipeline route. Mr. Smith clarified that diesel generators would only serve as a backup power source. Diesel would be stored on-site but used only during power outages.

Councilmember McCarthy asked if reverse osmosis (RO) had been considered for treating reclaimed water instead of using RGR water to meet water quality standards. Ms. Young responded that such blending opportunities and treatment options were actively being explored.

Mayor Daggett asked for a broader understanding of what water conservation, development, and usage strategies might take place before the city invested in infrastructure to access RGR. She pointed out that feasibility studies were underway for other water sources. Ms. Young explained that when RGR was purchased, the anticipated need for that water was projected to be in 2020. However, due to consistent reductions in community water usage, the projected need had been pushed back significantly. Flagstaff continued to grow into its existing groundwater supply. She highlighted that since 2005, reclaimed water had reached its summer use capacity, and the city was now pursuing direct potable reuse (DPR) as a strategy. Introducing advanced treatment could allow the city to use an additional 3,500 acre-feet currently available year-round. RGR would provide 12,000 acre-feet of redundancy daily, a major advantage in the event of a catastrophic fire or long-term drought. While the need for RGR may not be immediate, the city should avoid waiting for a water crisis to build the infrastructure and instead look to optimize all water systems together.

Mayor Daggett asked whether the potential for external entities to tap into the pipeline and help pay for it was already factored into the financial estimates. Ms. Young responded that those contributions were not currently included in the cost estimates but would be considered as potential users were identified and the project advanced. Their involvement could also enhance the city's eligibility for federal funding.

Mr. Black added that the city was pursuing an economy of scale. Contributions from potential partners would reduce the amount of federal dollars needed and supported the capital investment through shared funding.

Mayor Daggett confirmed that water from RGR was included in the city's Assured Water Supply (AWS) 100-year certification. Ms. Young noted that the city must demonstrate ongoing progress toward utilizing that supply to maintain its AWS certification. If the city had not reached its trigger point within 20 years, the state would reevaluate and expect to see evidence of advancement toward activating the RGR resource.

Councilmember Sweet supported the city's proactive planning and recommended organizing a site visit to RGR. She said visualizing the infrastructure helped her better understand the project, and she felt it would benefit other councilmembers as well.

Councilmember Harris emphasized that the RGR project was not something the city needed to activate immediately. She stressed the importance of being able to explain to residents why the city was investing in the project and added, "You can never have too much water." Ms. Young agreed, noting that those types of large-scale water projects took time. The city was in a good position to evaluate its options and seek funding opportunities over time rather than rushing.

Mr. Hill, an independent hydrologist, informed Council that he was contracted by the city to conduct a detailed analysis of when a new water supply would be necessary. The analysis, which would be presented to the Water Commission, considered scenarios such as catastrophic wildfires and droughts to assess system redundancy and resilience.

Ward Davis, representing the Flagstaff Water Group, addressed Council and noted that at the time RGR was approved, there were no viable alternatives. However, with the development of advanced treatment technology for reclaimed water, new options had emerged. He pointed out that incremental implementation of potable reuse allowed for a "pay-as-you-go" model. Mr. Davis stated that studies done by Mr. Hill and the firm Carollo had laid the groundwork for understanding how to integrate DPR and that those technologies were better understood and regulated than they were ten years ago. He advocated for revisiting those studies and incorporating their findings into current planning.

Mayor Daggett asked whether the earlier studies Mr. Davis referred to were commissioned by the city. Mr. Davis clarified that the studies were conducted by Carollo Engineering. Mr. Hill added that the 2017 study evaluated all potential water supplies except RGR, and the 2018 study focused on the footprint for advanced treatment at the Wildcat Hill and Rio de Flag facilities. Those studies were city funded.

Ms. Young noted that the studies explored how indirect and direct potable reuse could function within Flagstaff's existing system. She described the process as iterative, with the city continuously learning and adjusting as it gathered new information. The studies confirmed that the facilities had space for direct potable reuse, but raised questions about RO treatment and brine disposal, which were still under evaluation. The findings from the studies would help inform the feasibility phase of future water planning efforts.

## **5. FAIR -- Discussion and Possible Direction Regarding Vice Mayor Selection Process**

Councilmember Matthews shared that the motivation for raising the issue of vice mayor selection stemmed from her own experience running for office, realizing how much she did not know at the time. After being elected, she often heard comments about "drinking from the fire hose," especially during the first year of learning council duties. She noted that, after speaking with other cities, many shared that they avoided selecting a new councilmember as vice mayor, citing the role's importance as a

substitute for the mayor. The vice mayor should be comfortable in public speaking and ready to represent the city. She also noted that the current system assigned the position to the person with the highest vote count in the most recent election, but that may not always result in the most experienced or prepared person taking on the role.

Councilmember McCarthy explained that historically, the council's practice was to appoint the person with the highest vote count in the election two years prior, ensuring they had experience. The practice changed when the council wanted to prevent a particular person from serving as vice mayor. Councilmember McCarthy suggested returning to the previous system.

Vice Mayor Aslan agreed, suggesting the vice mayor role go to the top vote-getter in the previous election (not the most recent), maintaining a connection to voter choice while ensuring experience. He emphasized that the vice mayor's role was mostly theoretical unless succession was required and noted that while the current system had worked, it required a functional council. He supported the idea of making a change now rather than later.

