

## MINUTES

### 1. Call to Order

Mayor Daggett called the meeting of the Flagstaff City Council held March 26, 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 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. Roll Call

*NOTE: One or more Councilmembers may be in attendance through other technological means.*

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

Staff Present: City Manager Greg Clifton; Deputy City Attorney Kevin Fincel

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

The Council and audience recited the pledge of allegiance, Councilmember Matthews read the Mission Statement of the City of Flagstaff, and Councilmember Sweet 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. **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.*

Dennis Givens addressed Council and suggested allowing people to choose smaller trash cans to match their usage, which could incentivize composting, save money, and reduce waste. He also emphasized focusing on local issues like flooding, affordable housing, small businesses, and public transportation, while encouraging community action on broader topics.

#### 5. **Review of Draft Agenda for the April 2, 2024 City Council Meeting**

*Citizens wishing to speak on agenda items not specifically called out by the City Council may submit a speaker card for their items of interest to the recording clerk.*

Councilmember House made note of an additional proclamation for April 2, 2024.

#### 6. **March Work Anniversaries**

Senior Deputy City Manager Shannon Anderson provided a PowerPoint presentation that covered the following:

MARCH EMPLOYEE WORK ANNIVERSARIES  
FIRST YEAR ANNIVERSARIES  
FIVE YEAR ANNIVERSARIES  
TEN YEAR ANNIVERSARIES

#### 7. **City Manager Report**

Mr. Clifton briefly reviewed his report.

Community Development Director Dan Folke reviewed the 2023 Annual Community Development Report.

Councilmember Matthews acknowledged the significant amount of work that is happening and expressed her appreciation to staff.

#### 8. **Discussion of Citizen Petition to Change the Goals in Carbon Neutrality Plan**

Sustainability Director Nicole Antonopoulos and Water Services Director Shannon Jones provided a PowerPoint presentation that covered the following:

DISCUSSION ON CITIZEN PETITION TO REVISE THE CARBON NEUTRALITY PLAN PRIORITIES  
AGENDA  
CITIZEN PETITION

**BACKGROUND: BACK TO BASICS****MITIGATION VS. ADAPTATION****ACTION ON FIRE, FLOODING, AND DROUGHT IS SUPPORTED BY THE CURRENT CNP****CNP GOALS INFORMED BY THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY****THREE CORE GOALS OF THE CNP****CARBON NEUTRALITY PLAN TIMELINE****2022 REVISIONS INCORPORATED FIVE TARGET AREAS FROM THE 2018 CLIMATE ACTION****AND ADAPTATION PLAN****FIRE, FLOODING AND DROUGHT IN THE CARBON NEUTRALITY PLAN****THE CITY'S ONGOING WORK ON FIRE, FLOODING, AND DROUGHT IS SUPPORTED, BUT NOT DRIVEN BY THE CNP****CITY PLANS****ADOPTED CITY PLANS THAT FOCUS ON FIRE, FLOODING, AND DROUGHT****CITY PLANS THAT FOCUS ON MITIGATION****GETTING TO WORK...****CURRENT HIGH-PRIORITIES AND BARRIERS FIRE****CURRENT HIGH-PRIORITIES AND BARRIERS FLOODING****CURRENT HIGH-PRIORITIES AND BARRIERS DROUGHT****DISCUSSION****OPTIONS****STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Council and staff discussed the city's Capital Improvement Projects for stormwater and water infrastructure, which approached \$400 million over the five-year plan. Funding was planned through a combination of grants, debt capacity, and ratepayer contributions, with efforts to maximize grant opportunities while minimizing community impact. Grants were supporting innovative approaches to climate action, including environmental justice and emissions reduction, allowing flexibility in project implementation rather than prescribing exact methods. The conversation also highlighted the connection between housing and climate goals. Integrating the "Housing for All" initiative with the carbon neutrality plan ensured equity and efficiency, promoting dense, multifamily, water- and energy-efficient housing that supported sustainable transportation options. The integrated approach aligned housing solutions with climate action, to help reduce living expenses while advancing sustainability goals.

The following individuals addressed Council regarding the petition:

- Tom Pearson
- Joe Donaldson
- Bryan Bates
- Kathleen Armstrong
- Dee Hoagland
- Robert Bowser
- Jim Schweikert
- Michele James
- Laura Kessler
- Talyne Belka
- John McCartney
- Stefan Sommer
- Phil Goldblatt
- Pat Ellsworth
- Kay Bordwell
- Vickie Parks
- Jill Stephenson
- Buck Sanford
- Merion Sharp
- Amy Wolkowinsky
- Laura Carter
- Susan Shapiro
- Sat Best

- Pamela Carter
- Val Bryant
- Erica Rackley
- Katthy Flaccus
- Knut MacCormack
- Nat White
- Yiqun Lin
- Dr. Emily Davalos
- Jim Parks
- Sarah Wilce
- John Fegyresesi
- Merle Henderson
- Sarica Ceronohous
- Harmony Green

Written comments regarding the petition were submitted by the following individuals:

- Melinda Bell
- Joan Harris
- Annette Nystedt
- Karyn Riedell
- Ruth Porter Tilman
- John McCartney
- Lyla Yango
- Matthew Jude Poirier
- Talyne Belka
- Paul Ogden
- Steve La Falce
- Cathi Borthwick
- Mr. and Mrs. Lee R Tilman
- David Spence
- Robert Sanford Jr.
- Harmony Green
- Matthew Nemmer
- Timothy Retter
- Jessica Keetso
- Eva Condon MD

The following comments were received:

