



City of Prescott

City Council - Study Session

January 9, 2024 | 1:00 PM
201 N Montezuma Street
City Council Chambers, 3rd Floor
Prescott, AZ 86301

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Goode called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Phil Goode - Mayor
Connie Cantelme - Mayor Pro Tem
Lois Fruhwirth - Councilwoman
Ted Gambogi - Councilman
Brandon Montoya - Councilman
Eric Moore - Councilman
Cathey Rusing - Councilmember

3. DISCUSSION

- A. Presentation & Discussion Regarding an Overview of the City's Community Development Department.

Community Development Director Chelsea Walton introduced the presentation regarding an overview of the Community Development Department.

Department Mission & Overview:

- * Provide friendly and professional development services to those who live and work in Prescott
- * Areas of Responsibility - Community planning, long range planning, community development block grant (CDBG) program facilitation, historic preservation, plans examination, building inspection, code compliance, vacation rental facilitation
- * Twenty total positions within all divisions of the department

Department Accomplishments:

- * 257 total project applications
- * 24 agenda items presented to Council
- * 18 items presented to Planning & Zoning Commission
- * 10 items presented to Prescott Preservation Commission
- * 8 items presented to Board of Adjustments
- * General Plan Committee Open House
- * Plan Reviews - 10,562 total plan reviews performed with 78% met or exceeded in the due date

Councilman Montoya asked about the Code Compliance Hearing Officer that was authorized and if it will be in her department or legal.

Ms. Walton responded that the position will report to her and day-to-day coordination will be with legal, so it will be a collaborative position. Staff is hopeful that they will be in the office in February.

Councilwoman Fruhwirth asked what the goals are related to plan reviews for the department.

Ms. Walton responded that meeting and exceeding due dates is always something the Department strives to do, but there are different time frames for different project scopes. She feels 78% is good, especially because of the seasonal fluctuations and other factors.

Councilmember Rusing commented that funding was previously approved to fast track plan review for larger builders to free up time for single-family home and custom-built projects, but has heard feedback that this is still a slow process.

Ms. Walton encouraged builders who are experiencing issues to contact department staff to discuss that. Mass grading projects have different requirements which shortens the process, but for these types of builds there are additional review steps that are required. Custom-builds are scope and lot specific so these can all vary.

Councilman Montoya commented on the "plan review Wednesday" process and asked how this has impacted numbers in the department.

Ms. Walton responded that this began in April 2023. She doesn't feel it has been long enough to track the trend, but they will touch on it briefly. There is a seasonal fluctuation in projects that haven't occurred in the last couple of years because of COVID, so she would expect more definitive ideas in late spring.

Mayor Pro Tem Cantelme asked if it would ever be feasible for an outside planner to review plans and then bring those back to the city stamped and ready to go in order to save time for people seeking permits.

Ms. Walton responded that Chief Building Official Ryan Greene will discuss a pilot program for a commercial permitting that is similar to this and may potentially impact residential custom plan review as well.

Permit Information FY2023:

- * 189 New Single Family Residential (SFR) Issued - 70 days average from application to issue
- * 23 New Commercial Issued - 191 average days from application to issue
- * 76 Commercial TI Issued - scopes vary
- * 9,731 Total Field Inspections for all permit types

Department Goals & Objectives:

- * Customer support services and training
- * Community outreach and education
- * Staff training and development

- * Department community volunteer opportunities
- * Assess fee structure for greater cost recovery opportunities
- * Coordinate in-person training with customers as needed
- * Educational social media campaigns - "why permits"
- * Staff AzBO Trainings in Spring 2024
- * Work with industry partners regarding potential fee changes

Building Safety Division:

Mr. Greene provided a presentation regarding this division of the department. He also commented that when looking at plan reviews, staff also looks at and set the due dates and have been working diligently on shortening review time so that is some of the reason that the numbers are where they are at.

- * Three sections - intake/processing customer support, building plan review and building inspections
- * What we do - permitting, plan review, inspections and enforcement
- * Enforcement - 25 cases annually; respond to citizen inquiries regarding possible building code violations, establish minimum maintenance standards for basic life safety, work with and educate residents to gain voluntary compliance, and enforce codes through court of hearing officer only when voluntary efforts are unproductive or violation is an imminent threat to the health and life safety of both the residents and surrounding properties
- * Permitting - 1,900 processed annually; manage interactions at front counter, act as department's air traffic control, intakes/processes and issues building permits and assists with fire related permits and issuance of Certificates of Occupancy
- * Plan Review - 2,700 performed annually; work with building inspectors to resolve field related code issues and coordinate activities with other city departments, review plans for any size building occupancy classification, works with other departments/industry partners/governing body to implement building code adoptions every six years, and assist homeowners/designer/contractors by providing interpretations of building codes
- * Inspections - 12,000 annually; the inspection process involves examining structure/ electrical/ plumbing/HVAC/site characteristics, effectively communicate findings to homeowners and contractors, and conducts building damage assessment inspections

Mr. Greene continued with an overview in five-year fiscal year blocks of total permits issued. In FY2023 189 single family residential permits were issued, two multifamily permits were issued for 78 units and 23 commercial permits were issued.

