



# City of Prescott

## City Council - Study Session

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January 28, 2025 | 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. and asked for a moment of silence honoring former Prescott Mayor Rowle Simmons.

#### 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 & Request for Direction Regarding the Prescott Frontier Days Rodeo Grounds.

Mayor Goode stated that he was informed Senator Finchem met with PFD over the weekend and will be dropping a bill in the Senate today. His hope is that this bill will resolve long term difficulties related to the \$15 million allocation out of last year's legislative budget.

City Clerk Sarah Siep discussed expectations for public comment and decorum in today's meeting.

City Manager Dallin Kimble provided a presentation and stated that the rodeo grounds are property owned by the City of Prescott and our responsibility to manage which the city has not done a sufficient job of in the past. He regrets to see the division in the community related to this matter, and will be looking for Council direction today to lead and move forward related to the rodeo grounds.

#### History:

- \* July 4, 1888 - Rodeo began as a cowboy contest in Forbing Park as a big part of the city's brand
- \* 1913 - Rodeo moved to current location
- \* Mid-1930s - grandstands constructed
- \* 2007 - city purchased rodeo grounds

### Grounds Background:

- \* Grounds host a variety of offices and events outside of the rodeo
  - World's Oldest Rodeo
  - County Fair
  - Arizona Junior Rodeo
  - Sheriff Posse Roping Event
  - Toastmasters
  - University of Arizona Cooperative Extension
  - Auto Club
  - City of Prescott
- \* Rodeo - \$7.67 million in economic impact
- \* Charitable giving - nearly \$50,000 in 2024
- \* Cowboy Christmas - many other rodeos are held in July
- \* World's Oldest Rodeo Buckle prized among professionals and PFD paid over \$300,000 in prize money in 2024
- \* Challenges with aging infrastructure

### Challenges:

- \* \$15 million in deferred maintenance - aging infrastructure, dust mitigation, drainage improvements, safety and ADA updates, HVAC
- \* Noise, lights, traffic and parking impacts on neighbors
- \* Inadequate and inefficient space
- \* Conflict between PFD and Gail Gardener neighbors

### Lease & Resolution:

- \* July 2016 - City of Prescott entered into a new 25-year lease with PFD
- \* Paragraph 6 & Paragraph 9 are key in background related to a Master Plan development and who is responsible for repairs and maintenance
- \* Resolution No. 2023-1862 adopted in July 2023 following citizen petition - outlines public meetings related to any Master Plan process

### Path Forward:

- \* City takes responsibility of property and issues
- \* Re-start the Rodeo Grounds Improvement Planning Process - city-led collaborative effort with PFD, other rodeo ground users, neighbors and community at large; hired consultant with direction from steering committee; hold all public meetings as required by Resolution No. 2023-1862
- \* Reconsider Rezoning - if needed, will apply as part of permitting
- \* Renegotiate PFD lease - market-rate business lease, greater city responsibility for maintenance and management

Mayor Goode commented that there are a number of priorities for upgrading and improving the infrastructure at the rodeo grounds. When looking at the cost of those improvements it is substantial and if the state budget allocation can be used toward that it would go a long way to address those concerns.

Councilman Moore thanked Mr. Kimble for his comments and providing this approach, but expressed his concern that as a city priorities can change but the one constant is the rodeo and the neighbors so it is important to commit to a course of action that will resolve these issues long term. City involvement is

important to make this work with the rodeo which is a fantastic organization, they had a masterplan and vision that may have been unrealistic without city involvement.

Councilman Gambogi stated that the rodeo is part of Prescott's heritage. He believes in putting first things first, and this is a good way to set the warring parties aside and come up with a solution that everyone can live with.

Councilmember Rusing stated that she is proud of the work done each year to put this event on for the city's benefit, can work together to make the improvements and make sure that the event continues on for another 100 years. She asked about a Steering Committee for the planning and stated that all contracts and projects should go through the bidding process.

Mr. Kimble responded that procurement would apply and be required. He added that he would anticipate the Steering Committee being comprised of two members from rodeo, two members from the neighborhood, a rodeo grounds user and members of city staff.

Councilman Montoya thanked Mr. Kimble and stated this sounds like a way forward, he is looking forward to doing that.

Mayor Pro Tem Cantelme commented that there is deferred maintenance at all city owned properties and asked how the city moves forward with a codified plan and then get something in writing addressing taking care of all that. She added that the neighborhoods have to be considered in anything that is done, nobody will be 100% happy but everyone should have some level of happiness in the plan moving forward.

Councilwoman Fruhwirth echoed comments in support of this approach and stated that she feels that one to two members of the city staff should be involved so they are up to speed on everything. This is an asset that needs to be protected and preserved, and this is important to do.

Councilmember Rusing expressed the importance of the UofA Extension located on the rodeo grounds and need to make sure they are included in the plans.

Councilman Moore asked about an area designated as open space on the map included in the presentation, and if it is part of the open space portfolio.