Councilmember Matthews asked for input from Councilmember Sweet on her experience as a newer member serving as vice mayor.

Councilmember Sweet shared that she served as vice mayor while still learning her council duties, which made it challenging. She acknowledged that she did a good job, but it was a steep learning curve. She raised the idea of appointing the vice mayor on a yearly basis, similar to how the Board of Supervisors rotated the role. This would give more members the opportunity to serve if they were interested.

Councilmember Harris stated that she requested a job description for the vice mayor role but found none existed. She expressed concern that expectations for the role were unclear and believed the vice mayor should represent the city when the mayor was unavailable. She supported creating a job description to clarify the responsibilities.

Councilmember Sweet agreed, saying that clearer expectations would have helped when she was vice mayor. She noted that the mayor's discretion currently defined the role, which could lead to inconsistencies.

Vice Mayor Aslan added that the role was undefined and varied depending on the mayor. He supported assigning the vice mayor position to the top vote-getter from the previous election but was concerned that selecting the role with three new councilmembers immediately after an election could lead to unstable dynamics. He emphasized the importance of continuity and voter influence in the process and opposed annual rotation.

Councilmember Harris reminded the group that the last time the system was changed, it was due to four councilmembers deciding together, something that could happen again, regardless of the system.

Councilmember Matthews said she liked the idea of annual rotation, but also saw value in giving more experienced members a chance to serve. She supported defining the role and exploring other scenarios to avoid unintended consequences.

Mayor Daggett cautioned that if the system alternated annually, it would not work to use vote totals as a guide. She asked how they could ensure the vice mayor had experience if the highest vote-getter was newly elected.

Councilmember House raised concerns about assuming the top vote-getter was best suited to serve. She supported re-evaluating the process and creating a pathway that allowed those with interest and experience to serve. She asked what would happen if the top vote-getter declined the role.

Councilmember McCarthy responded that the role was ultimately selected by council and not defined in code. If someone did not want the role, they could decline, and it would move to the next person.

Councilmember Sweet pointed out that when she served as vice mayor, she had very little experience,

and the role was still manageable. However, she supported reviewing how other cities of similar size approach vice mayor selection to inform any potential change.

Councilmember McCarthy emphasized his continued support for appointing the top vote-getter from the election two years prior. He proposed that the current vice mayor, who received the highest votes in the last election, served one more year and then transition.

Vice Mayor Aslan reiterated that the vice mayor position, unlike in the Board of Supervisors, was directly influenced by the electorate. The role's most important function was succession, and voters expected some say in that. He acknowledged that while he was honored to serve, he would be fine stepping aside and noted he had six years of experience to contribute.

Councilmember Harris suggested selecting a vice mayor from among those with two years of experience, allowing both council and public expectations to be met.

Councilmember House added that she would like to see a review of practices in other cities of similar size and population, as vote totals did not always equate to a clear public mandate for vice mayor.

Councilmember Matthews said she would take the lead on researching how other cities and towns handled it and suggested revisiting the issue after the upcoming election.

Nadine Hart addressed Council, expressing concern that appointing a vice mayor by default based on vote totals did not ensure the most qualified person. She wanted more council input and review of candidates' attendance and willingness to engage with the community.

Dennis Givens addressed Council and advocated for letting the voters determine.

After discussion, a majority of the Council gave direction to leave the system as it was.

## **6. Open Call to the Public**

Nadine Hart addressed Council and shared concerns from a recent Flagstaff Housing Authority (FHA) board meeting, explaining that for months they had been trying to schedule a meeting to discuss retaining housing for Housing Choice Voucher holders but had been unsuccessful. She noted that during discussions on the Regional Plan, it became clear that none of her concerns were being addressed by the Housing Director. She expressed worry about the high turnover rate and a lack of transparency between voucher holders and FHA. She suggested that there should be representatives from Silar Home and Brannon Homes involved and emphasized the need for more structure and a stronger voice in the meetings.

## **7. Informational Items To/From Mayor, Council, and City Manager; future agenda item requests**

Vice Mayor Aslan stated that the conversation about the vice mayor position had fallen apart previously but expressed that all the candidates would make great vice mayors. He agreed that the current vice mayor position would remain as is.

Councilmember McCarthy brought up a concern raised during public participation about a dumpster placed in front of a mural, instead of inside a designated area. He pointed out that the city and the neighborhood had invested significant funds to install the mural, and it was unfair to place a dumpster in front of it. He noted that during the mural installation, the dumpster had been temporarily moved to the street and argued it should be returned there. Additionally, he referenced a letter from Habitat Harmony regarding prairie dog colonies and suggested the Council revisit previous decisions about prairie dogs. He proposed that instead of bulldozing colonies, they should be relocated to new sites. He requested a FAIR for the item to come to Council for discussion.

**8. Adjournment**

The meeting of the Flagstaff City Council held October 22, 2024, adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

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MAYOR

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
CITY CLERK

**CERTIFICATION**

I, STACY SALTZBURG, do hereby certify that I am the City Clerk of the City of Flagstaff, County of Coconino, State of Arizona, and that the above Minutes are a true and correct summary of the Meeting of the Council of the City of Flagstaff held on October 22, 2024. I further certify that the Meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

DATED this 16th day of December, 2025

\_\_\_\_\_  
CITY CLERK