- * Accomplishments - implemented a third party plan review program, implemented a series of "coffee with contractors" meetings to further facilitate comradely and public outreach, created/implemented new submittal checklists for each permit type, implemented a "fast track permit" process for small projects to avoid need for plan review and revamped the "permit by inspection" process to allow permits to be issued quickly for small projects
- * Goals and Objectives - increase level of proactive outreach to contractors/design professionals/other applicants, provide staff training on common review items and use of consistent checklists to reduce plan review time frames seek to educate the public regarding minimum requirements and further

pursue training opportunities.

Neighborhood Services Team:

Planning Manager George Worley provided a presentation to the Council regarding this division of the Department.

- * Team handles - educate residents about local codes, works with residents to attain voluntary compliance, work with local volunteer groups to assist residents, enforce codes through court or hearing officer if voluntary efforts are unproductive
- * Goals - efficiently enforce adopted codes, gain compliance in a cooperative manner, and educate residents to maintain community standards
- * Objectives - effectiveness in responding to citizens and customers, regular compliance inspections of major road corridors, continue to strive for voluntary compliance through communication with violators, provide outreach & neighborhood cleanups and participate in community events to educate to the reasons for codes

Planning & Zoning Team:

- * Five total staff members
- * What we do - long range planning, community planning and zoning, which is the implementation of the projects
- * General Plan - long range planning, these are high level plans to guide development decisions
- * Neighborhood Plans, Specific Area Plans etc. - these are community planning tools to focus on quality of life
- * Census Facts - population growth at average of 1.5% annually since 2000
- * Annexations have increased the land area of the city by 21.6% since 2000
- * Population density has increased from 917 persons per square mile in 2000 to 1015 in 2020
- * Median Age - 47.8 in 2000 to 60.5 in 2020
- * Goals/Objectives - provide professional and timely planning & zoning services, provide professional and accurate data to decision-making bodies of the city, work with Council and the development community to meet the goals of the adopted General Plan, be ready to adapt to challenges and opportunities, and offer educational opportunities to Planning staff to improve the function of the team and improve ability to provide great customer service

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG):

Grants Administrator Michael McInnes provided an overview for Council regarding the program which reinvests approximately \$240,000 in federal tax dollars into the Prescott community. The city's CDBG program is celebrating twenty years of giving back to the community.

- * Goals/Strategies - assist maximum number of Prescott residents in need, strengthen city's relationship with local non-profits and continue Prescott's minor home repair program in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce Foundation

Mayor Pro Tem Cantelme asked about CDBG funding going toward construction projects which improve neighborhoods. She would like to see a portion of these funds go to neighborhood revitalization as she feels this is an area where the city is lacking.

Mr. McInnes responded that HUD limits how funds are distributed. For example, 70% must go to low to moderate income projects which are typically for the local non-profits that are working with these groups and applying for funding. These projects outside the local non-profits would be collaborative efforts with city departments.

Historic Preservation:

Planner & Historic Preservation Specialist Kaylee Nunez provided a presentation to the Council regarding this division of the department.

- * What we do - manage and implement the Prescott Historic Preservation Master Plan which has the criteria for all 13 local and national districts to identify/manage/protect unique historic qualities, districts created based upon the age of buildings/defining design types/landscape or combination of elements, and serve as a resource to owners of historic properties to help them maintain or gain National Register Status (also monitor properties for de-listing)
- * Goals - implement public participation timeline and begin review of 2025 Historic Preservation Master Plan draft, leverage resources to bring greater awareness to preservation in Prescott and develop five-year objectives for preservation in Prescott
- * Hosting the 2024 Preserve Arizona Conference & Governor's Heritage Preservation Honor Awards at the end of June
- * Over 800 properties in the Prescott areas and this all needs to be updated

Mayor Pro Tem Cantelme thanked Ms. Nunez for her work in historic preservation for the city. She is emersed into historic preservation and building relationships with state agencies which is critical.

Mayor Goode thanked staff for their presentation and work, and echoed Mayor Pro Tem Cantelme's comments regarding historic preservation in Prescott.

This item was for discussion only, no formal action was taken.

- B. Presentation & Discussion Regarding the 2024 Water Management Policy Proposals.

Council recessed from 2:15 p.m. to 2:24 p.m.