Mr. Kimble confirmed and stated that it is 4-acres and part of the proposal for protection. He would hand over responsibility of oversight on this to Deputy City Manager Michael Morris as his experience is relevant and objective on these issues.

Mayor Pro Tem Cantelme asked if the city will consider other activities besides the rodeo in future plans.

Mr. Kimble confirmed and added that the intent is to study the property holistically. There are other uses and events, what is the highest and best use of

the property. Considerations for rodeo, other users of the property, other potential events at the property but he doesn't know exactly what that will look like.

Councilman Moore reiterated that this is a joint effort.

Mayor Goode opened the floor to public comment.

Member of the public Sue Manuel stated that it is a slap in the face as a taxpayer that the city would spend money on a want for the rodeo, she doesn't know anyone who is against the rodeo as it was or is now but they don't want the monstrosity proposed. In her opinion, the list of expenses sent by Mr. Kimble to the state is overboard, and the fairgrounds does not need to be rezoned. She asked what the market value is for the property.

Member of the public Ralph Hess addressed the Council and read a statement from Deb Thalasis as one of the individuals who initiated the process resulting in the Resolution adopted in 2023. She commented on the issue of deferred maintenance at the rodeo grounds and expressed confusion regarding this because the city has invested over \$2 million since 2002 for updates at the rodeo grounds. Citizens just passed a tax for public safety needs so why is this entity receiving priority over other community needs.

Member of the public Howard Mechanic addressed the Council regarding public funds to a private entity when the fairgrounds is the most valuable piece of property that the city leases. The city and the public are entitled to full financial transparency before any investment is made. He stated that he has received a letter from the IRS which states they haven't received PFD's 2023 990 form and he wants PFD to be asked: 1. Regarding funds transferred from Buckle Club to PFD during 2023-2024 agreements should be provided with details on the transfers, 2. Within 2 months full 2023 and 2024 financial records and IRS filings should be released, 3. PFD should explain why there is no 2023 filing from them. Finally, he asked if the Steering Committee meetings will accept public comment.

Member of the public Bonnie McMinn addressed the Council regarding a handout she provided with details regarding PFD's revenues and expenditures over the last two years, as well as their IRS filings. Based on her observations, the core business revenues are down and expenses are up. She feels that a detailed business and marketing plan should be provided before any money is spent on the rodeo.

Member of the public Karen Fann addressed the Council and thanked them and staff for addressing these issues. She stated that if the rodeo is moved they will lose the designation as "world's oldest", and added that the funding from last year's state budget is grant money which would go directly into a City of Prescott property it is not coming out of the city's general fund. Improvements would be an advantage for the taxpayers and will generate money for the community, additionally, the improvements will benefit the neighborhood as well as the rodeo. This is about all of Prescott, the money brought in supports our local businesses. Finally, she stated that when the legislation was done, the gift clause was looked into and cleared it is not a violation.

Councilman Gambogi commented that one person said the 990 wasn't submitted yet another one provided details from the 990 and he asked for clarification on that. He added that the Council isn't here to re-engineer the rodeo, they are here to work on starting the Steering Committee so he thinks everyone needs to stay focused.

Councilmember Rusing stated that the city is not part of the lawsuit.

Councilman Moore stated that this is off topic, and the Council and public need to hear about how to move forward in a positive way.

Councilwoman Fruhwirth asked someone to address the \$15 million funding from the state.

Ms. Fann responded and stated that there was no inference that the city was involved in the lawsuit, the \$15.3 million being discussed is something everyone should be working together to get for improvements. The legislation was written that the funds had to go through PFD, which disallowed the money be given to the city.

Member of the public Judy Stahl addressed the Council as a local business owner who has worked with many of the cowboys over the years. She stated that with this plan she would like to see that the neighborhood is not disturbed, and added that the entrance should be on Rodeo Drive and not on Gail Gardner.

Member of the public Edward Bowe addressed the Council stating that the current rodeo grounds are inadequate, and he feels the property should be sold and the rodeo should be moved. Council should think outside the box.

Member of the public Tony Hamer addressed the Council regarding the fact that the rodeo has been part of the community since 1913 and only recently challenged in its impacts on the community. It is part of the city's brand, and it is disturbing that it would be put at risk. Community survey said that preservation of the city's past is important, and the Council needs to look seriously at the plan that's been submitted.

Member of the public Matthew Halldorson addressed the Council as the director of the Cooperative Extension and lessee at the rodeo grounds. The Extension is a service oriented arm of the UofA. The current facilities are not up to snuff and so there have been talks about potential relocation, but with the potential plans for upgrades at the grounds there is the most potential in synergy at this location which would be the most beneficial to the community.

Member of the public Earl Duque addressed the Council regarding his following of these issues over the years at the rodeo grounds. He thanked Mr. Kimble and his staff for hearing and acting on the concerns, a Steering Committee and outside consultant are important first steps. Additionally, he said that Equifest and Community Compost Program should be included in the list of users for the property. Most successful projects are those that look at all the variables and plan

toward success, this will provide the opportunity to reset and provide a collaborative process.