- Petition requests reinstating fire, flooding, and drought as a top priority in the CNP, reflecting the original 2018 Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP).
- Fire, flooding, and drought have caused significant damage to residential and commercial property and continue to be recurring threats.
- Impacts disproportionately affect vulnerable populations (poor, elderly, fixed incomes); equity demands action.
- Monsoon flooding could impact thousands of structures and cause billions in damages.
- Immediate adaptation measures are needed to protect lives, property, and community resilience.
- Reinstatement of fire, flooding, and drought provides a balanced approach to climate action.
- Past catastrophic events (e.g., Lahaina) as cautionary examples of focusing only on carbon neutrality without preparation for fire, flooding, and drought.
- Adaptation funding would save even one neighborhood or life, making it worthwhile.
- Current CNP focuses on carbon neutrality by 2030; maintaining this focus is critical for long-term climate mitigation.
- Adding fire, flooding, and drought into the plan may dilute efforts and redirect funds from carbon reduction initiatives.
- Multiple agencies already address fire, flooding, and drought (e.g., Forest Service, county, federal programs); city resources are limited.
- The CNP addresses root causes of climate change, not just symptoms; mitigation of CO<sub>2</sub> is essential for preventing long-term fire, flooding, and drought.

- Emphasis on long-term planning and fiscal responsibility; immediate adaptation measures exist outside the CNP.
- Maintaining current CNP ensures continued funding, staffing, and focus on achieving carbon neutrality.
- Carbon neutrality and fire, flooding, and drought mitigation are not mutually exclusive, but adding fire, flooding, and drought into CNP could reduce focus on emissions.
- The CNP addresses systemic causes (CO<sub>2</sub> emissions) while fire, flooding, and drought are symptoms managed by other programs.
- Immediate threats (fire, flooding) require federal and state action; city-level CNP is designed to tackle root causes.
- Planning should focus on measurable outcomes and expertise rather than emotional or individualized concerns.
- Long-term resilience involves both adaptation (fire/flood mitigation) and mitigation (emissions reductions), but the CNP prioritizes the latter.
- Keeping CNP intact: maintaining focus on carbon neutrality, avoiding dilution of funds, relying on other agencies for fire, flooding, and drought mitigation, prioritizing root causes of climate change.
- Skepticism about the role of CO<sub>2</sub> and climate science.
- The CNP is a framework for regional cooperation with county and federal agencies.

A break was held from 5:50 p.m. through 6:01 p.m.

Council asked for staff to share information about the interdepartmental and interagency work that went into the issues of fire, flooding, and drought issues.

Wildland Fire Operations Captain Dylan Guffey offered that the city's wildland fire program was responsible for fire suppression and fuels management within city limits. Their work included managing new fire starts, conducting prescribed burns, selective thinning on city parcels, assisting with grants and contracts for private homeowners' properties, and removing hazardous trees and managing fuels in parks and open spaces. The program consisted of five Wildland Fire personnel, including four firefighters, additionally all city firefighters, were trained and qualified in wildland fire response according to the standards of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group. He shared that they worked closely with internal city partners, including Sustainability and Water Services, on all projects such as prescribed burns and watershed protection. Externally, they collaborated with the USDA, Forest Service, the Arizona Department of Fire and Forestry Management, the Department of the Interior, the National Park Service, and adjacent fire departments and districts, including Blue Ridge, Mormon Lake, Ponderosa, and Pinewood. They also coordinated with organizations like the Ecological Restoration Institute and the Greater Flagstaff Forest Partnership, particularly on tree-thinning projects. All personnel from partner agencies, such as Summit and Highlands Fire, meet the same Wildland training requirements under their joint authority agreements with the city. The strong collaboration and training ensured a comprehensive and coordinated approach to fire prevention, mitigation, and response across the Flagstaff area.

Climate Action Section Director Jenny Niemann explained how Flagstaff's climate plan had evolved, and clarified that adaptation concerns like wildfire, flooding, and drought were already embedded in the current CNP. The city adopted its first CAAP in 2018, then created the CNP in 2021 which focused primarily on emissions mitigation due to time and resource constraints. As planned, a 2022 revision merged the two documents so that both mitigation and adaptation strategies would exist in a single, comprehensive plan. All major adaptation target areas from 2018, such as forest health, water security, public health and safety, and economic resilience, were carried forward into the 2022 CNP, with some updates and refinements based on new information and interdepartmental collaboration.

Ms. Neimann emphasized that adaptation and mitigation overlapped extensively and offered examples like energy efficiency improving resilience during power outages and forest health efforts reducing both fire risk and carbon emissions. The Wildland Fire program coordinated heavily with sustainability staff on grants, forest health, home hardening, biomass utilization, air filtration programs, and public education.

Council discussion highlighted that Flagstaff already had numerous specialized plans addressing fire, flood, and drought, and that the issues were actively being worked on across departments and partner

agencies. It was agreed that while community concerns were valid and widely shared, reopening the Carbon Neutrality Plan mid-cycle was unnecessary. Council direction was to keep the current plan intact, continue collaboration and implementation, and revisit priorities through the planned update process rather than amending the plan immediately.

There was not requisite support to advance the petition to a future agenda.

**9. Open Call to the Public**

None

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

Vice Mayor Aslan shared that the Flagstaff Community Band was running their annual donor program, and he requested the Council consider using their Initiative Fund to support and contribute to Flagstaff Community Band.

Mayor Daggett shared that she attended the unveiling of the Coconino Community College's new mascot, Coco the Comet.

**11. Adjournment**

The Work Session of the Flagstaff City Council held March 26, 2024, adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
MAYOR

ATTEST:

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