Water Resources and Environmental Services Manager Brian Ruiz provided a presentation to Council regarding the recommendations from Mayor's Commission for Water Policy Review & Monitoring.

Commission Background:

- * Established in May 2022 with eight members to review and monitor the updated Water Policy which was adopted in April 2022
- * Quarterly updates were provided in September 2022, January 2023, May 2023 and August 2023
- * Overall findings - continue with the 2022 policy, but remove or correct language that the city doesn't actually act upon; some policies don't have clear procedures for staff and applicants and need to be removed until such time as procedures are in place that the can be fairly enforced
- * Additional recommendations - begin the process of developing a long-term

water management plan by incorporating the water resource management model (WRMM) and appropriate legal documents; develop procedures for use of the WRMM

Update Strategy - The Bridging Document:

- * Utilize the Commission's recommendations within context of current policy
- * Consider staff recommendations to improve permitting and tracking efforts
- * Study Commission's recommendations outside current policy
- * Incorporate into next policy and code update with - D&O modification (still in process and under review with ADWR), General Plan completion and long-term water management plan establishment

Policy Changes Summary:

- * Table of Contents added
- * General changes to language to update status of water portfolio & regulatory language
- * Update maps, charts & figures
- * Update to website links
- * More in depth discussion of WRMM
- * Updated conservation section
- * Information on Governor's Water Policy Council
- * City Code reference section added
- * Update definitions
- * Update water application guidelines 1-22

Policy 1:

- * Language revised to "...to be reviewed by either the Planning & Zoning Commission or Board of Adjustment. In the event that the project scope does not require such planning application per the Land Development Code (LDC), then the WSA application submittal package shall include a basic site plan, if exterior improvements are included in the project scope or a basic floorplan to be reviewed by city staff"

Policy 2:

- * Language revised to "...1.5 AFY...Reference PCC Section 9.1.10"

Policy 3:

- * Language revised to "...the WRMM water use estimates are available when there is 60 months or more customer data available. Water use estimates, as projected in the WRMM in acre feet per year (AFY), shall be adjusted annually after the WRMM is updated in January of each year. The city will provide an annual assessment to City Council, within two months after the WRMM is updated, to evaluate water usage for budgeting purposes. An annual report on water resource activities associated with this policy (e.g. WRMM, D&O and impacts to the water portfolio) will be provided to Council."

Councilwoman Fruhwirth asked if it is more appropriate to update administrative approval to 1.5 AF (as suggested) or changed to commercial landscape code. She also asked why references to the Water Issues Subcommittee were removed from recommendations on Policy 3.

Mr. Ruiz stated that removal of the Water Issues Subcommittee wasn't intentional, staff will need to look at how that can be updated.

Policy 4:

* No revisions

Policy 5:

* Language updated to "...large project that exceeds the total water budget for any budget period. The requirement for a cost benefit analysis will be reserved for projects with many users/uses or large industrial or commercial use..."

Policy 6:

* Language updated to "...1-year after the application was submitted if the project described in the application is not considered by the Water Issues Subcommittee. Administrative or Council approved WSA applications will expire 1-year after the approval date if the project is not actively moving through the permitting process...If a project's building permit(s) is voided, withdrawn or expires before completion of construction, then the water allocation shall expire. The applicant will need to re-apply for water pursuant to the current Water Management Policy and Water Budget."

Councilwoman Fruhwirth asked about unusual applications or something where the WRMM doesn't exist and asked staff how that would be addressed in the policy.

Mr. Ruiz responded that a water demand analysis is requested when those types of businesses come in.

Mayor Goode commented that a multi-family development that requires over half the budget and would need to go to the budget to over-ride the policy, but a cost-benefit analysis would be required only if it is in the last month but should be required no matter where it is in the budget year.

Council and staff discussion regarding ensuring that the language aligns with the intentions of the policy, particularly when it comes to requirements and standards for cost/benefit analysis.

Councilman Montoya suggested that, given there is a great deal of discussion left on this item and there is limited time before the Voting Meeting is set to begin it be continued to a further Study Session moving forward.

Mayor Goode concurred, this information is important and there is a need to have a functional and efficient policy. The Council can reschedule and go through all of the policies at a future meeting.

City Clerk Sarah Siep confirmed and stated that the item will be added to a future Study Session agenda to continue discussion.

This item was for discussion only, no formal action was taken.

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Mayor Goode adjourned the meeting at 2:55 p.m.



PHILIP R. GOODE, Mayor

ATTEST:



SARAH M. SIEP, City Clerk

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Voting Meeting of the City Council Voting Meeting of the City of Prescott, Arizona held on January 9, 2024. I further certify the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.



Sarah M. Siep, City Clerk