Member of the public Kymberli Lopez addressed the Council in good faith in moving forward, doesn't want to get into the weeds and negativity. She has invited members of the public to come in and speak with them and only one person has done that, they are here to move forward with the rodeo's tradition of western heritage. The public will be kept in mind throughout this process. The PFD's taxes were filed by Slater and Rutherford, she handled all of the requests for those records and they were put on GuideStar. PFD Recorder & Office Manager Jason Owens addressed the fact that taxes were filed in accordance with the extension that was allowed and posted on GuideStar for the public.

Mayor Pro Tem Cantelme commented on how aware she is that the grounds need to be updated and are unsafe, but when she looks at the losses that were provided she wouldn't lease to them because there is no evidence that they would be able to pay the overhead with 4-5 years of losses. She asked how PFD plans to rectify the situation and what their future plan is to show they'll make and not lose money.

General Manager Jim Dewey-Brown responded that the biggest thing is PFD will stop putting their money into the city property and facility.

City Attorney Joseph Young confirmed that PFD is responsible for above ground maintenance and the city is responsible for below ground maintenance.

Mrs. Lopez added that even through COVID the rodeo went on. There are over \$2 million in assets and a budget is done annually, they understand this is a business and they are the stewards of the property and the brand.

Member of the public Truly Bracken addressed the Council and thanked Mr. Kimble for the attention he is bringing to this process. The problem for the rodeo arose when these overly ambitious plans were brought forward and there is a reason for citizens to be concerned about where the money is going to go it is wise to consider those issues. She reiterated that a Miller Valley entrance would dramatically minimize the impact on the neighborhood, and added that there are questions about the parking and traffic study.

Member of the public Wayman Trujillo addressed the Council as a local business owner and asked the Council to consider that someone like Jim Dewey knows rodeo, this isn't something that just anyone can run. The other users and neighborhood should be involved, but the conflict that this has created in Prescott is something he just doesn't understand. PFD is a tenant, but without them the city loses the grounds. Remember that someone on Committee needs to understand rodeo.

Member of the public Sue Knaup addressed the Council and stated that she feels the Steering Committee is a good idea. She is a neighbor of the rodeo grounds on Schemmer, and feels that connections of open space and surrounding neighbors, etc. should be considered. Nobody has mentioned what that place

looks like now, it is blighted and it shouldn't be. The rodeo should be the centerpiece, and everyone should work together.

Councilman Gambogi commented that only two people actually commented on the proposal before the Council today.

Councilmember Rusing stated that the Council should discuss hiring a consultant.

Mayor Goode stated that the Council needs to give direction on how to proceed.

Councilman Moore echoed Councilman Gambogi's comments, direction should be to create a robust Steering Committee that includes someone who knows rodeo so possibly larger than proposed. He added that Mr. Halldorson should be on that Committee as well.

Councilman Montoya agreed with Councilman Moore's comments and added that it isn't hard to believe the IRS wouldn't have accurate data. Moving forward with a Committee to tackle this is a good idea, he is disheartened by the discord that still exists but wants to move forward in a way that makes everyone proud of the community.

Councilwoman Fruhwirth concurred, she wants to empower Mr. Morris to make sure the right people are picked to look at this collectively and objectively. Her concern is the consultant and she asked if there is someone in mind already, she is comfortable having a FY2026 line item in the budget for it.

Mr. Kimble responded that there is not a specific vendor in mind, but it is important to find someone with experience designing properties like this and follow city procurement processes. If Council gives direction to move forward the bid process can begin before the dollars are allocated so we can move forward.

Mayor Pro Tem Cantelme stated that there should be a Council Liaison in the Steering Committee meetings so they are up to speed.

Councilmember Rusing said she supports a Steering Committee and the hiring of a consultant.

Councilman Moore asked if a consultant will come after getting direction from a Steering Committee.

Mr. Kimble responded that a consultant would need to be in from the beginning when considering design.

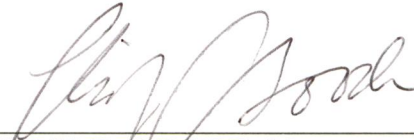
Mayor Goode agreed with Mr. Kimble, having a consultant early on would be beneficial for the process. He added that Mr. Morris will be able to look at things really objectively given that he hasn't been here long, and his experience in working on these types of projects will help a great deal as well.

Council consensus for the Steering Committee and consultant.

*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 2:43 p.m.



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PHILIP R. GOODE, Mayor

ATTEST:

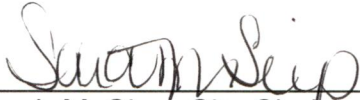


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SARAH M. SIEP, City Clerk

**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 28, 2025. I further certify the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.



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Sarah M. Siep, City Clerk

